

Former Rwandan Prime Minister, Pierre-Damien Habumuremyi pleaded not guilty before Gasabo Primary Court where he appeared on Thursday on charges of bounced checks he issued and for breach of trust.

Habumuremyi appeared before court for the first time since his arrest a week ago, he requested for his trial to be held in camera which the court denied.

His charge sheet includes bounced checks with a total of about Rwf170 million to different people issued in the name of Christian University of Kigali which he founded. Habumuremyi issued checks with insufficient funds on his bank account to which he argues were only meant as a form of commitment to the university's creditors and had agreed not be cashed but on a later date.

The former prime minister also attributes his financial woes of his now-defunct university to the Covid-19 pandemic. Lecturers and staff of this university have also spent many months without receiving their salaries.

Habumuremyi dismissed the charges claiming that he is seeking his release to seek reimbursement from them through the sale of the university shares. The total amount of funds that Habumuremye has to repay is more than 1.5 billion Rwf.

The Prosecutor on the other hand wants a pre-trial detention for Habumuremyi, who also said that he has a fragile health linked to heart and eye disease.

Following the hearing of the case, the court will take time and decide if Habumuremyi can be granted bail to which it set July 21 for this ruling.