



## **God is best judge, says grandfather of slain Kasirye**

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Since Joseph Kasirye was murdered on October 27, 2008, his grandfather, Matia Mulondo's home in Kayugi, Mukungwe sub-county in Masaka has remained in a mournful state. At the family cemetery, Kasirye's grave remains un-built because the family hoped that his missing head would one day be recovered and reburied with the rest of the body.

According to Mulondo, those hopes vanished on Friday, April 23 after Justice Moses Mukiibi acquitted Godfrey Kato Kajubi, the man suspected of being in possession of Kasirye's head. "I leave all that to God because he is the best judge. There remains nothing we can do other than asking God to strengthen us, and judge fairly those who killed Kasirye," he said.

The slain boy was the only child that lived with his grandparents; Mulondo and his wife Babiryie. "He was the only one we could send to the shop, or to fetch water from the well. We now have to do everything by ourselves," says Babiryie. A few meters from Mulondo's house is the demolished residence of Umar Kateregga, the witch who confessed to killing the boy and handing the head to Kajubi.

His house was demolished by the residents on learning that Kasirye was killed inside the house. After 16 months in custody, Kajubi walked free on April 23 after Justice Mukiibi ruled that the city businessman had no case to answer. Mukiibi dismissed as "unreliable" evidence by key prosecution witnesses, Kateregga and his wife Mariam Nabukeera. In his one and a half-hour ruling in a fully packed Masaka High Court, Justice Mukiibi said that Kateregga and Nabukeera seem to have told court a pack of lies to clear themselves of the murder of Kasirye.

The judge rejected evidence pointing to communication between Kajubi and Kateregga

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on the night of the murder. The telephone printout from MTN had been presented as evidence to pin Kajubi, but Justice Mukibi said that prosecution failed to prove that the phone calls had any connection to the murder of the boy.

The judgment, however, left Kasirye's family feeling wounded. "The wound was beginning to heal, but we were stabbed again. So we are planning to celebrate Holy Mass around the second week of May in memory of our departed son. We want to ask God to comfort and strengthen us in this trying moment and to ask Him to take over this matter now that we are left with no one to turn to for redress," says Babirye.

"It is now clear that the poor will never get justice. Since they have chosen to free [Kajubi], they should also set free the others (Kateregga and Nabukeera)," added Mulondo. What baffles this old man is court's refusal to accept Kateregga's confession that he killed the boy at the urging of Kajubi to whom he handed the missing head.

"The man (Kateregga) said it clearly that it is Kato Kajubi who took the head, (and the other missing body parts), why doesn't court want to believe him?" Mulondo asked. His village mates, who say they had lost confidence in the Police and Judiciary, echo similar sentiments. Anthony Mubiru puts all the blame on the Police, he claims mishandled investigations. "This was not the first case [of child sacrifice] nor was it the second. Unfortunately, they have let the man walk free. Shame on this government, it has betrayed us," said Zaverio Mukasa.

The 12-year-old Kasirye was killed on October 27, 2008 in a suspected ritual murder and his beheaded body was recovered from a swamp the following day, after Kateregga led Police to the scene. Kateregga then told the Police that the missing body parts had been taken by a business man whom he later named as Godfrey Kato Kajubi. Kajubi first hid and later handed himself over to Police in Kampala on November 5, 2008. He was transferred to Masaka, a week later to face murder charges.

Kajubi was at first jointly charged with Kateregga and Nabukeera but the Director of Public Prosecutions dropped charges against Kateregga and Nabukeera who turned

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into prosecution witnesses. But Justice Mukiibi refused to admit their evidence, saying the witnesses should be the ones to face murder charges.