

Chemical spray on beef: Suspects seek fresh plea



In the dock. Suspects who were arrested in connection with spraying meat with chemicals at KCCA court yesterday. PHOTO BY ABUBAKER LUBOWA

Change of mind. The suspects had in their first appearance in court pleaded guilty to one count in connection with using chemicals to preserve meat.

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KAMPALA. Six butcher men who were recently arrested in a swoop by Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) health and law enforcement officers for allegedly spraying beef with unidentified chemicals as a way of preserving it, were yesterday brought back to court and requested that their charges be read to them afresh.

The suspects, who appeared before City Hall Court, had at

their first appearance in court on Friday last week pleaded guilty to one count of causing nuisance in connection with the alleged spraying of beef and fish in their butchers with chemicals to chase away flies.

The court had, to that effect, set yesterday as the date it would pass its verdict, but they instead asked court to read to them the charges afresh.

The suspects are; Erias Kafumba, Isa Ssenoga, Isma Mutebi, Umar Kalyango, Baker Mulondo and Ibrahim Ssekitto.

The suspects' request was objected to by state attorney Hillary Musimenta, who submitted that the accused have no genuine reason to move court to read to them the

charges afresh.

"Your worship, last Friday, the charges were read to these people in English and translation was made to them in Luganda, a language they claimed to understand so very well before they consciously pleaded guilty. Their seeking court to read back the charges to them, in my view, is a wastage of court's time," Mr Musimenta submitted.

Presiding magistrate Beatrice Khainza opted to further remand the suspects to Luzira prison until today when she will give her ruling on whether to accept their request and have the charges read to them afresh or not.

Last week, the same court

sentenced two men to pay a fine of Shs100,000 or serve a week in jail upon pleading guilty to similar charges. They opted for a fine and were released.

The suspects were Joseph Kayondo, a fish monger and Willy Ssekabira, a butcher, both residents of Kisaasi, a Kampala suburb.

At the time of their arrest, KCCA thought the suspects used formalin, a chemical that is used to preserve dead bodies to preserve beef. They have since come out to clarify that it was not formalin but some chemical called tsunami, which is equally dangerous to human lives.

LUKWAGO SPEAKS OUT

Technical wing on the spot. Meanwhile, Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago and KCCA councillors yesterday tasked KCCA's technical wing to explain why there are many butcheries operating within the city without the approval of the institution's public health department. "How come the reports about preserving meat with chemicals were first reported in the media yet we have a full directorate of public health? Does KCCA even supervise how these animals are slaughtered and the different butcheries they are taken to for sale?" Mr Lukwago asked.