# Two teenagers sentenced to life for brutal machete murder of 14-year-old on London bus



Two teenagers have been sentenced to life imprisonment for the brutal machete murder of 14-year-old Kelyan Bokassa on a London bus in Woolwich, south-east London. The boys, who are now 16 years old, received minimum terms of 15 years and 10 months after pleading guilty to Kelyan's murder and possessing knives. The fatal attack occurred on 7 January, when Kelyan was violently stabbed 27 times on the upper deck of the Route 472 bus.

According to court evidence, Kelyan, an aspiring rapper, had boarded the bus shortly after 2 p.m. and sat at the back of the upper deck. Security footage showed the defendants boarding 20 minutes later carrying identical lengthy machetes concealed within their clothing. Without uttering a word, the pair approached Kelyan and attacked him with repeated machete blows while smiling. The entire assault lasted just 14 seconds and left Kelyan with virtually no chance to defend himself, despite having a small kitchen knife tucked into his waistband which he never accessed. Passengers on board fled in panic, with many audibly screaming during the attack.

Kelyan tried to shield himself with his school bag, and after the attack stumbled down the aisle asking for help and saying, "take me to my mum's." Despite the quick reactions of the bus driver, passengers, and emergency responders, Kelyan succumbed to his severe injuries, including a severed femoral artery, and was pronounced dead at the scene shortly before 3:30 p.m.

The defendants were arrested on 15 January following a police manhunt. CCTV footage indicated that they had been tipped off about Kelyan's presence on the bus, suggesting premeditation. One of the machetes was later recovered from the River Thames after being discarded.

During sentencing at the Old Bailey, Kelyan's mother gave a poignant victim impact statement, describing the profound loss and heartbreak she experienced. "I stand here not just as a mother but as a broken soul whose life changed forever the day my child's life was taken from me by another child," she said. She also reflected on the stark contrast between her son's love for cooking and football and the violent circumstances of his death.

The case has reignited public concern about the prevalence of knife and machete crime among young people in London. Prosecutors emphasized the extreme violence and the merciless nature of the killing, hoping the sentences offer some solace to Kelyan's family and community. Both defendants had previous convictions related to knife possession, highlighting ongoing challenges in addressing youth knife crime.

This tragic incident underscores the urgent need for continued efforts in tackling weapon offences and violence involving young people in the capital, an issue that has consistently drawn significant media and political attention.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-05-23/teenagers-admit-machete-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-bus), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy75nzk4y1vo), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/two-teenagers-plead-guilty-to-murdering-schoolboy-in-machete-bus-attack-13373352)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/woolwich-london-emergency-services-old-bailey-met-b1240003.html), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/two-teenagers-plead-guilty-to-murdering-schoolboy-in-machete-bus-attack-13373352)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo), [[7]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-01-16/two-teenagers-charged-with-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-london-bus)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-05-23/teenagers-admit-machete-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-bus), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/two-teenagers-plead-guilty-to-murdering-schoolboy-in-machete-bus-attack-13373352), [[7]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-01-16/two-teenagers-charged-with-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-london-bus)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo), [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-05-23/teenagers-admit-machete-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-bus), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/woolwich-london-emergency-services-old-bailey-met-b1240003.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/woolwich-london-emergency-services-old-bailey-met-b1240003.html), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/two-teenagers-plead-guilty-to-murdering-schoolboy-in-machete-bus-attack-13373352), [[7]](https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-01-16/two-teenagers-charged-with-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-london-bus)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj9v987d4kjo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c8057l4ye4yo> - A 14-year-old boy, Kelyan Bokassa, was fatally stabbed 27 times on a London bus while returning home from school. Two teenage boys, aged 15 and 16, have been charged with his murder. Both defendants appeared at the Old Bailey, where they were remanded into custody. A plea hearing is scheduled for 14 April, with a trial set for 13 October. The incident occurred on 7 January on the Route 472 bus in Woolwich, south-east London. Despite efforts by the bus driver, passengers, and paramedics, Kelyan was pronounced dead shortly after the attack.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-05-23/teenagers-admit-machete-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-bus> - Two teenagers have admitted to the murder of 14-year-old Kelyan Bokassa, who was fatally stabbed on a London bus. The attack occurred on 7 January on the Route 472 bus in Woolwich, south-east London. Kelyan, an aspiring rapper, was stabbed around 27 times. The defendants, both aged 16, pleaded guilty to murder and possessing a knife. They are scheduled to be sentenced on 25 July. The case has drawn attention to the issue of knife crime in London.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy75nzk4y1vo> - Two teenagers have pleaded guilty to the murder of 14-year-old Kelyan Bokassa, who was attacked with machetes on a bus in south-east London. The incident took place on 7 January on the Route 472 bus in Woolwich. The defendants, both aged 16, also admitted to carrying a bladed weapon. Both had previous convictions, including for possessing a knife in a public place. Sentencing is set for 25 July. The case has highlighted concerns over knife crime among young people in London.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/woolwich-london-emergency-services-old-bailey-met-b1240003.html> - Two youths are facing life sentences for the murder of 14-year-old Kelyan Bokassa, who was stabbed 27 times with machetes on a bus in Woolwich. The attack occurred on 7 January on the Route 472 bus. The defendants, now aged 16, appeared to have been tipped off that Kelyan was on the bus before they boarded and attacked him. One of the machetes was discarded in the River Thames but later recovered. The case has raised concerns about knife crime in London.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/two-teenagers-plead-guilty-to-murdering-schoolboy-in-machete-bus-attack-13373352> - Two teenagers have pleaded guilty to murdering 14-year-old Kelyan Bokassa in a machete attack on a London bus. The incident occurred on 7 January on the Route 472 bus in Woolwich, south-east London. Kelyan was stabbed around 27 times with two 'lengthy machetes'. The defendants, both aged 16, also pleaded guilty to possession of an offensive weapon. Sentencing is scheduled for 25 July. The case has highlighted the issue of knife crime among young people in London.
7. <https://www.itv.com/news/london/2025-01-16/two-teenagers-charged-with-murder-of-14-year-old-boy-on-london-bus> - Two teenagers have been charged with the murder of 14-year-old Kelyan Bokassa, who was fatally stabbed on a London bus. The incident occurred on 7 January on the Route 472 bus in Woolwich, south-east London. Kelyan was stabbed repeatedly on his journey home and died from a severed femoral artery. The defendants, aged 15 and 16, appeared in court and were remanded in custody. A 44-year-old woman arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender has been released under investigation.