

THE NYENGA POLICE OFFICER WARNED PARENTS AGAINST TAKING CHILDREN TO WORK IN QUARRIES

Stone quarry kills two children in Buikwe

By Emmanuel Balukusa

A woman fainted after two children died in a stone quarry in a village in Buikwe district.

The bodies, covered with stones and soil, were found by Alfred Ettomatti Tabule, a worker at a quarry belonging to Majid Diliwo Sizi.

The deceased are Musa Sserumogi, 17, a pupil in Primary Five and Jamadah Butelaba, 15, in Primary Seven.

Madinah Namuganza, an aunt and guardian of the two children narrated that on Sunday, she had lunch with the children and left them at home.

"I last saw my children on Sunday afternoon. We had lunch together and I left them at home to go for our village savings group meeting. I did not imagine that it would end like this," Namuganza said.

Although Namuganza came back home late in the evening, not finding them at home did not bother her, for she thought they were in a cinema hall watching a football match.

"At around 8:00pm, when I could not see a sign of their returning, I started moving about, asking my neighbours if they knew where the children were, but they all said they did not know. After a futile search for them, I went to bed," Namuganza narrated.

Alfred Ettomatti Tabule, a worker in the quarry, said he last saw the boys on Saturday, when they were coming from St. Anthony Nyenga Girls' Primary School, where they go to study.

"I found that my quarry had fallen in and saw a hand sticking out of the soil. I then called a workmate who made an alarm," Tabule narrated.

Namuganza explained that she was searching for the children when she heard the alarm, but she thought that her neighbour's patient had died.

"I could not believe my eyes when I saw my two children dead," Namuganza narrated, before she fainted and the residents tried to resuscitate her.

Police dug the bodies out of the quarry. The bodies had severe injuries.

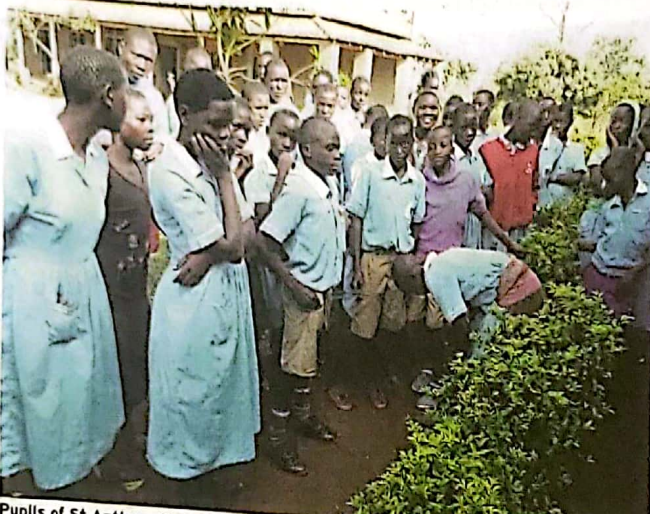
Suleiman Kasiba, a resident, said the children may have sat on top of a section of the quarry which had a crack in it causing it to crumble and bury them alive.

Valentine Arondo, the village LCI chairperson, told *New Vision* that these are the first deaths at the quarry.

"Previously, when a person was buried in the mines and quarries, we were always on



Relatives and residents watch as Police officers take away the bodies of the children to Jinja Hospital. Photos by Emmanuel Balukusa



Pupils of St Anthony Nyenga Girls' Primary School on hearing the news of the deaths

the ground to rescue them before they died," Arondo said.

Teachers, pupils speak out

Eliphazi Malinga, the class teacher of Primary Seven and Butelaba's teacher, said they have lost a competent and intelligent boy.

"Butelaba had already registered to sit his Primary Leaving Examinations this year and his performance was promising," Malinga said.

Malinga added that Butelaba had scored aggregate twelve in the recent mock examinations. He added that



One of the relatives of the deceased mourning



Jamadah Butelaba

ON THE GROUND

George William Nsamba, the Njeru municipal inspector of schools, said: "The reports of the children were promising and indicate that the two loved their studies. The children have been walking a long distance from home to school."

both boys were co-operative and good in academics and football and have been part of the school football team.

Stella Amojora, Butelaba's classmate, explained that the class has been proud of him because he has been their peer educator inside and outside of classroom. She added that they are shocked by the death

of their colleagues. "It has shocked us as a school and it is going to take us time to forget them," Amojora said.

Big loss

George William Nsamba, the Njeru municipal inspector of schools, said the death of the boys was a big loss to both Buikwe district and the nation.

Nsamba said: "The reports of the children were promising and indicate that the two loved their studies. The children have been walking a long distance from home to school," Nsamba said.

He said research indicates that Nyenga division is the leading division in employing children in the whole district.

Nsamba appealed to parents to stop employing children on the lakes for fishing and in quarries and mines, adding that the deceased might have been searching for pocket money in the quarry.

Police investigations

The officer in charge of Nyenga Police Station, Hussein Musiho, condemned parents for neglecting their duty of protecting children.

He warned the parents who take their children to quarries to stop and urged them to keep their children close to them and prevent them from loitering in the towns.

Musiho ordered all the proprietors of the mines and quarries to fence them.

The bodies were taken to Jinja Hospital for a post-mortem examination.