

The children also want court to order a fair and reasonable distribution of their father's estate among all his 12 children.

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

A family dispute over the estate of the late former Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) boss and prominent lawyer Chris John Bakiza has escalated to the High Court of Uganda Family Division, where several of his children are contesting the validity of his Will and suing their stepmother, Robinah Mbabazi.

In court documents filed before the Family Division of the High Court, a number of Bakiza's children, some represented by their mothers because they are minors, argue that the Will fails to make reasonable provision for several of the deceased's young dependents.

"The plaintiffs contest the validity of the said Will and codicil and have filed the present suit for a declaration that the purported Will of February 1, 2021, and codicil of July 2023 do not express the true last wishes of the late Chris John Bakiza," the children state in the court documents.

"Our father left behind many children who deserve equal treatment," one of the plaintiffs stated in the court filings. "The current arrangement does not reflect fairness, particularly for the younger children who still depend on the estate for education and upkeep."

The plaintiffs asked the court to declare that the Will does not adequately

Ex-CID boss' children contest his will, sue stepmother over Shs1b

provide for the maintenance and education of three minor children. They are also seeking an order compelling the estate to ensure equal and fair payment of school fees, scholastic materials, and general upkeep for five school-going children.

Other prayers

Additionally, the children want the court to order a fair and reasonable distribution of their father's estate among all his 12 children.

The suit also raises concerns about the management of the estate and the conduct of the current executors of the Will, who are listed among the defendants.

The plaintiffs argue that the executors are unfit to continue managing the estate and ask the court to remove them. They want new executors appointed from among the plaintiffs or other suitable persons to administer the estate.

Alternatively, they propose that three of Bakiza's children be appointed as co-executors alongside the current administrators to ensure transparency in the management of the estate.

The children are also seeking general damages, legal costs, and any other remedies the court may deem appropriate.

The dispute has also drawn in Bakiza's widow and her children, whom the children accuse of interfering with the estate.



Chris Bakiza, a former Director of Criminal Investigations Directorate. PHOTO/COURTESY

According to the court filings, tensions within the family began even before Bakiza's death. The children claim that during his final illness, which involved a painful throat and mouth hence seeking medical help in several hospitals, including the Cancer Institute at Mulago,

and India, communication with him was controlled by Ms Mbabazi, limiting their ability to speak with him.

After Bakiza's death, disagreements intensified over money, property, and the handling of estate assets, allegations that have also resulted in criminal proceedings.

"The 1st defendant in particular has since transferred all the deceased's vehicles; Town ace registration number UBE548G, Noah registration no. UAY995Q, and a double cabin regis-

tration No UBF267K to her personal names, and withdrawn sums of money amounting to over Shs70m from the deceased's private bank account in Stanbic Bank, Metro branch," the court documents read in part.

The children also claim that in the application for probate, their stepmother deliberately under-declared and misrepresented the value of their father's estate to be worth Shs100m, and yet in actual sense, it is estimated to be worth Shs1b.

ABOUT THE CASE

According to the deceased's will of February 1, 2021, some of his properties he indicated to have left behind include: matrimonial home in Kyadondo for his wife Robinah Mbabazi, house at Semawata Road, Ntinda which was retained for commercial purposes of raising children's fees, family house in Mushenyi Village in Kabale, land at Katuna, Kabubu-Gayaza, Namayovu-Mityana, Nalumunye, and Njagi. Two pieces of land in Busiro, four plots of land Kindeke-Kiboga, farm land at Kyamakola in Kiboga, cows and goats at Kiboga farm, four vehicles, private gun which he bequeathed to his

heir, and a law firm. Earlier, some of the elder children had dragged their stepmother to court, accusing her of intermeddling in the estate.

Last November, the Buganda Road Court appointed retired Supreme Court of Uganda Judge Paul Mugamba to mediate the dispute between the children and Ms Mbabazi. Then Chief Magistrate Ronald Kayizzi directed that the matter be handled through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) after Ms Mbabazi requested mediation to resolve the conflict amicably out of court.

But the children now claim the mediation process has stalled. The case is yet to be fixed for hearing.