

Teacher jailed for telecom fraud

The court convicted Earnest Edengel on all 12 counts, which arose from offences committed between September 2024 and February 2025.

BY JULIET KIGONGO

A 26-year-old teacher has been sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to 12 counts of telecom-related fraud and obtaining money by false pretence, in which he impersonated a former Member of Parliament (MP) to defraud unsuspecting victims.

Earnest Edengel was yesterday sentenced by Chief Magistrate Gladys Kamasanyu of the Standards, Utilities and Wildlife Court at his own plea of guilty.

Passing the sentence, the court convicted Edengel on all 12 counts, which arose from offences committed between September 2024 and February 2025 in Busiika Town Council in Luwero District, and Pallisa District.

On counts one, five, and nine, Edengel was convicted of fraud upon a customer, contrary to Regulation 110(b) of the Uganda Communications (Licensing) Regulations, Statutory Instrument No



Ernest Edengel at the Chief Magistrate's Court of Standards, Utilities and Wildlife in Makindye yesterday. PHOTO / ABUBAKER LUBOWA

95 of 2019.

The prosecution told the court that Edengel, together with others still at large, used the MTN Uganda telephone number 0786048140 to disguise and

pretend to be MP Francis Mukula.

The court heard that through this impersonation, the convict induced Ms Rose Sibika to send him Shs1.5m on the promise of scholarships for

her children, Mr Peter Osilon to send Shs805,000 on the pretext of securing him a government teaching job in Kampala, and Daniel Eyek to send Shs450,000 after being promised a job as the Kumi District Agricultural Officer. None of the promises were fulfilled.

For these three counts, the court sentenced Edengel to one year's imprisonment on each count.

On counts two, six, and 10, Edengel was convicted of obtaining money by false pretence, an offence under Section 285 of the Penal Code Act.

The prosecution stated that during the same period and in the same areas, the convict falsely introduced himself as Mr Francis Mukula and fraudulently obtained money from the three complainants under false promises of scholarships and government employment.

The Chief Magistrate sentenced him to three years' imprisonment on each of these counts.

On counts three, four, seven, eight, 11, and 12, the court found Edengel guilty of using another person's SIM card for illegal purposes, contrary to Regulation 29 of the Regulation of Interception of Communications Regulations, 2024.

Evidence before the court showed that the convict used SIM cards registered in the names of Francis Mukula and James Ojangle to defraud Rose Sibika, Peter Osilon, and Daniel Eyek.

For counts seven, eight, 11, and 12, the court imposed a sentence of two years' imprisonment on each count.

While sentencing him, Chief Magistrate Kamasanyu noted that although the convict pleaded guilty after the prosecution had closed its case, the nature of the offences warranted a custodial sentence.

"Offences of this nature are on the increase in this country and are occasioning losses and damage to unsuspecting members of society," the magistrate said.

She further observed that the actions of the convict had damaged the public image of the person

he impersonated, noting that the convict's conduct cost the former MP his image.

Court was also told that during his arrest, Edengel was found in possession of 10 SIM cards, including those used in committing the offences before the court. The magistrate said the scale of the wrongdoing could not be fully ascertained.

The court also took note of Edengel's profession as a teacher. "The convict is not an ordinary person. He is a teacher by profession. He associates with the little ones, and they learn from him," the magistrate stated.

The court made no order for compensation, holding that the custodial sentences imposed were sufficient.

