Opposition politician Victoire Ingabire appeared before Kicukiro Primary Court on Tuesday July 15, 2025, facing six charges, including plotting to overthrow the government and forming a criminal group.

The leader of the DALFA-Umurinzi party was arrested last month following a High Court decision that she be investigated based on testimony from a group of nine other suspects in a separate case.

Ingabire has denied all charges, arguing that the prosecution is acting under pressure from the High Court. She noted that the allegations had already been investigated four years ago and dismissed at the time.

Wearing a long dress made from African fabric (kitenge), Ingabire appeared in court with her lawyer Gatera Gashabana. Before the trial began, she raised objections, saying she had not been granted the right to be defended by legal counsel of her choice. The hearing had previously been postponed because she wanted to be represented by a lawyer from Kenya.

However, that lawyer was not allowed to appear in court, as the Rwanda Bar Association did not accredit them. The association's head, Moise Nkundabarashi, said the Kenyan lawyer had applied but was denied accreditation because Kenya's Bar Association does not accept Rwandan lawyers.

Prosecutors accuse Ingabire of six crimes, including forming or belonging to a criminal group, inciting public disorder, and plotting to overthrow the government. Most charges resemble those against the nine suspects allegedly affiliated with the unregistered DALFA-Umurinzi party.

These individuals were arrested in 2021 after participating in training sessions on how to resist authoritarian rule without using violence. Ingabire was accused of leading and organizing the training, given her role as party leader and the fact that most participants were party members.

The main prosecution witness, Boniface Nzabandora, was central to the arrests. He told prosecutors that he was invited to the training sessions but withdrew after realizing the group's intentions were harmful to the country.

Nzabandora secretly recorded conversations from the training, and this audio is a key piece of evidence for the prosecution.

Ingabire rejected the charges and said the court should not admit the case. She explained that she had been questioned about the same issues in 2021 when the group was first arrested, and at the time, no grounds for prosecution were found.

She believes the High Court pressured prosecutors to revive the case, despite there being no new evidence.

Regarding witness Nzabandora, Ingabire said he once lived in her home and was like a close assistant, but she later dismissed him after learning he had been approached by security agencies and asked to spy on her.

Her lawyer, Gatera Gashabana, also questioned the witness’s credibility, saying Nzabandora left Ingabire’s home unhappy after being fired, implying he may have a personal grudge.

The defense also argued that some of the charges are outdated, such as organizing protests, which should expire one year after the alleged actions. Yet Ingabire is facing them four years later — which she denies.

This pretrial detention hearing lasted over five hours — unusually long for such a case — and ended with unresolved arguments. The judge reminded both parties that there would be time to present full defenses in the substantive case.

A court decision is expected on the 18th of this month.