

By Barbra Kabahumuza

Tears rolled down the cheeks of the relatives of six people, who were sentenced to eight months in jail for spraying harmful chemicals on meat and fish meant for sale.

Yesterday, City Hall Court Grade One Magistrate Beatrice Kainza passed the sentence after the accused were convicted by court on their plea of guilty.

The accused pleaded guilty to the offense of causing a nuisance by spraying harmful chemicals on the meat and fish that they sell to the public in order to kill and deter away flies.

While passing the sentence, the magistrate noted that the suspects' actions put the lives of innocent members of public in danger and, therefore, deserved a long custodial sentence to deter others from committing the same crime.

The convicts are Erias Kafumba, Isa Ssenoga, Isma Mutebi, Umar Kalyango, Baker Mulondo and Ibrahim Ssekitto. They were arrested last week from areas of Nakasero, Nakulabye and Ntinda Markets in an operation carried out by Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) health and law enforcement officers on dirty butchers.

The sentence comes after magistrate Kainza declined to re-read the charges for the accused, who wanted to change their plea, saying they did not understand the charges when they were first read to them on Friday, last week.

On the same day, the suspects told the magistrate that they had understood the charges read to them and went ahead to negotiate for lenient sentences.

"If you are dissatisfied with my ruling, you have a right to appeal

Butchers jailed for spraying harmful chemicals on meat



Meat operators appearing before the Kampala Capital City Authority Court listening to the Magistrate reading their charges. Photo by Wilfred Sanya

against the sentence before the High Court within 14 days," she advised.

However, butchers in Kampala, led by Steven Katambula, said they are

dissatisfied with the sentence, which they described as unfair.

The closure operation comes in the wake of a detailed *Saturday Vision*

investigation which revealed that most of the butchers, especially those dealing in meat, chicken and also fish and grasshopper vendors were using

BETWEEN THE LINES:

The butchers' action has been exacerbated by the lack of a proper monitoring mechanism from the bodies tasked with supervising, such as KCCA, Ministry of Health, agriculture ministry and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards.

unregulated preservatives on old products they are selling as fresh.

The four-week investigation revealed that the practice has been exacerbated by lack of a monitoring mechanism from bodies tasked with supervising, such as KCCA, Ministry of Health, the agriculture ministry and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards.

Meanwhile, during a meeting, the KCCA acting director of health services, Daniel Okello, said they had discovered that the chemicals were accessible at any outlet in Kampala.

He revealed that KCCA combined efforts with the National Drug Authority, agriculture ministry and UNBS to ensure that the chemicals are not off shelves.