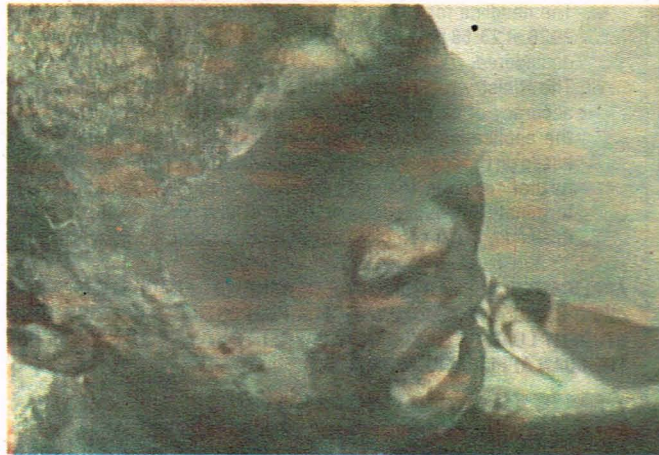


Family appeals for help as Kole arson survivor battles for life



Isaiiah Ariko is currently fighting for his life at Kiruddu National Referral Hospital. PHOTO/COURTESY

BY BILL OKETCH

KOLE. A family in Kole District is appealing for financial support to save the life of a nine-year-old boy who survived a deadly arson attack that killed his younger brother after unknown assailants torched a grass-thatched hut where the children were sleeping.

The tragic incident happened on April 3, 2026, in Teipie Cell, Eastern Ward, Aboke Town Council in Kole.

The two children, identified as Raphael Odongo, 3, and Isaiiah Ariko, 9, had travelled from their uncle's home in late March to visit their grandfather, Mr David Ariko.

According to family members, the children had spent several days peacefully at the

home before tragedy struck.

Unknown attackers reportedly set fire to the hut where the boys were sleeping during the night. Raphael died in the blaze, while Isaiiah sustained severe burns and was rushed to Lira Regional Referral Hospital in critical condition.

He was later referred to Kiruddu National Referral Hospital in Kampala for specialised treatment, where he remains admitted.

Family members say the cost of treatment has become overwhelming.

Their mother, Christine Abongo, who is living with a disability, is unable to meet the medical expenses, while relatives say they have already sold most of their belongings to keep Ariko on treatment.

Mr Andrew Omona, the children's uncle, said the family is struggling to buy medicine

required for Ariko's recovery.

"We've sold almost everything and now we cannot afford the medication anymore," Mr Omona said yesterday.

According to the family, one of the prescribed medicines costs about Shs200,000 per bottle, and they have so far managed to purchase only nine bottles.

The family is now appealing to well-wishers, religious leaders, local authorities and humanitarian organisations for financial assistance.

Anyone willing to support Ariko's treatment can send contributions through mobile money number 0771680746 registered in the names of Andrew Omona.

Police investigations into the suspected arson attack are ongoing, although no arrests had been reported by Sunday.