

THE FACILITY IS THE OFFICIAL LABORATORY FOR POLICE INVESTIGATIONS AND OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

Criminal DNA samples stolen from govt lab

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and Martin Kitubi

Two Police officers attached to Wandegaya Police Division are among the suspects that have been arrested in connection with the stolen criminal samples at the Government Analytical Laboratory (GAL).

On Sunday night at around 2:00am, unknown people allegedly broke into the GAL headquarters at Wandegaya, a Kampala suburb and took off with two central processing units (CPUs) and two monitors that contained all the high-profile criminal deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) results.

According to Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a DNA is a thread-like chain of nucleotides carrying the genetic instructions used in the growth, development, functioning and reproduction of all known living organisms and many viruses.

The DNA specimens are collected from murder scenes to help in

investigations. The GAL is the official laboratory for Police investigations and other public agencies.

When *New Vision* visited the crime scene yesterday, the vandalised place, which is adjacent to the Ministry of Health headquarters in Kampala, was sealed off with a yellow tape.

The place was not accessible to any person including the staff at GAL.

The Police had intensified checkup where everyone was required to present an identification card before entry.

Tarsisius Byamugisha, the commissioner in charge of the directorate of GAL under the internal affairs ministry declined to divulge details.

"We will let the public know after investigations. The incident is being investigated," he said.

Grace Akullo, the director of Criminal Investigations Directorate, told *New Vision* that the team investigating the matter was yet to avail her with details on what happened and the kind of



Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda with former vice-president Gilbert Bukenya commissioning the Government Analytical Laboratory in Kampala. Thugs stole evidence of high-profile murder cases

equipment and information missing. Luke Owoyesigire, the Kampala Metropolitan Police spokesperson, said two Police officers were arrested in connection with the case.

He identified the Police officers as Nicholas Kiyahabwe and Daniel Onyait, who he said are being detained at Wandegaya Police Station over negligence of duty.

Owoyesigire said the stolen computers were connected to the genetic analyser machine that deals with criminal DNA tests in the laboratory.

"The matter is being investigated

and charges of neglect of duty have been preferred against our officers who were arrested," he said.

Evidence stolen

However, an inside source intimated to *New Vision* that the perpetrators concentrated on things that could be moved easily.

"We think this was a well-planned move because after vandalising the genetic analyser machine, the thugs parked the stolen items into the boxes that were also inside the same room," a source said. The source added that the CPUs that were stolen contained

criminal DNA results for the period between February last year to-date.

"All high-profile cases, including the one of Andrew Felix Kaweesi, Susan Magara, Case Clinic's Francis Ekalunga and the recent one of Abel Katende, are among the affected ones," a source added.

GAL is a directorate under the Ministry of Internal Affairs that is mandated to provide specialised scientific analytical, advisory and referral services to foster administration of justice, private sector growth and ensure general public safety.

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