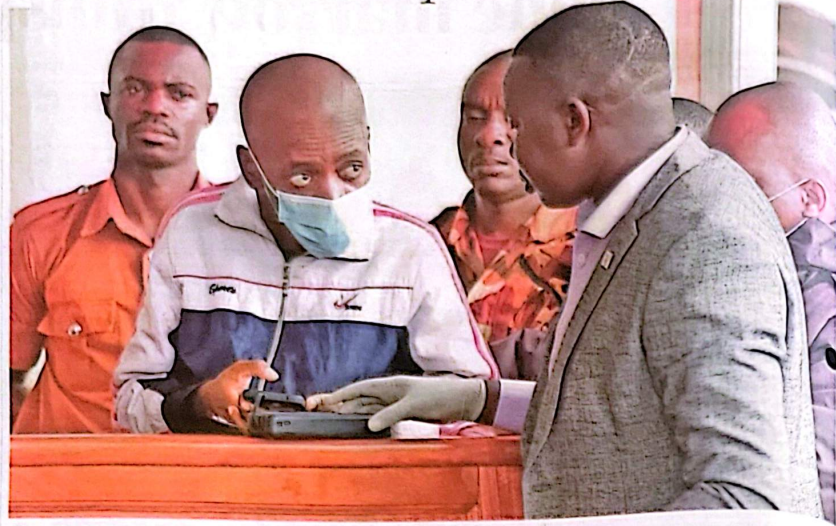


I didn't intentionally cause death

On Friday, Christopher Okello Onyum took to the witness stand to defend himself against four counts of murder allegedly committed at a daycare centre in Ggaba on April 2. He delivered a testimony marked by long pauses and a largely disjointed flow as he urged the court presided over by Justice Alice Komuhangi Khaukha to dismiss the charges, arguing that the prosecution had failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that he had the intent to kill the four victims. Below is a slightly abridged version of how the proceedings unfolded in the court.



The accused, Christopher Okello Onyum, consults his lawyer during a court session. PHOTO: ABUBAKER LUBOWA

BY JULIE KIGONGO
& ANTHONY WESAKA

Richard Kumbuga (Okello's lawyer): Two witnesses are present in court.

Justice Alice Komuhangi Khaukha: What is your name?

Okello: Aaaaaa... My lord, my name is Christopher Okello Onyum.

Judge: How old are you, Mr Onyum?

Okello: Aaaaaa, I am 39 years old, my lord.

Judge: Okello, I'm going to read through the charges again, and I want you to listen carefully. This time, you're not pleading to them, but I want you to refresh your mind so that you know what you are talking about. You are charged with four counts of murder, and the first count is murder, contrary to sections 171 and 172 of the Penal Code Act, Cap 128.

The particulars of this offence are that you, Christopher Okello Onyum, on April 2, 2026, at Ggaba Early Childhood Development Centre, Ggaba Trading Centre, Ggaba Parish in Makindye Division, Kampala District, with malice aforethought, you unlawfully caused the death of Eteku Gideon. Have you understood this count?

Okello: Yes, my lord.

Judge: The second count is also another charge of murder contrary to Section 171 and 172 of the Penal Code Act, Cap 128.

The particulars of this offence are that you, Christopher Okello Onyum, on April 2, 2026, at Ggaba Early Childhood Development Centre, Ggaba Trading Centre, Ggaba Parish in Makindye

Division, Kampala District, with malice aforethought, you unlawfully caused the death of Keisha Apenoroth. You have understood that as well?

Okello: Yes, yes, my lord.

Judge: Still another count, the third count is murder contrary to Section 171 and 172 of the Penal Code Act, Cap 128. The particulars of this offence are that you, Christopher Okello Onyum, on April 2, 2026, at Ggaba Early Childhood Development Centre, Ggaba Parish in Makindye Division, Kampala District, with malice aforethought, you unlawfully caused the death of Ignatius Seeranyange. Have you understood that?

Okello: Aaaaaa yes, yes, my lord, I have understood.

Judge: Okay, and the last one is also murder contrary to Section 171 and 172 of the Penal Code Act, Cap 128.

