

# Parents recount horror as trial of

Emotions ran high yesterday as grieving parents revealed the harrowing moments they went through upon learning about the death of their toddlers, with one parent collapsing and fainting under the weight of sorrow during the trial that kicked off yesterday, with six prosecution witnesses testifying out of the 11.

BY ANTHONY WESAKA & JULIET KIGONGO

**S**tella Apolot, Gideon Ateku's mother (prosecution witness two).  
**Justice Alice Komuhangi Khaukha:** Are you comfortable with the Luganda language?  
**Apolot:** Yes, my lord.  
**Judge:** Please help her take the oath.  
**Apolot:** Takes the oath.  
**Judge:** Please speak louder so that we can all hear.

**Chief State Attorney Jonathan Muwaganya:** Repeat your name.  
**Apolot:** I'm Apolot Stella  
**Muwaganya:** How old?  
**Apolot:** 36 years  
**Muwaganya:** What do you do?  
**Apolot:** I'm a businesswoman  
**Muwaganya:** What business?  
**Apolot:** I sell greens.  
**Muwaganya:** Where do you live?  
**Apolot:** Ggaba  
**Muwaganya:** Where do you trade from?  
**Apolot:** Ggaba Water area.  
**Muwaganya:** Do you know Gideon Eteku?

**Apolot:** I used to call him my son  
**Muwaganya:** How old was he?  
**Apolot:** Two and a half years old.  
**Muwaganya:** On April 2, where were you?  
**Apolot:** I woke up that very morning, prepared him, and took him to the daycare. I left him there and went back to do my daily chores.  
**Muwaganya:** Which daycare? Where is it found?  
**Apolot:** She breaks down and fails to respond for a while  
**Muwaganya:** We are going to ask you to be strong such that we can go through this process of court.

**Apolot:** It is found here in Ggaba  
**Muwaganya:** What followed?  
**Apolot:** I went back to my usual work  
**Muwaganya:** What followed?  
**Apolot:** It was like at 11am when a friend known as Nakimuli called me. She asked me whether I had taken my child to school. I replied yes, and she said, "Hurry to the school because there is an assailant who has entered it and killed some of the children". I lost energy, and I even failed to walk. I jumped on a boda.

When I reached the gate, there were so many people there. I just forced myself through and went straight to his classroom. Upon reaching there, I started calling him, but there was no response. I was told by a certain lady that some children had been taken to Wentz Hospital. So I started walking there, but I also failed to



People line up for security checks before attending the public court hearing in Ggaba yesterday. PHOTOS/ABUBAKER LUBOWA

walk there, and I got a boda to the medical centre.  
**Muwaganya:** What did you find there at the medical centre?  
**Apolot:** I entered a room that had three children, and I saw that they had covered them. I asked the doctor whether my child was alive, and the doctor replied by telling me to calm down. I insisted and asked again, but the doctor gave me the shocking news of how all were dead.  
**Muwaganya:** So what followed?  
**Apolot:** I lost all the energy I had. The police came and decided to take all the dead bodies to Mulago.  
**Muwaganya:** Before the police came, did you get a chance to see Gideon? What state was he in?  
**Apolot:** He had been stabbed and had a lot of blood. The bodies were taken to Mulago. I remained at home since I was alone and I could not follow them.  
**Muwaganya:** What followed?  
**Apolot:** The following day, we organised to have Gideon's body picked up from the hospital. We picked him and took the body home in Kampala and later, looked for transport to take the body to Pallisa for the burial.  
**Muwaganya:** What happened in Pallisa?  
**Apolot:** We prepared for burial  
**Muwaganya:** When was he buried?  
**Apolot:** We buried him on a Saturday  
**Muwaganya:** Finally, Stella, did you happen to know the person who killed him (Gideon)?  
**Apolot:** No, I just saw him in photos, but I have now seen him here today.  
**Muwaganya:** Did you know the accused person before the incident?  
**Apolot:** No.  
**Muwaganya:** My lord, that is all for this witness. She is available for cross examination.

