

Police probe death of girl, after UACE results release

The student got 19 points, one point less than the maximum UACE exam score.

BY AMBROSE MUSASIZI

Police in Kampala Metropolitan area are investigating circumstances under which a 20-year-old student was found dead in her bedroom shortly after the release of the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education results last Friday.

A statement shared by Kampala Metropolitan Police with this publication said investigations had kicked off.

"Preliminary observations revealed ligature marks around the neck and no visible signs of physical assault. A case of suspected suicide has since been registered at Wakiso Police Station, and inquiries are ongoing to ascertain the full circumstances surrounding the incident," the statement read in part.

Preliminary information received by the Officer-in-Charge Operations Wakiso indicates that Genevieve Juliana Mutyaba, a resident of Kavumba Village, allegedly took her own life after reportedly becoming distressed upon receiving her A-Level examination results.

The police said family members noted that the deceased isolated herself in her room for several hours. Their concern prompted them to forcefully open the door, where they found her hanging from the door frame using a scarf. She was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital Wakiso, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

A case of suspected suicide has since been registered at Wakiso Police Station.

Although the cause of the death has not been established, residents of Kalwanga Village in Kyotera District, where she was buried, alleged that the student may have taken her own life after she missed the perfect 20 score by just one point.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) released the 2025 Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) exams results last Friday. But for 20-year-old Genevieve Juliana Mutyaba, the miss was unbearable as she allegedly died by suicide at her family home in Nansana, Wakiso District.

The body of the former student of Mengo Secondary School in Kampala, was later taken for burial on Sunday at her ancestral home in Kalwanga Village in Kalisizo Sub-county, Kyotera District.

Mourners who turned up to pay their last respects to Genevieve described her as bright, disciplined, and ambitious. But the tragedy has sent shockwaves through her community and raised questions about the pressures facing Uganda's youth in the education system.

Her father, Mr Robert Mutyaba, also the head of the laity at Nansana Catholic Church, spoke of the family's heartbreak. "I was shocked when I found my daughter hanging," he said.

Mr Mutyaba added: "Genevieve has always been among the bright-



Genevieve Juliana Mutyaba during her happy days. PHOTO/COURTESY

est and most disciplined students. She dreamed of becoming a great engineer and an academic. I'm really sad that she has not lived to see her dreams fulfilled," he lamented.

The neighbours and relatives spoke of Genevieve's passionate dream to pursue an Engineering course at Makerere University, one of Uganda's most prestigious institutions.

Those who knew her said she had always excelled and believed that getting the maximum points would secure admission.

But the single point slip reportedly pained Genevieve, who reportedly became withdrawn and deeply distressed.

Residents said she struggled to cope with remarks from some colleagues who repeatedly taunted her on how she had scored 19 instead of the perfect 20 points.

"She was known to be among the brightest students," one female neighbour said on Monday.

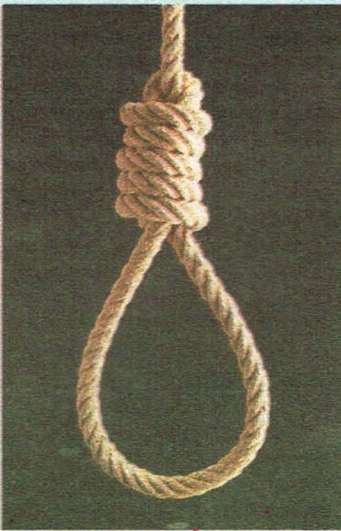
She added: "Many people believed she would score 20 points, but when the results were released, some of her friends kept asking what had happened. Those comments appear to have weighed heavily on her."

At Genevieve's funeral, some experts who converged hoped that increased dialogue about mental health, coping strategies could bring an improved situation when it comes to suicide.

Dr Amina Kato, a clinical psychologist, noted: "Creating safe spaces in schools

CASES OF SUICIDE

The 2024 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) report shows Uganda recorded 272,271 cases of suicidal thoughts, with 39,656 of the cases involving children aged 10-14, and another 36,615 cases in those aged 15-21, while 34,697 were from young adults aged 20-24 years. These figures highlight a hidden crisis among Uganda's youth, including learners, facing unimaginable pressure and emotional struggle.



where students can openly talk about their struggles is crucial. Often, a simple

conversation with a trusted adult can prevent a tragedy."

She highlighted the importance of peer support programmes, counselling services, and mental health education as tools that empower students to seek help before reaching a breaking point.

Ms Dorothy Kiggundu, the head teacher in charge of public relations and discipline at Mengo S.S., expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of their former student, describing the incident as both shocking and disheartening to the school community. However, in a telephone interview yesterday she declined to divulge further details, noting that the institution was still awaiting an official account from the family.

Ms Kiggundu clarified that the student had been released from the school the previous year, and the circumstances surrounding her death occurred outside the school's jurisdiction.

"We are saddened by the loss," she said, "but since the incident happened after she had already left our care, we can only comment further once we receive a formal report from the parents."

This is the second victim of suicide to be buried in the same district this month. Early this month, 14-year-old Primary Five pupil John Terry Kisekka, who had recently joined Kololo Junior School in Wakiso District, was found hanging in a dormitory. He was buried at Niinzi Village, less than five kilometres from Kalwanga.

Mr Badru Mujuzi, an elder in Kalwanga Village said: "We must pay attention to every student, every sign of despair. The community has to come together, not just the school, not just the parents, but all of us. Silence and disbelief only make it worse."

Mr Mujuzi's words lingered in the air: a reminder that awareness isn't enough, it must be coupled with action.

Experts weigh in

Psychologists and educators say academic pressure is one of the leading causes of suicide among students in Uganda. Dr Miriam Kyomugisha, a clinical psychologist in Kampala, explained that several students face overwhelming expectations from parents, teachers, and peers.

"For some students, failure—even by a single point—can feel like the end of the world... They fear shame, disappointment, or the loss of future opportunities, and without proper support, the pressure can become unbearable."

The situation in Uganda reflects a worrying trend. In 2021, a 19-year-old boy from Wakiso District reportedly ended his life after failing to secure admission to his preferred university programme despite his excellent results.

In 2020, a student in Gulu District committed suicide after being repeatedly bullied by peers for scoring lower than expected in his A-level exams.

These tragedies underscore how academic stress, combined with social and family pressure, can push vulnerable students toward desperate acts.

Beyond exam pressure, other factors contribute to student suicides. Mental health challenges, family conflict, financial difficulties, cyberbullying, and societal stigma around failure - all play a role.