

... to the scene and
evacuated the injured victims to Grade

Residents living near the scene said

pie head to the airport to catch flights,"
he said.

tigue after a long-distance journey.
Tragically, three occupants lost their

driver fatigue.

Herbalist accused of rape under guise of epilepsy cure

BY JAMES OWICH

GULU. A 31-year-old woman yesterday told the High Court in Gulu that a herbalist repeatedly raped her after convincing her that sexual intercourse would cure her epilepsy.

The accused, Mr Alfred Oryem, a resident of Payuta Village in Awach Sub-county, Gulu District, appeared before Justice Lillian Alum Omara to answer to a charge of rape allegedly committed in 2018.

The court heard that Mr Oryem convinced the victim, who was 23 at the time, that engaging in sexual activity with him would treat her illness.

The alleged incidents occurred

between August and November 2018.

The victim, whose identity is withheld for legal reasons, had been taken to the herbalist by her family for treatment.

Despite the accused denying the charge, the woman told the court that Mr Oryem had sex with her on three different occasions while she was under his care.

"He would take me to his house, undress me and have sex with me. He (Oryem) told me not to tell anyone about it," she testified.

She said she did not immediately report the abuse because the herbalist warned her that revealing the encounters would prevent her from getting cured. She added that she later

conceived and gave birth to a child who is now six years old.

One of the prosecution witnesses, the victim's brother, told the court that the herbalist approached the family after learning that his sister was suffering

WHAT THE LAW SAYS...

Rape offence: Under Ugandan law, rape carries a maximum penalty of life.

Consent: Consent obtained through deception, intimidation or abuse of authority may still amount to rape.

from epilepsy and offered to treat her.

"He came to our home around August 2018 and told us that he could heal my sister. We then took our sister to his home, which was in the neighbourhood," he testified.

The witness added that his sister stayed at the accused's home between August and November 2018 before returning home. However, she continued visiting the herbalist for treatment until April 2019.

According to him, the family became suspicious after noticing changes in the victim's body.

The matter was later reported to Awach Central Police Station. Police advised the family to seek medical

confirmation of the pregnancy at Awach Health Centre IV.

"We went to Awach Health Centre IV and the pregnancy test turned positive. We found that she was three months pregnant. Oryem was later arrested and charged with rape," the witness said.

Through his lawyer, Mr Samuel Openy, the accused attempted to challenge the testimony, questioning whether force or coercion had been used.

The prosecution has so far presented three witnesses, including the victim, her brother and their mother.

Two more witnesses, a police officer and a health worker, are expected to testify when the hearing resumes on April 1.