

Allow me bury my wife, NUP's Waiswa asks CJ

Family members said the mother of four died in the early hours of Wednesday after her condition deteriorated following a four-year fight with cancer.

BY DERRICK WANDERA

Remanded National Unity Platform (NUP) deputy spokesperson Alex Waiswa Mufumbiro has written to the Chief Justice Flavien Zelijja, seeking temporary release from prison to enable him to attend the burial of his wife, Edith Katende Mufumbiro.

His wife died yesterday after a prolonged battle with breast cancer.

In an April 8 letter addressed to the office of the Chief Justice, Mr Mufumbiro appealed for temporary release to fulfil what he described as his late wife's final wish.

"With great sadness, I have learnt of the passing of my dear wife Edith Katende, who has been battling cancer for a considerable time... In the final days of her illness, as her condition deteriorated and it became clear that she would not recover, Edith, in the presence of my family members, expressed her last and most earnest wish; that I be by her side and that I be permitted to lay her to rest," the letter reads in part.

It added: "It is for this reason that I have decided to appeal to your office for my temporary release. I pray that you entreat the Chief Magistrate, Kawempe Chief Magistrate's Court, and the Grade One Magistrate as their supervisor, to grant me bail to be able to bury my wife."

Mr Frank Baine, the prison spokesperson, yesterday said there are no laws permitting them as Prisons to release suspects on remand to bury their loved ones.

"You are not allowed to bury, and there is no law that provides for that, and we have never done it. But at least he has asked the court, and the court can decide on that matter. For us, our role is to keep him," Mr Baine said.

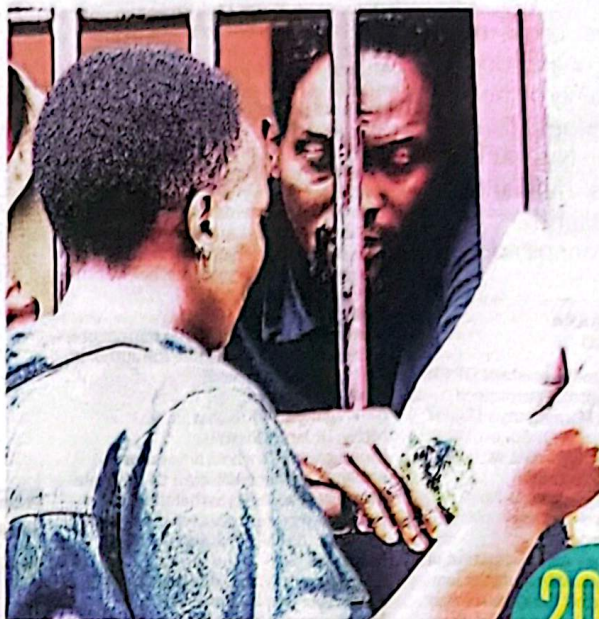
He further stated that the only options that Mr Mufumbiro has are to seek bail and have him released so that he can bury his wife, or have the laws amended to allow suspects on remand to be released to bury their loved ones.

In an emotional account of their final conversation, Mr Mufumbiro recalled the last phone call he had with his wife last Thursday afternoon, days before her death at Platinum Hospital in Kampala.

"In our last call, my wife asked whether that was going to be the last call I would give her. I told her that I would call back, but for sure that was the very last call I had with her," he said.

Family members said the mother of four died in the early hours of Wednesday after her condition deteriorated following a four-year fight with cancer that intensified over the last year.

Mr Mufumbiro said he had hoped to speak to her again on Monday or Tuesday after the Easter break, but that opportunity never came.



NUP leader Alex Waiswa speaks to wife Edith Mufumbiro (left) when he was produced at court last September. PHOTO/IBRA-HIM KAVUMA

on Wednesday, I asked her how she was feeling, and she said she was fine. But I could clearly see that she was not fine," he said.

Family members said Katende's health

worsened on Friday night, prompting an emergency rush to the hospital.

"We first went to Uganda Cancer Institute, but found the hospital overwhelmed with numbers. We turned around and went to Platinum Hospital. She was put on oxygen, but it was too late," Mr Kenneth Kato Mufumbiro, the deceased's brother-in-law, said.

Relatives said the deceased began experiencing discomfort in her left breast shortly after her wedding to Mr Mufumbiro in 2022 at Busabala Beach. Although initial screenings ruled out cancer, the symptoms persisted and escalated after she gave birth the following year, when she was eventually diagnosed with breast cancer.

One of Mr Mufumbiro's lawyers, Mr Elias Nalukoola, said the request for temporary release remains at the discretion of the courts handling the cases against him.

He added that Mr Mufumbiro has on several occasions applied for bail without success.

"We are operating under abnormal situations because these people should have been given mandatory bail after the number of days on remand elapsed. Let's wait and see because we have already taken different steps," he said.

A requiem service is scheduled for this morning at Namirembe Cathedral in Kampala City before the body is taken to the family home in Mutungo.

Tomorrow, the body will be taken to church in Luzira before being transported to Luuka District, where burial is scheduled for this Saturday.

PRAYER



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Alex Waiswa to Chief Justice Zelijja Flavien.



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