**Defence lawyer Sarah Awelo (Okello's lawyer):** Stella, accept our condolences. We have a few questions to ask you. At what time did you take the child to school that fateful day?  
**Apolot:** I used to take him early like at 7am but that day I delayed

**Defence lawyer:** At what time did you take Gideon to school on that fateful day?  
**Apolot:** At 8am  
**Defence lawyer:** When you would bring the child to school, whom would you meet?  
**Apolot:** Teachers used to be there.  
**Defence lawyer:** When you would get the teachers there, would you enter the school with the child?  
**Apolot:** Yes.  
**Defence lawyer:** Were you always checked by the security?  
**Apolot:** They would check bags to see which clothes were there.  
**Defence lawyer:** What time did you always pick him up from school?  
**Apolot:** 4pm.  
**Defence lawyer:** While picking him, would you enter the school premises?  
**Apolot:** Yes.  
**Defence lawyer:** When entering the school, were you always checked?  
**Apolot:** No.  
**Defence lawyer:** You said it was your friend Nakimuli who informed you about the sad incident. What time was it?  
**Apolot:** 11am.  
**Defence lawyer:** Did the school ever inform you about the incident?  
**Apolot:** No.  
**Defence lawyer:** Did you ever find security personnel at the gate every time you would bring your child?  
**Apolot:** They used to be there but this lower side.  
**Defence lawyer:** So they were not on this side of the gate?  
**Apolot:** I can't lie.  
**Defence lawyer:** When you would come to school, would you find the security officers at the gate?  
**Apolot:** They would be there.  
**Defence lawyer:** Did the security officers check you?  
**Apolot:** It was the teachers who used to check.  
**Defence lawyer:** Once again, accept our condolences.

**Judge:** Any re-examination?  
**Muwaganya:** No.  
**Judge:** Stella, thank you for coming, and we condole with you on the loss of your baby.  
As Apolot was leaving the witness dock, she fainted, and a team from the Red Cross and the police carried her away.  
**Judge:** Can we agree that we don't take every picture?  
Next witness walks in. Marvin Otim Komaketch, the father of Agenorworth Otim (Prosecution witness three)  
**Judge:** What is your name?  
**Witness:** Komaketch Marvin Otim, father to Agenorworth Otim.  
**Judge:** How old are you?  
**Otim:** I'm 32 years.  
**Judge:** What is your religion?  
**Otim:** I'm a Catholic.  
He takes oath.  
**Judge:** Mr Otim, are you comfortable speaking to court in English?  
**Otim:** I prefer to use Luganda because I'm at home. (cheers from the public).  
**Judge:** They will interpret for you the question he will ask, okay?  
**Otim:** Okay.  
**Muwaganya:** Where do you live?  
**Otim:** Ggaba Water  
**Muwaganya:** What do you do for a living?  
**Otim:** I'm a chef.  
**Muwaganya:** Do you know that man sitting down there (pointing to Okello)?  
**Otim:** Yes.  
**Muwaganya:** How do you know him?  
**Otim:** I know him as a suspect who killed the children.  
**Muwaganya:** How about the person called Keisha Agenorworth Otim?  
**Otim:** I knew her very well because she was my daughter.  
**Muwaganya:** How old?  
**Otim:** She was going to make two years on the 28 of this month.  
**Muwaganya:** So what happened on April 2?  
**Otim:** I woke up early as usual and went to work. Then my supervisor came

and told me my child had died. I quickly jumped onto a boda, and I came to Ggaba.  
**Muwaganya:** Did your supervisor tell you which child had died?  
**Otim:** Keisha. My supervisor said he had received a phone call that my child had died. He told me that it was my wife who had called.  
**Muwaganya:** What is the name of your wife?  
**Otim:** Namujju Kurthum.  
**Muwaganya:** So you said you jumped on a boda, which place in Ggaba did you go?  
**Otim:** I went home first.  
**Muwaganya:** Upon reaching home?  
**Otim:** I was told they were in the hospital.  
**Muwaganya:** Which hospital?  
**Otim:** It's called Wentz Medical Centre.  
**Muwaganya:** What followed?  
**Otim:** There was a lot of security deployment, but I entered the medical centre, and I went and I saw the child.  
**Muwaganya:** Where was your child?  
**Otim:** She was in an emergency room  
**Muwaganya:** In what state was your child?  
**Otim:** Her neck had been cut, and she had died.  
**Muwaganya:** What followed?  
**Otim:** My mother came.  
**Muwaganya:** What is the name of your mother?  
**Otim:** Amono Jackie.  
**Judge:** What is the name of your mother again?  
**Otim:** Amono Jackie  
**Muwaganya:** What happened?  
**Otim:** The bodies were taken to Mulago.  
**Muwaganya:** How many bodies were taken to Mulago?  
**Otim:** All those killed  
**Muwaganya:** Did you get to know the number?  
**Otim:** Yes, they were four.  
**Muwaganya:** Did you go to Mulago?  
**Otim:** Yes, I went there and stayed until I was given the postmortem report.  
**Muwaganya:** What followed?  
**Otim:** After the postmortem, we were



# suspected baby killer starts

given the body. My mother bought a coffin and brought her home in Ggaba.

