

National News

Family members recount Nakimuli's last moments

Nakimuli's sister said the legislator had expressed confidence that she would survive the surgical procedure.

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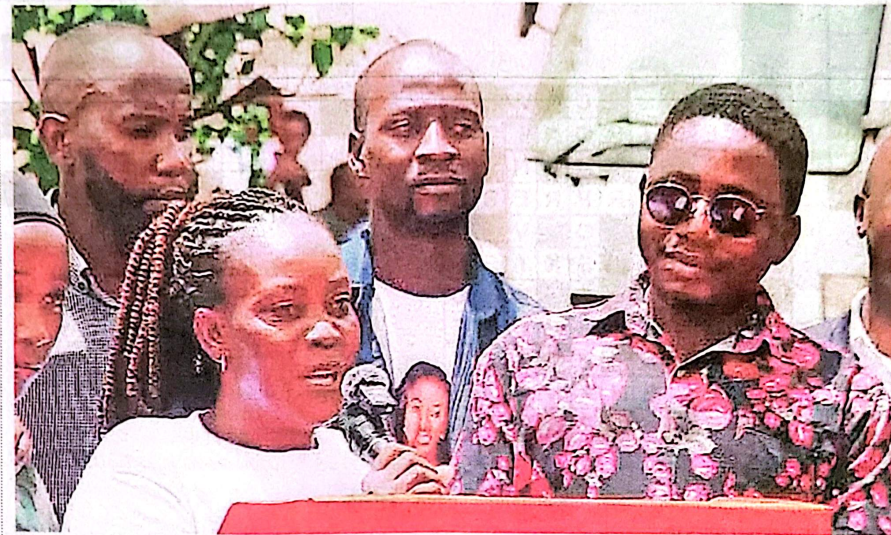
The late Kalangala District Woman Member of Parliament, Helen Nakimuli, remained resolute in the face of illness until her final moments, her family has revealed. Speaking during a special sitting of the Kalangala District Council convened in her honour on Tuesday, Nakimuli's sister and caretaker Irene Nampala said the legislator expressed confidence that she would survive the operation that ultimately claimed her life.

"We spoke shortly before she was taken to theatre. She assured me she would come back strong and better; unfortunately, that was not to be," Ms Nampala said.

Nakimuli had been battling fibroids and had initially scheduled surgery for January. However, the procedure was postponed to allow her participate in the 2026 General Election campaigns. According to family members, doctors advised that her condition could be managed temporarily with medication until after the elections.

Ms Nampala said the legislator remained active despite the pain and drove herself to hospital on Monday for the rescheduled surgery. She later died following the procedure.

By press time yesterday, the family said it was still awaiting the postmortem report from Alexander Medical



Ms Irene Nampala, the sister of Helen Nakimuli, speaks alongside other family members during the district council session on Tuesday. PHOTO/DAVID SEKAYINGA

Centre in Kampala, where the surgery was conducted.

Nakimuli's father, Fr Christopher Walusimbi, an Orthodox priest, struggled to hold back tears as he addressed mourners, urging them to remain hopeful despite the loss.

"I have lost five children out of the 11 that God gave me, with the first dying at the age of five," he said. "We should not lose hope because not all seeds we sow germinate as we wish. I thank God for enabling Helen to accomplish her mission in life," he added.

Fr Walusimbi described

his daughter as a dedicated leader who served both Kalangala District and the country with commitment. He also appealed for calm among residents, particularly regarding discussions about her successor in Parliament.

"I still have many children with good morals and strong character," he said, gesturing towards other family members. "The people of Kalangala should not be worried," he added.

His remarks followed calls by some leaders within the National Unity Platform (NUP) suggesting that the family could front a suitable candidate to replace the fallen legislator.

During the council session, district leaders paid tribute to Nakimuli's service and unanimously passed a motion recognising her contribution to local development.

Kalangala District chairperson Rajab Ssemakula conveyed condolences on behalf of the district leadership and called for transparency regarding the circumstances surrounding her death.

"We commend Hon Nakimuli for her dedicated service to the people of Kalangala and Uganda at large," Mr Ssemakula said. "We stand with the family in this difficult time and call for the release of the postmortem report," he added.

The council also resolved to honour the late legislator by naming sev-

BACKGROUND

Nakimuli died on April 19 at Alexander Medical Centre in Kampala following what family members described as a failed surgery. She is remembered for her steadfast leadership and dedication to improving the livelihoods of the people of Kalangala.

eral public facilities after her, including Lukuba Road, the Kalangala Town Council playground, and the women's ward at Kalangala Health Centre IV.

Members of Parliament, including Moses Kabusu, Francis Zaake, Theodore Ssekikubo, Gorreti Namugga, and Betty Ethel Naluyima, pledged to push for a thorough investigation into her death.

"We shall demand answers regarding the circumstances of her death," one of the legislators said.

"We also urge the district council to push government to fulfil her dream of establishing a skilling centre in Kalangala," the MP added.

The proposed skilling centre among Nakimuli's flagship initiatives aimed at empowering youth in the island district.

National Unity Platform leaders also praised her political legacy. Ms Flavia Nabagabe, the head of the party's women's league, described Nakimuli as a bold leader who championed accountability and women's rights. "We shall mobilise our members to ensure her vision continues," Ms Nabagabe said.

The party's acting president, Dr Lina Zedra, urged leaders in Kalangala to emulate the late MP's character and commitment to service.

"Let her life inspire you to build a stronger and more vibrant Kalangala," she said.

On behalf of the government, Resident District Commissioner Fred Badda said plans were underway to establish a technical institute in the district, a project Nakimuli had consistently advocated for.

Later in the day, the body was transported from Kalangala Island to Kampala ahead of funeral arrangements, including a special parliamentary sitting held yesterday.

