# Ugandan High Court judge convicted of exploiting woman after UK trial



Lydia Mugambe, a 50-year-old Ugandan High Court judge and PhD student at the University of Oxford, was found guilty in March 2023 of multiple charges relating to the exploitation of a Ugandan woman, culminating in a trial at Oxford Crown Court. Prosecutors described Mugambe's actions as taking “advantage of her status” in an egregious manner.

During the proceedings, prosecutor Caroline Haughey KC outlined how Mugambe had manipulated the victim, effectively removing her ability to secure steady employment. The victim was forced to work as Mugambe's maid and provide childcare, illustrating a significant power imbalance exacerbated by the victim's lack of knowledge regarding employment rights.

The court established that Mugambe conspired with Ugandan deputy high commissioner John Leonard Mugerwa to facilitate the woman's entry into the UK. According to the prosecution, this arrangement involved a dishonest exchange, whereby Mugerwa coordinated the Ugandan High Commission's sponsorship of the woman’s entrance into the UK in return for Mugambe's support in a legal case involving Mugerwa.

Jurors were informed that Mugambe had also conspired to intimidate the victim to withdraw her support for the prosecution. Evidence presented included Mugambe reaching out to a pastor to make contact with the victim, as well as communicating with the victim's family to persuade her to retract her statements.

Mugambe was arrested under the Modern Slavery Act, expressing surprise at the officer’s comments, stating, “I am a judge in my country, I even have immunity. I am not a criminal.” Despite the serious nature of the allegations, she maintained that she had treated the young woman with “love, care and patience,” denying any coercion or exploitation.

The victim, who cannot be named for legal reasons, testified that her experience in the UK was marked by feelings of loneliness and confinement, especially as her working hours were severely limited.

Following the trial, which exposed a complex interplay of power and exploitation, Mugambe's judicial credentials drew attention, especially given her recent appointment to the UN's judicial roster in May 2023.

Mugambe was due for sentencing on May 2, 2023, a decision that would conclude a high-profile case highlighting issues surrounding human trafficking and exploitation within the UK immigration system.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/news/thames-valley/news/2025/march/10-03-2025/ugandan-high-court-judge-and-a-un-criminal-tribunal-judge-convicted-of-immigration-and-modern-slavery-offences---oxfordshire> - This article reports that Lydia Mugambe, a 49-year-old Ugandan High Court judge, was found guilty by a unanimous Oxford Crown Court jury of multiple charges, including conspiring to facilitate a breach of UK immigration law and requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour.
2. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/judge-convicted-modern-slavery-offences> - The Crown Prosecution Service details the conviction of Lydia Mugambe, highlighting that she was found guilty of conspiring to breach UK immigration law, arranging travel for exploitation, requiring a person to perform forced labour, and witness intimidation following a three-week trial.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/mar/13/un-judge-exploited-and-abused-woman-she-forced-into-slavery-court-rules> - This article discusses how Lydia Mugambe, a UN judge and Ugandan High Court judge, was found guilty of exploiting and abusing a young woman she forced into slavery, taking advantage of her status to prevent the victim from holding steady employment and forcing her to work as a maid and provide childcare without payment.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/20f02ee7d7de112eb9f3c39c6fbf8a1f> - The Associated Press reports that Lydia Mugambe, a UN judge and Ugandan High Court judge, was convicted in the UK of forcing a young woman into slavery, detailing how she deceived the victim into traveling from Uganda to the UK and made her work as an unpaid maid and nanny while confiscating her passport and visa.
5. <https://www.pmldaily.com/news/2025/03/uganda-mulls-appeal-for-judge-convicted-in-uk-human-trafficking-case.html> - PML Daily reports that the Ugandan government is considering an appeal against the conviction of High Court Judge Lydia Mugambe by a UK court, following her guilty verdict on charges of exploiting a Ugandan woman brought to the UK.
6. <https://www.newvision.co.ug/articledetails/206829> - New Vision Official reports that Lydia Mugambe, a High Court judge in Uganda, was found guilty of modern slavery offences in the UK, including forcing the victim to work as her maid and provide childcare for free, and that she was appointed to the UN's judicial roster on May 26, 2023.
7. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25132823.united-nations-judge-sentenced-oxford-crown-court/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data