**Muwaganya:** Where did you take her body?  
**Otim:** Ggaba.  
**Muwaganya:** Whose place?  
**Otim:** At Jjajja's home, who is my mother.

**Muwaganya:** What followed? What happened next?  
**Otim:** We made preparations to go to the village in Gulu for the burial.  
**Muwaganya:** Did you go to the village?  
**Otim:** Yes, we set off on Friday.  
**Muwaganya:** What happened when you reached Gulu?  
**Otim:** We slept, some were very tired, and the burial was the following day.  
**Muwaganya:** So, when was your child buried?  
**Otim:** She was buried on Saturday at midday.  
**Muwaganya:** That is all for this witness. He is available for cross-examination.

**Judge:** Who is doing the cross-examination, Mr Kumbuga?  
**Defence lawyer Richard Kumbuga:** Mr Komakech, I'm a lawyer, and I wish to ask you some questions. So, would I be right to say that you were told your child was dead?  
**Otim:** I told you because I was called while at my workplace. At my workplace, we are not allowed to use our phones.  
**Kumbuga:** Were you told who had killed her?  
**Otim:** No.  
**Kumbuga:** So, will I be right to say this



Red Cross officials attend to a parent who collapsed during the High Court session in Ggaba yesterday.

is the first day you are seeing him today?  
**Otim:** No, because I saw him that fateful day when I jumped on a boda.  
**Kumbuga:** So there was no security as you dropped the children at the gate?  
**Otim:** No, it's the teachers who would receive the children, though on that day, it wasn't me who dropped the child off at school.

**Tragic.**  
So I sloped down and got my child with a cut neck. They had put the body on the verandah of the school and covered it. When I uncovered him, I found that they had cut his

neck.  
**Mr Simon Okurut, witness**

**Kumbuga:** So there was no security?  
**Otim:** No security.  
**Kumbuga:** Since there were many people around that day you were not able to see the accused?  
**Otim:** I saw him, though I didn't know she had been killed from there. When I was at the hospital, I heard people saying Okello had killed the babies.  
**Kumbuga:** Did you see the accused at the hospital?  
**Otim:** I didn't see him.  
**Kumbuga:** At the time you saw that person while on a boda, [had he been arrested]?  
**Otim:** He was on a police patrol car.  
**Kumbuga:** Would I be correct to say that since you were on a boda, you didn't

have sufficient time to observe the accused?  
**Otim:** I was going home on a boda, but when I reached the hospital, I saw him on social media.  
**Kumbuga:** Do you remember how he was dressed?  
**Otim:** I don't remember.  
**Muwaganya:** You said on that fateful day, it wasn't you who brought the child to school?  
**Otim:** Yes, it was my neighbour, called Derrick.  
**Muwaganya:** So, who always dropped the child off at school?  
**Otim:** Sometimes it was me, and sometimes her mother.  
**Judge:** Our sincere condolences, and thank you for coming.  
Lawrence Mbazira, father of Ignatius Sseruyange  
**Judge:** How old are you?  
**Mbazira:** 40 years old.  
Takes oath  
**Anna Kiiza:** Where do you stay?  
**Mbazira:** Ggaba Water  
**Anna Kiiza:** What do you do?  
**Mbazira:** Carpenter.  
**Kiiza:** Where is Sseruyange?  
**Mbazira:** He is deceased.  
**Kiiza:** What happened that day?  
**Mbazira:** At around 7am, the mother, Namiyungo Beth, bathed him, dressed him in sportswear and then took him to school. It's called Ggaba Early Childhood Development Centre.  
While they were leaving, the child said bye to me. The child complained of how I had not responded to his bye, but I told him that I had. And I said bye loudly this time around.

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