

# 10 held over early marriage

**KATAKWI**

**By Emmanuel Opio**

Katakwi Police have arrested 10 people for alleged involvement in the marriage of a 15-year-old girl.

Peter Oduko, the officer in charge of Katakwi Police Station, said the arrest was executed after a tip off from one of the concerned residents in the village.

Oduko noted that the 10 were arrested in Africa village, Abela parish in Katakwi district during the girl's 'wedding' on Monday.

"The culprits, who included the couple and parents, will appear before court" Oduko said. He explained that the girl is a Primary Five pupil at Abela Primary School.

However, the father of the girl denied all the allegations, saying the person who reported him to the Police had an intention to tarnish his name.

According to him, the girl is 18 years old and in Primary Six. He added that he would never marry her off at a younger age. Other suspects arrested refuted the allegations, saying they were just visiting the girl's home when the Police pounced on them.

Reports of defilement and early marriages are on the rise, something Police blame on low vigilance by the local council leaders in villages. Recently, Betty Ikareut, the senior probation officer of Katakwi, challenged parents to partner with the Police to protect children, especially girls, against early marriages.