

TRIBUTE | UoN Vice-Chancellor pledges to pay for funeral expenses

Varsity comrade died in my arms

Student was reserved and loved politics

BY ELIZABETH MERAB
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Things will never be the same for 25-year old Felix Mwirigi, a third year student at Kikuyu Campus who cradled his dying colleague from the campus to Karen Hospital.

His friend Francis Maina, a third year Bachelor of Education student died after jumping from the sixth floor of his campus hostel room on Sunday morning after an underground electrical cable exploded.

The students thought the explosion was a terrorist attack and frantically tried to escape.

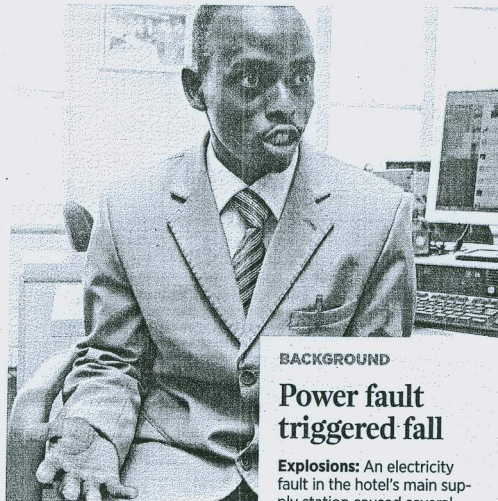
While some used the staircases in the hostel, others decided to jump through windows.

Like his colleagues, the late Maina was also trying to escape but ended up succumbing to the serious injuries he sustained from the fall.

"I had never seen a dead person so close," said Mwirigi.

Mwirigi was one of the students who was sleeping in Kimberly hostel when the electrical cable exploded in the wee hours of Sunday.

"I first heard girls screaming and then there were heavy footsteps of people running down the stairs. That is when I got up and ran out too," recalled



DIANA NGLA | NATION

UoN student Felix Mwirigi, who carried his dead colleague.

Mwirigi, who was in his room on the fourth floor.

"When I was out of the hostel, I saw people falling from windows like luggage that was being thrown down. It was horrifying to see human beings fall that way."

Though many students were screaming for help, it was Maina's bleeding that attracted Mwirigi's attention.

"He was bleeding from all openings. I ran from the campus to the road where other students gathered to get a car to rush him to hospital since the school's ambulance was not around," he said yesterday during an interview at Nation Centre.

Mr Maina however succumbed to his injuries while on the way to hospital. "If there was immediate response, I am sure his life would have been saved. I don't regret that my clothes were drenched in blood. I only mourn the death of my comrade," said a melancholic Mwirigi.

BACKGROUND

Power fault triggered fall

Explosions: An electricity fault in the hotel's main supply station caused several gunshot-like explosions, sparking panic.

Panic: Students jumped from the hostel, thinking the explosion was a terrorist attack.

Casualties: 141 students were injured and one died as they were taken to city hospitals.

Having drinks

Mr Maina's friend described him as a reserved person who loved politics.

"I was with him on Saturday evening discussing the just concluded campus election which our team had won," said Dickson Mwalimu, also a student at the university.

"Since the tension was high, he decided to go to the school's club and have a drink before going to bed. I never knew that would be the last time I would see him alive," added Mwalimu as he conducted a fundraising for his friend.

Two Kenyans to battle for Sh13.5m prize

BY NATION REPORTER

Two Kenyans are among 10 African innovators who have been nominated for a Sh13.5 million prize.

Mr Alex Mwaura Muriu and Mr Kyai Mullei beat more than 900 applicants from 41 countries to be selected among the final contestants for the annual Innovation Prize for Africa awards.

They will battle it out with four South Africans, a Moroccan, a Ugandan, a Burundian and a Cameroonian for the grand prize during an award ceremony to be held on May 12 and 13 in Skhirat, Morocco.

The awards are organised by the Africa Innovation Foundation and mobilises innovators from the continent to invest in African-led solutions.

Mr Muriu is the brain behind Farm Capital Africa, described as a well-developed risk sharing agribusiness funding model that draws in investors for a share of farming profits.

Mr Mullei was nominated for his M-Changa, also known as e-harambee mobile phone application, which allows people to initiate and manage fundraisers through text messages or web devices in a cost-effective manner.

Students on Kikuyu campus leave as exams are postponed

BY NATION CORRESPONDENT

About half of the students of University of Nairobi's Kikuyu campus have left the institution. This follows an electric cable explosion on Sunday which caused a stampede, leading to the death of one student.

The students who were interviewed by the *Nation* said they were still traumatised after the incident and needed time to come to terms with what happened.

The university authorities have postponed examinations on the campus yesterday.

In a signed notice, Vice-Chancellor Peter Mbithi said as a result of the incident, the tests would be done next week.

"The Senate on April 13, 2015, resolved to postpone examinations in Kikuyu campus to April 20, 2015. The decision was taken to allow students come to terms with the aftermath of the incident and prepare adequately for the examinations," the statement said.

Prof Mbithi added that the university would use professionals to offer psycho-social support to the students.

The University would also provide funeral expenses and other support to the family of the dead student.

He said that as at yesterday, 27 of the 167 injured students were still receiving treatment in various hospitals.

Kenyatta National Hospital, which admitted 112 students, discharged 89.

"Six of the 22 students still hospitalised underwent surgery and are recuperating. One student was transferred to Nairobi Hospital," Prof Mbithi added.

He said another four students who were admitted to PCEA Thogoto Hospital, had been transferred to KNH.

He said 50 students were treated and discharged from the hospital yesterday.

"We have been informed by hospital authorities that the students admitted are in a stable condition," he added.

A third year student, Agnes Mwasia said she could not spend another night on the campus.

There are just 27 of us. Everyone else has left and I am just waiting for my clothes to dry before I go"

Agnes Mwasia

"There are just 27 of us in the hostel. Everyone else has left and I am just waiting for my clothes to dry before I go," Ms Mwasia, who hails from Kitui County, said.

Ms Anne Kianira, a first year, was at the gate leaving.

"After what happened on Sunday, let me go home and relax then come back to school," she said.

Another one leaving was Mr Zacheaus Muchungu.

However, some students chose to stay and read for the examinations. One of them was Dickson Mwasia, a third year.

He said he could not leave the campus just because of a security scare.

"Even if I decide to go home, anything could happen to me on the way. I will complete my exams before leaving," he said.

Ms Mwasia said she would not know what to do in case of a terrorist attack.

"Most of the windows in our hostels are fitted with grills. There is no way you can use them to escape. We also don't know if our hostels have emergency exits," she said.

Yesterday, the Kenya Red Cross team was at the institution to offer counselling services to students.

Kenya Power workers were repairing the cables which exploded on Sunday causing the stampede.



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