The particulars of this offence are that you, Christopher Okello Onyum, on April 2, 2026, at Ggaba Early Childhood Development Centre, Ggaba Trading Centre, Ggaba Parish in Makindye Division, Kampala District, with malice aforethought, you unlawfully caused the death of Ryan Odeke. Have you understood that?

Okello: Yes, my lord, I have understood that.

Judge: I will now hand over to your lawyers to lead you through the preliminaries, and then afterwards, you will tell your story uninterrupted.

Richard Kumbuga: Mr Okello, can you tell this honourable court your full name?

Okello: Aaaa, yes, my lord, and my name is Christopher Okello Onyum.

Kumbuga: How old are you?
Okello: I am 39 years old, my lord.
Kumbuga: What work do you do?
Okello: I am a farmer, my lord.

Kumbuga: Where do you do your farm work?
Okello: In Nwya District.

Kumbuga: Where were you staying before you were arrested?
Okello: My lord, before I was arrested, I was living in Kyanja.

Kumbuga: Which village in Kyanja?
Okello: I don't know, my lord, the village.

Kumbuga: Are you a Ugandan citizen?
Okello: No, no, my lord, I'm not.

Kumbuga: So, what is your nation?
Okello: My lord, I am an American citizen.

Kumbuga: Ok, before you became an American citizen, did you have any other citizenship either by origin or by birth?
Okello: Yes, my lord, by birth, I was a Ugandan.

Kumbuga: Before this honourable court, they have read for you four counts of murder. Now the court demands that you give your account of those four counts. Can you please begin with the date you were arrested?

Judge: In addition to the counts, you sat through the proceedings, and you listened to all their evidence. So from their evidence, the court requires that you give an explanation in light of the evidence that has been adduced against you. So you can now start.

Okello: I have my notes. Can I read them?

Judge: Yes, please go ahead. You heard the evidence, what do you say in your defence?

What he says. The charges should not stand because the prosecution produced evidence of a charge and a caution statement and a plain statement, while it was said that I confessed to killing the children deliberately, but my lord, I was made to make that statement by force because I was not allowed to raise questions about what they were doing," Christopher Okello, accused

Okello: I have to say I am not guilty of the four counts because I was not intentional. I did not intentionally cause the death of the four children. I have another explanation; I could explain in another way how the children died, and yet I did not do so intentionally. So I am going to say to my lord that I did not do it intentionally.

The charges should not stand because the prosecution produced evidence of a charge and a caution statement and a plain statement, while it was said that I confessed to killing the children deliberately, but my lord, I was made to make that statement by force because I was not allowed to raise questions about what they were doing.

Judge: Yes, Mr Onyum, let's proceed.

Okello: So my lord, the prosecution's

prayer that I be convicted on the four counts of murder should not be honoured because they did not make examination, my lord. They could have done or should have done better to show the court that they were intentional/deliberate in killing the four children. So here I contend that they said that I did it deliberately, but my lord the defence thinks that, taking together all the evidence, it does not support the claim that I killed the four children deliberately, and it doesn't seem to me that it can hold. So my lord our defence...

Judge: Actually, it is not our defence, it is your defence...

Okello: Oh yeah... So my lord many claims were raised that I was completely fine mentally and yet my lord it is impossible; they were other kinds of mental challenges that could have gone undetected perhaps and contributed to the death of the four children.

So my lord, the defence contends that it may be not be concluded yet that I was completely mentally fine to the extent that I would have contributed to the death of the four children.

Judge: Yes, Mr Okello is still waiting for you. Do you have anything else you would want to tell this court, or is that all?

Okello: Oh yes, my lord, I still have what to say. So my lord, the prosecution...

Judge: Yes, Mr Okello, first, repeat what you said?

Okello: So my lord, the prosecution's

of the four children, says Okello

Okello: From what point, my lord?

Judge: Ok, I wrote that it is possible there are other signs of mental illness that were not detected that may have led to the death of the four children...

Okello: I think that's all for that part, and another part which deals with the intention and motive for killing is that I did it for the riches, and I sacrificed the children for that.

So my lord, the prosecution's case said that I confessed to killing the four children in a ritual sacrifice deliberately for riches, right? My lord, I have something to say to that.

