

the deaths of Gideon Eteku, Keisha Agenorwoth Otim, Ignitius Sseruyange, and Ryan Odeke were confirmed through post-mortem examinations.

The report indicated that the children died of hypovolemic shock resulting

Muwaganya submitted that intent could be inferred from the nature of the weapon—a kitchen knife—the targeted body part (neck), and the severity of the injuries

On participation, the prosecution cited both direct and circumstantial evidence placing Okello at the scene, including DNA evidence linking him to

He further told the court that Okello, upon arrest, appeared aware of the gravity of his actions and their potential legal consequences—an indication,

ing, determining whether Okello can be convicted or acquitted of the four counts of murder.

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KAMPALA. The defence team in the high-profile Ggaba daycare murder trial last evening asked the High Court to acquit the prime suspect, Christopher Okello Onyum, arguing that he was mentally ill at the time of the alleged crimes.

In final submissions delivered before Justice Alice Komuhangi Khaukha, defence lawyer Richard Kumbuga maintained that convicting his client would amount to finding an innocent person guilty.

Mr Kumbuga anchored his argument on Section 11 of the Penal Code Act, which absolves a suspect of criminal responsibility if it is proven that they were suffering from a mental illness at the time of committing the offence.

"This court should come to the conclusion that the fact that he was found with medication at the time of arrest is a sign that he had a mental challenge; in case this court finds him guilty, it is to find an innocent person guilty," Mr

Kumbuga submitted.

"This might be erroneous, and dangerous to a legal profession, and worrying to the families that have people with such challenges," he added.

The defence told the court that between 2016 and 2025, Okello reportedly experienced episodes of mental illness, including hallucinations, suicide attempts, and violent behaviour. His brother, who testified as a defence witness, said the accused had previously spent eight to nine months receiving treatment at Butabika National Referral Mental Hospital. Counsel further argued that the accused suffers from schizophrenia, a severe condition that disrupts a person's thinking, emotions, and perception of reality.

The defence also relied on testimony from Dr Emmanuel Nuwamanya, a police surgeon, who told the court that individuals with intermittent mental episodes can still engage in routine trans-

actions during periods of stability.

This, Mr Kumbuga said, explains prosecution evidence showing Okello carrying out activities such as hiring a vehicle and making mobile money transactions, including sending Shs195,000

to the daycare director before the incident.

He also raised questions about the prosecution's case, pointing to the lack of security guards at the daycare, non-functional CCTV cameras at a neighbouring building at the time of the killings, and unclear video footage allegedly placing the accused on a boda boda heading to the scene.

Additionally, the defence suggested that underlying health conditions such as sickle cell disease due to chronic pain and heavy medication, could contribute to mental instability.

Mr Kumbuga further questioned why the accused, who had been renting a house in Kyanja, was later found living on the streets, arguing that such behaviour was consistent with someone battling mental illness.

When asked by the judge whether Okello was responsible for the killings, the defence lawyer declined to give a di-

Lawyers ask court to acquit Okello as ruling date set

DEFENCE ARGUMENTS

- Defence argues Okello Onyum was mentally ill
- Alleged episodes of mental illness between 2016 and 2025.
- Drugs found on the accused at arrest cited as indication of mental health treatment.
- Said video evidence placing accused near scene is unclear.
- Claimed accused's shift from rented home in Kyanja to living on the streets supports mental health deterioration.

rect answer.

"My lord, allow me to stop here and allow the court to determine who participated in the crime," he said.

Okello is facing four counts of murder arising from the alleged fatal stabbing of four toddlers at Ggaba Early Childhood Development Programme on April 2. The victims were identified as Gideon Eteku, Keisha Agenorwoth Otim, Ignitius Sseruyange, and Ryan Odeke.

The children, aged between one and two-and-a-half years, were under the care of the daycare centre at the time of the attack.

Okello has since denied all the charges, which, on conviction, carry a maximum penalty of death by hanging.

Justice Komuhangi last evening set Thursday to deliver judgment in the case, bringing to a close a trial that has drawn widespread public attention over the brutal killing of four toddlers.