

# Giving money to street children punishable – KCCA

By Juliet Waiswa

Anybody found engaging street children in harmful employment will be imprisoned for six months or pay a fine of two currency points, according to the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) ordinance.

Once passed into law, anybody found leasing or renting a house to a child, engaging them in commercial

sex, letting them loiter on the streets or engaging them in soliciting money will also be penalised.

The KCCA Child Protection Ordinance 2019, drafted by KCCA, is intended to protect children in Kampala from engaging in harmful activities, such as selling alcohol, which are not covered by the current legislation.

KCCA will present the

ordinance to Parliament for approval before it is passed.

## Protecting children

During a council meeting on Tuesday, the chairperson of the KCCA legal committee, Allan Atuhaire, said the ordinance is intended to enhance child protection.

Atuhaire, who is also the councillor for Makindye West, said it will control the influx of

street children and encourage initiatives intended to get children off the street.

The law will penalise the parents, guardian and anybody who will not abide by it.

Atuhaire said a study carried out in the city showed there were about 2,600 street children, of whom 1,400 were engaged in child labour.

He said they consulted government agencies, such

as gender ministry, political leaders and lawmakers before they drafted the ordinance.

The Deputy Lord Mayor, Sarah Kanyike, said people have been giving gifts, money and food to children on the streets, which encourages them to remain there.

"We want to discourage these kinds of activities. If these children come to the streets and are given food, they will

not leave," Kanyike said.

## Vendors speak out

Annet Okello, a street vendor on Parliament Avenue, said that she cannot leave her child at home since she has no one to look after her.

Andrew Kasagga, a member of Kubwaturukira Hawkers, said mothers of most street children were arrested by KCCA and are in prison.



Grace Lwanga, Asimwe and Adeke hand over a petition about sexual harassment at the workplace to Kadaga at Parliament on Wednesday. Photo by Kennedy Oryema

# Sexual harassment: Women activists want laws reviewed

By Faith Amongin and Lisa Nsaba

Activists have called for a review of the Employment Act, which they said is ineffective in fighting sexual harassment at workplaces.

The activists, under the auspices of Women of Uganda, led by Youth MP Anna Adeke, say despite the existence of legal provisions outlawing sexual harassment at workplaces, the vice continues unabated.

The activists made the remarks while delivering a petition to the Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, demanding an investigation into the matter where senior attorney Samantha Mwesigye accuses the Deputy Solicitor General, Christopher Gashirabake, of sexually harassing her for the past one decade.

Angela Asimwe of Akina Wa Mama Afrika, said laws on sexual harassment in Uganda are not effectively implemented, which she said creates a culture of impunity.

"As a result, female employees

## BETWEEN THE LINES

The activists say there is need to revise the Employment (sexual harassment) Regulations 2012, which give an option of temporary transfer of individuals accused of harassment.

prefer to remain silent and are forced to work in hostile and humiliating environments," Asimwe said.

She said the manner in which Mwesigye's case has been handled highlights shortfalls in the law.

She said there is need to revise the Employment (sexual harassment) Regulations 2012, which give an option of temporary transfer of individuals accused of harassment, pending completion of investigations.

"The provision is problematic because it overlooks the danger the accused might pose to employees at the new station," Asimwe said.

Grace Lwanga, an official from the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), said the law should clearly describe the procedure through which an employee can file a complaint of sexual harassment and emphasise full confidentiality to prevent retaliation.

"Women are mocked once they speak out," Lwanga said. In her response, Kadaga promised to engage the Attorney General so that action is taken expeditiously.

"I understand the intricacies involved, it is a serious issue," Kadaga said.

The Speaker also promised to engage Parliament to review the Employment Act so as to close any loopholes in it.

In 2006, Parliament passed a law defining sexual harassment at workplaces, clarifying that if one directly or indirectly makes a request to an employee for sexual intercourse, sexual contact or any other form of sexual activity, the victim is entitled to lodge a complaint with a labour officer who shall then take action.

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