I made the confession in the charge and caution statement and the plain statement, and in other areas, but I was pressed hard to do so. I did not have any choice but to say anything else or what I wanted to say, my lord. I was coerced into saying something acceptable to them at the time.

The prosecution also tendered other evidence to suggest that I was deliberate and fore-mind in killing the children, like a file in the flash disc about a book about the war in China, I put the file so long ago, though not so long ago before I came to the country. I do not think that the file counts regarding the killing of the four children.

I put the file on the flash disc in what I thought was the side of them. I did that because I wanted to assure them and trap them.

Prosecution also presented to the court other exhibits/evidence, what ever the court calls them, that seem to suggest that I did this deliberately and with forethought, but, for example, my lord, there were the videos of behaving by ISIS, there were also the school searches for young children. I told them my aim was not to fight wars.

Judge: Mr Okello, when you finish, you will let me know because I told you that when you give an unsworn statement, nobody interrupts you.

Okello: Oh yes, when I am done, I will let you know. The videos, these searches, and most of the other evidence that suggest that I did this deliberately happened at a later time, when I made the searches and did those actions, some factors were forcing me. The defence concludes that I did so intentionally in the legal sense.

To summarise the intentional murder section, the defence does not believe, I do not believe that I did this murder intentionally. That's one reason why the four charges should not be honoured, my lord.

So my lord, I will explain in a different section how I came to think and act that way. I will explain why I think I was forced to act that way.

Judge: Please proceed.

Okello: It is not going to be very long. To support the argument that I didn't do it intentionally, we are going to rely on exhibits already submitted by the prosecution, the charge and caution statement, and the plain statement.

So moving on, I am going to describe how I believe I was forced and did not very willingly state in the police statements and some of the other evidence that the prosecution presented.

Judge: Mr Okello, you already said

that, and we have it on record. Give me something else.

Okello: Maybe not.

Judge: Is that all?

Okello: No, my lord, I want to be very sure that we have this on record. I want to say that these are the witnesses I am going to rely on.

Judge: The witnesses, we recorded their particulars yesterday, and there was a prayer from lawyers that they do not want to mention the witnesses.

Okello: Ok, in the next session, my lord, I'm going to try to show how it seems unlikely that I should have conceived an idea like that, although it didn't do it. We believe so, my lord, which this section will help to support the argument that the accused didn't intentionally kill the four children.

In this section, I am going to say that the defence contends that the accused...

Judge: Please talk about yourself, and that is your defence. You are the accused.

Okello: Oh yeah, am going to contend that I am a person said to be of generally good moral character, also said to be passionate and kind, very busy, and is said to be focused on his work and some have said that he is fairly prosperous and resourceful and in light of this circumstantial evidence it helps give to the suggestion that or alternative explanations should be considered.

For this circumstantial evidence, I am going to contend that I had a bright future to look forward to and parents to look after, and I had what I thought was a very successful business in the making, and so in light of all this, I could not do such a thing. In light of this section I am going to call it a prosperous life.

I will rely on the evidence/testimony from my dad, former landlord, and testimony from the people who leased me land in Nwya, as well as my resume. In this section, I will call it a clause, it's just circumstantial evidence, I can't prove directly, but it is just supporting evidence that could be useful for defence in the future.

I do not know if it is strong, but here I am trying to make an argument that I went through some distress. This is something difficult for me, something that I voluntarily participated in that happened to me, and I did not have control over it. Maybe my lord, this section also helps me in the argument that it was not deliberate in killing the four children, and maybe the other evidence could show that it was not deliberate in the deaths of the four children.

I must say that from mid-January and or sometime in late March, I entered a distressing period and I was contending with certain people that I will describe in a later section. During this time, but it is approximately I can't remember very well, and I can't remember for how long, and the very precise period it began, but early January and mid-March.

Certain people got my attention and eventually, and somehow began to demand accountability from me, and made increasing demands from me, and so they threatened to kill me and stayed out in the neighbourhood where I lived.

They stayed at that Bunge neighbour-

hood and parked a car, and watched what I did.

