

Villagers raised the alarm after a foul smell exposed a clandestine prayer gathering.

Family prays for a week in bid to resurrect body

BY JESSICA SABANO

Shock has gripped residents of Butinindi Village in Mukono District after a group of worshippers kept the body of a 26-year-old man inside a house for almost a week, praying and fasting in the belief that he would rise from the dead.

The deceased, Ashe Segawa, reportedly died six days earlier following a long illness. Instead of notifying authorities, his family and fellow sect members locked the body inside a room and began a seven-day prayer ritual, convinced a resurrection miracle would occur.

The incident came to light when villagers noticed a foul smell drifting from the roadside home and alerted local leaders.

Segawa's brother, Mr Abbey Kafeero, told *Daily Monitor* that the group's leader, a self-styled prophetess, had been visiting the home daily to pray over the body.

He said the "prophetess" assured them Segawa would rise on the seventh day but disappeared when police arrived.

Mr Kafeero further claimed that the "prophet" had previously blocked the family from taking Segawa to hospital even as his condition deteriorated.

"She forced all of us to fast and pray for him. He was not allowed to eat even when he was very sick," Mr Kafeero said.

He added: "When he died, she told us not to inform the community or relatives because she was going to resurrect him."

When authorities entered the house,



The place of worship in Butinindi Village, Mukono District, where residents found the decomposing body of a 26-year-old man. PHOTO/JESSICA SABANO

they found Segawa's body in an advanced state of decomposition and the home in a disturbing state of filth.

"We were shocked by the level of dirt and the smell," said one of the residents who first raised the alarm.

The resident added: "We had warned

the chairman days ago when we noticed something was wrong."

Villagers accused the sect of dangerous practices, saying members are discouraged from working or seeking medical treatment, with leaders insisting that "Jesus will provide" for them.

During a visit to the group's makeshift place of worship, residents found another critically ill man lying on the floor as worshippers prayed around him. Witnesses said he had been denied medical care.

Butinindi Village chairperson Peter

“ The false promise. She [self-styled prophetess] forced all of us to fast and pray for him. He was not allowed to eat even when he was very sick; when he died, she told us not to inform the community or relatives because she was going to resurrect him,” **Abbey Kafeero, brother of the deceased**

Kayiira condemned the sect's actions and promised immediate action.

"We will ensure the sick man is taken to the hospital and that his family is informed. What has happened here is unacceptable," Mr Kayiira said.

He also criticised the rise in unregulated religious groups exploiting vulnerable communities and called for stronger oversight to prevent similar tragedies.

Mr Michael Kyazze, the lead pastor at Omega Healing Centre and president of the Coalition of Pentecostal Evangelicals, said the country's social and economic pressures have made people more vulnerable to exploitation.

He urged believers to scrutinise new religious leaders before submitting to their influence.

Police have since arrested the deceased's mother, Mary Nakalanzi, along with several relatives and sect members. Authorities are searching for the prophetess, who is believed to have gone into hiding.