

PRESS RELEASE

PDPO SECURES FIRST CRIMINAL CONVICTION UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY ACT

Kampala, 23rd July, 2025

The Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO) has achieved a significant milestone in enforcing Uganda's data protection and privacy laws, securing its first criminal conviction under the Data Protection and Privacy Act, Cap. 97. This landmark case, pursued in collaboration with the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), underscores the Government's firm commitment to ensuring accountability amongst data controllers and processors.

The conviction was entered against Mr. Ronald Mugulusi, Director of Nano Loans Microfinance Ltd and operator of the Quickloan app, following prosecution on two counts of failure to register with PDPO and violation of individuals' privacy rights by processing of personal data without consent of the data subject, or any other legal justification as mandated by the Act. The offences were committed in the course of his business operations in Kampala between 2023 and 2025.

Mr. Mugulusi was first arraigned in court on 25th April 2025 and subsequently pleaded guilty on the first count on 10th July 2025, before the Makindye Standards, Wildlife and Utilities Court, admitting that his company collected and processed personal data without the required registration with PDPO. He voluntarily entered a plea bargain, accepting full responsibility for the offence and waiving his right to trial. On 10th July 2025, he was convicted and fined **Three Hundred Thousand Uganda Shillings (UGX 300,000)** by the presiding Magistrate. Prior to prosecution, PDPO had severally engaged and provided guidance to Mr. Mugulusi on how to comply with the legal obligations under the Act and its Regulations. Despite these efforts, he failed to take corrective action, and his continued unlawful conduct, including the mishandling of his clients' personal data, necessitated referral of the case for criminal investigation and prosecution.

The second count arose from a complaint involving the misuse of a borrower's personal data, including the name, phone number, and photograph which was recorded in a video and sent via WhatsApp, accompanied by a threat to publish it on TikTok over loan non-repayment. Although the data had been

shared for loan processing, its reuse to shame the borrower breached the data protection principle of purpose limitation and lacked legal justification. A court-sanctioned reconciliation was subsequently reached between Mr. Mugulusi and the complainant, Mr. Wonambwa Michael, under Section 160 of the Magistrates Courts Act, Cap. 19, and the Judicature (Reconciliation) Rules, 2011. Mr. Mugulusi offered compensation, leading to a stay of further proceedings.

This conviction sends a strong and clear message that non-compliance with data protection and privacy obligations is a criminal offence and will be prosecuted. Every entity that collects or processes personal data must register with PDPO and ensure their practices are lawful, fair, and transparent. We commend the complainant's courage in pursuing this case to the end. In most such cases, victims are often reluctant to provide evidence or follow through to prosecution. This conviction shows that when victims cooperate, offenders can be held accountable.

PDPO reiterates its call to all data controllers and data processors that process personal data of Ugandans to comply with the Data Protection and Privacy Act, Cap. 97, and its Regulations. Registration is mandatory and can be completed online via: <https://www.pdpo.go.ug/register>.

For any data protection and privacy related inquiries or compliance advisory support, please contact PDPO on **Tel: +256 417 801008/009/011, +256 200 707100** or Email: info@pdpo.go.ug



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