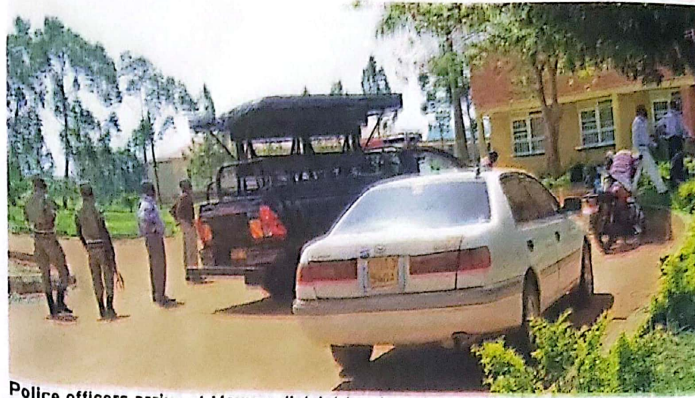




Police officers arrive at Mayuge district headquarters on Monday to probe claims that a computer had gone missing. Photos by George Bitu

Mayuge computers disappear, teachers demand July pay

MAYUGE

By George Bitu

Mayuge district finance department computers have gone missing, complicating demands by science teachers for their unpaid July salaries.

Teachers, who had returned on Monday morning to establish their payroll status, as advised earlier, instead found policemen all over the local government headquarters, located in Mayuge town.

Moses Mugabi, an official at the personnel office, said five monitors and three central processing units had been taken from the computer room at the finance department.

According to Mugabi, it was not possible to access payroll data as the computers in the office had been linked to the network.

"The returns from Kampala are on the system. Unfortunately, now that some computers have been stolen, we cannot open anything," Mugabi explained.

Plain-clothes policemen recorded statements from one Waiswa, who is responsible for opening and closing the office block.

"After closing the offices, Waiswa takes the key to the nearby Police station, for safe custody. However, on Saturday, he had to open the office for a local contractor who keeps building material on the premises," a source that preferred anonymity told *New Vision*.

Mark Opolot, a teacher of chemistry, wondered whether the missing computers had not been moved to frustrate efforts by teachers who had not received their salaries.

Last Monday, the chief administrative officer, Joyce Namboozo, promised the 82 affected teachers that they

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Stephen Balabye, teacher at Bunya SS:



I never got salary for two months and up to now, I am demanding arrears. To add insult to injury, even my July salary hasn't been paid.



Farida Nankwanga, a resident of Nsango village:

Mayuge district seems to have a serious problem. Roads are bad, health centres lack drugs and now even teachers are not being paid.

Asuman Mwanje, local councillor:



Some of the officials first get that money and put it on fixed deposit accounts to earn profits. God save Mayuge, otherwise, we are doomed.

up on the issue of his salary.

"We have done our work and the Government should own up. Why must one teach and end up not being paid at the end of the month over flimsy excuses?" Mwalye asked.

Part of a wider problem

Suzan Naigaga, a pensioner, said she received gratuity of sh40m in May as per records obtained, but the money has not yet been remitted to her account.

"For all this time, I have moved to and from Mayuge for my money, to no avail. I appeal to the concerned authorities to come to my rescue," Naigaga said.

Samuel Kigomo, a teacher of mathematics, said it is now a practice in Mayuge to keep getting on to and off the payroll.

"There seems to be a problem with the district. Our neighbours seem to be better organised and I wish we could borrow a leaf," Kigomo suggested.

Way forward

Dennis Odoch, the Mayuge district Police chief, confirmed that his officers had been deployed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the district computers.

"Our work is to investigate and bring the culprits to book. Investigations are on and we shall establish what happened," Odoch said.

Bashir Kayeyera, the Uganda National Teacher's Union (UNATU) area chief, urged the local officials to solve the salary mess immediately through the acquisition of a hard copy of the payroll.

"Let the system be accessed from another nearby point. By doing so, a copy of the payroll can be got and everyone knows status," Kayeyera noted.

would get feedback within a week.

"The computers are off the system, until August 21. So, I kindly ask you to return then when we have the information ready," Namboozo suggested then.

Simon Mwalye, a biology teacher at Malongo SS, said he no longer has money to follow