

'Bishop' to face High Court trial over alleged sodomy

Reuben Turyasingura allegedly forced himself on a 21-year-old barber.

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A born-again church bishop accused of forcibly sodomising a male barber has been committed to the High Court for trial after police concluded investigations into the alleged offence.

Reuben Turyasingura, 45, the bishop of Serenity Foundation Ministries in western Uganda, was yesterday sent to the High Court by Buganda Road Chief Magistrate Ritah Neumbe Kidasa to answer charges of homosexuality.

The summary of evidence presented in court by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) states that Turyasingura allegedly forced himself on a 21-year-old barber at his residence in Kukululu Zone, Kawempe Division, Kampala.

Court records indicate that the bishop met the victim, whose identity this publication has withheld due to stigma surrounding homosexuality cases in Uganda, at a salon in Kukululu Zone, where the young man offered shaving, scrubbing, and massage services.

The prosecutors say the two later became acquaintances after the bishop frequently visited the salon, eventually convincing the barber to start offering services from his home for better pay.

The indictment states that on December 28 last year, Turyasingura informed the barber that he would be travelling from his village in Rukiga District and would arrive late in Kampala, and allegedly asked the barber to escort him to his residence, a request the victim accepted.

The prosecutors further say the victim met the bishop at Kitaka stage in Kawempe around midnight before proceeding to the accused's home, where they reportedly found the bishop's shamba boy, identified as Brian Mwesigwa.

"They both proceeded to the bedroom where Mwesigwa served them tea," part of the indictment states.



Reuben Turyasingura in the dock at Buganda Road Magistrate's Court yesterday. PHOTO/ JULIET KIGONGO

The prosecution alleges that the bishop then requested the barber to become his sexual partner and promised to pay him Shs20 million, but the young man declined.

"Upon refusal of his advances, the accused forcefully grabbed the victim and performed a sexual act with him in his anus," the prosecution further states.

Fearing stigma

Court documents indicate that the victim did not immediately raise an alarm because he feared the stigma and embarrassment that would follow, since he was known in the area.

The prosecution further alleges that the victim attempted to leave the room but found the door locked, managing to exit later when the shamba boy opened the house for cleaning.

The incident reportedly came to light the following day when the victim failed to report to work at the salon, prompting a friend to search for him.

The barber later was advised to report the matter to the police. A case was filed at Kikaya Police Station and later transferred to Kira Road Police Station.

The victim was medically examined using Police Form 3, which reportedly showed bruises and a laceration in

WHAT LAW SAYS

Uganda's law on homosexuality is governed by the Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023, which criminalises same-sex relations and related activities. Same-sex sexual acts carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, while aggravated homosexuality may attract the death penalty upon conviction. The law also criminalises the promotion of homosexuality, including advocacy, funding organisations that support LGBTQ rights, and public campaigns considered to normalise same-sex relations. In April 2024, the Constitutional Court declined to nullify the law entirely but struck down several provisions, including those criminalising failure to report homosexual acts and provisions relating to premises.

the anus. Prosecutors say the barber also complained of pain in his waist and back following the alleged assault. Police later visited the scene and reportedly recovered several items, including a 200ml bottle of olive oil with yellow liquid, a blue towel and mobile phones.

Turyasingura was arrested and charged with homosexuality, an offence he denies. The prosecution further states that medical examination confirmed the accused is of sound mind and HIV positive.

Prosecutors say they intend to rely on several pieces of evidence during the trial, including the complainant's medical report, a search certificate dated December 30, a sketch plan of the scene, an exhibit slip dated December 31, 2025, and the medical report of the accused.

The court remanded Turyasingura to Luzira Prison pending the next convenient criminal session of the High Court, where he will stand trial.

"Whereupon, prosecution shall contend that the accused person (Bishop Turyasingura) had no lawful excuse for his actions and pray that he is convicted as indicted," the DPP states in the summary of evidence.