

National News

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Murdered Entebbe couple's children given burial rights

The court upheld the requests of the couple's immediate family over cultural considerations.

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

The Family Division of the High Court has ruled that the biological children of an Entebbe couple who were murdered last year at their residence in Nakiwoogo, Entebbe have the final say on how and where their parents will be laid to rest.

That brings an end to a protracted family dispute that has delayed burial for more than nine months.

In her ruling dated April 20, Justice Celia Nagawa held that Mr Mark Kabenge Mutaaga and Ms Isabella Najjita Mutaaga, as the closest relatives to the deceased, have the paramount right to determine the mode and place of disposal of the remains of their parents, David Mutaaga and Deborah Mutaaga.

"This is by virtue of their position as the biological children of the deceased," Justice Nagawa ruled.

The decision follows a bitter disagreement between the children, who favour cremation and burial in Switzerland,



The late Mark Kabenge Mutaaga and the late Isabella Najjita Mutaaga.
PHOTO/FILE

BURIAL DELAYS

Court records show that the remains of the couple have been preserved at A-Plus Funeral Home in Mengo since their killing on July 6, 2025. Records further showed that the prolonged delay has caused "undeniable anguish" to both sides of the family. The bodies of the couple were initially taken to KCCA Mortuary before being transferred to the private facility at the request of family members. Storage costs have since been met by the extended family through a coordinated contribution arrangement.

and members of the extended family, who had insisted on a customary burial in Naggalabi, Buddo, in line with Buganda cultural norms.

At the centre of the objection was Mr Steven Sendagire Seruwagi Ssengaluma, a clan leader, who argued that as a relative and cultural head, he had a duty to ensure that Mr Mutaaga, a member of the Nvuma clan, was buried at the ancestral home in accordance with Kiganda customs.

However, the court found that while cultural considerations are important, they do not override the rights of the deceased's immediate family, particularly their children, who demonstrated the closest personal relationship during the couple's lifetime.

Background to the dispute

The late David and Deborah Mutaaga were both Swiss citizens who had spent about three decades living and working in Switzerland before returning to Uganda permanently after retirement.

They settled in Nakiwoogo, Entebbe, where they lived for about four to five years prior to their deaths. The couple was married in Uganda in 1988 and had two children, both currently based in Europe.

Following their killing, now under police investigation registered as Entebbe CRB No. 747/2025, a family meeting held on July 17, 2025, agreed to delay burial until investigations progressed and suspects were apprehended.

However, in December 2025, the children, through their lawyers, sought clearance from the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) to cremate the remains and repatriate them to Switzerland. This move was opposed by the clan leadership, prompting a formal objection and eventually a court case to resolve the impasse.

With the court's decision, the children are now expected to proceed with their preferred arrangements, potentially paving the way for the long-delayed burial.

Meanwhile, police investigations into the brutal murder of the couple are ongoing, with no publicly identified suspects to date.