Purpose. Justice Mubiru says the court action will help check schools that discriminate against low performing students.

School denies 'dull' student O-level exam, fined Shs10m

BY FELIX WAROM OKELLO
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ARUA. The High Court in Arua has awarded a former student of St Mary's Ediofe Secondary School Shs10 million in general damages for being barred from taking the 2016 Uganda Certificate of Education examinations.

Ms Gladys Ayikoru testified that the school administrators declined to register her to sit for the penultimate secondary school-tier national exams on grounds that she had performed poorly in an internal Term I test.

The administrators set the said pre-registration test to appraise the competence and preparedness of students for the national examinations run by Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb).

Ms Ayikoru sued St Mary's Ediofe Secondary School after its administrators prevented her from registering. And on March 22, Arua High Court Judge Stephen Mubiru awarded her Shs10 million in compensation, the cost of the suit and 8 per cent per annum interest on the award from judgment date until full payment.

Sr Grace Aciro, the school head teacher, had told court: "After a long discussion in the meeting, we agreed that those who got Division Nine could not be registered with the school. The options given to her were either to repeat or try elsewhere..."

She was among five other students who got division nine. They were all told to look for alternative institutions where to register to take the national exams.

Ms Ayikoru testified that "as a result of this treatment at the hands of the defendant (the school) that I felt psychologically tortured because the whole school considered me to be a dull student". "I had to make stressful adjustments such as changing to another school and dropped one of the subjects within few months," she said. In his judgment, Justice Mubiru decided that the actions of school were in contravention of the rights of the student who had suffered psychological torture.

"I have estimated that the expenditure of looking for special French teacher and costs incurred in looking for a new school by the parent to be Shs2.5 million and in light of the severity of the emotional impact the defendant's violations had on her at such a tender age, to arrive at an award of Shs10 million as general damages," he said.

Denying poorly performing students an opportunity to register and sit for national examinations at various centres is a common practice in many schools countrywide.

WAY FORWARD

Change of school. Following her expulsion from St Mary's Ediofe SS, a top-rate Catholic church-founded school in the western suburb of Arua Town, Ms Ayikoru relocated to the less prestigious Odravu Secondary School.

She registered and took the UCE exams, obtaining Aggregate 54, which placed her in Division III.

House approves Shs 1.2b for nodding disease

BY SOLOMON ARINAITWE
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PARLIAMENT. Parliament has approved a supplementary budget of Shs1.2b to help victims weakened by the mysterious nodding syndrome in Northern Uganda despite Shs73m advanced earlier this year not being unaccounted for.

The Sh1.2b will be shared among Kitgum (Shs267m), Lamwo (Shs175m), Oyam (Shs 36m), Pader) (Shs324m) and Amuru districts (Shs 78m).

Other benefitting districts and entities are Omoro (Shs 219m), Gulu Referral Hospital (Shs 110m), Gulu



To benefit. Kilak South MP Gilbert Olanya interacts with Balam Opiyo, one of the victims of nodding syndrome, in Omoro District last month. PHOTO BY JULIUS OGUNGI