They started demanding money from me, and they would follow me closely. I fled from my home for a long time, that single bedroom I was renting in Bunge near the trading centre, and I stayed outside on the streets for a while. I didn't want to be in a secluded place for long, I lived on the streets and didn't stay in the house for long. I was outside there on the run.

So my lord, during this period of January and March, and the very latter part of this episode, I tried to end it somewhere somehow. I tried a few things to where the whole thing to an end. I tried to flee the country, then I tried to rob a bank, and I tried to kill my brother's family.

Judge: Mr Okello, are you continuing?

Okello: Oh yes, my lord, that's all for this distress section. For this other section, I will rely on witness testimony.

Judge: No, do not mention the names of your witnesses; your lawyers requested that they Okello: Oh, oh, it is ok Mr Okello, is that all?

Okello: No, No. This is my last section, I called it friends. I describe those people, the adversaries that I bumped into and I contended with. I do not know much about them; it was not very often, most

OKELLO'S DEFENCE

Okello denies intentionally killing the children and argues that the charges should not stand. In his defence, he describes being under intense psychological distress, claiming he was being threatened and was living in fear at the time. He also referenced other erratic and violent actions he contemplated or attempted during that period to illustrate his mental state, suggesting that his condition may have affected his actions and intent.

of them, but some I saw often, and not every type of person. I am going to describe a few types of people in here. Three types of them and some of the interactions I had with them. Some of them seemed to be very young, like teenagers, but not very young. The young ones were very new clothes and greeted me by their first name: Hi Chris, and just proceeded walking. So they could come from opposite directions, and we would meet once. That was the end of the encounter.

These last two, they drove in very new cars, they were very clean all the time and very well polished, very posh cars in new brands, and these people in

this category were very groomed and dressed very smartly and they had no - voice talks. They were very quiet and had a distinct expression on their faces. I do not know how to describe it, but they were perfectly expressed. I think that is how I can explain them.

The last category of the three they were not distinct like the others. There was nothing unusual about them. And I could only begin to think they were together or part of the others by my overall experience with them collectively. I think this is also supporting evidence, and if witness testimony allows it will support this argument. I contend these friends had something to do with my actions on the 2nd, my lord.

So closing my lord, I believe that the court should not because the proper for murder conviction on the four counts because the defence contends that there were some circumstances that forced me to act the way I acted on the 2nd, and my lord, the court should not honour the charges that were filed because they did not make and support a good strong argument that I was deliberate. Defence contends that our prayer should be granted, that the charges should be dropped.

Judge: Mr Okello, is that all?

Okello: Yes, my lord.

Judge: Thank you so much, Mr Okello.



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

PUBLIC NOTICE

The following are required to report to the Public Service Commission Offices on 2nd Floor, Farmers' House, Parliament Avenue in respect to disciplinary cases instituted against them.

S/No.	Name	Designation	Work Station	Date & Time
1.	Taremba Joshua Akampa	Driver	Public Service Commission	Thursday 7/5/2026 - 9:00am
2.	Iperu Joyce	Stenographer Secretary	Office of the President (Directorate for Ethics and Integrity)	Thursday 14/5/2026 - 9:00am
3.	Kilama Tony	Driver	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Thursday 14/5/2026 - 9:00am
4.	Mwandisi Luke	Human Resource Officer	Ministry of Health (Bulobuka Hospital)	Thursday 14/5/2026 - 9:00am
5.	Mugwa Fred Weira	Human Resource Officer	Education Service Commission	Thursday 14/5/2026 - 9:00am
6.	Tumwesigye Collins	Office Attendant	Education Service Commission	Thursday 14/5/2026 - 9:00am
7.	Kusemerwa Bridget	Economist	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development	Thursday 21/5/2026 - 9:00am
8.	Okello Patrick Milton	Senior Human Resource Officer	Ministry of Health (Uganda Blood Transfusion Services)	Thursday 21/5/2026 - 9:00am

Failure to report as required will imply that the Officer has willingly forfeited his/her right to be heard and his/her case shall be determined and concluded thereafter.

For any further details, please contact the Secretary, Public Service Commission on telephone numbers 041-4342279 and 041-254271.

SECRETARY

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION