

Kayunga couple in agony as hunt for stolen baby drags on

BY FRED MUZAALE

KAYUNGA. A young couple in Kayunga District is living in distress nine months after their newborn baby was allegedly stolen from Kayunga Regional Referral Hospital, with little progress made in tracing the child.

The baby girl is said to have been taken from the maternity ward in July 2025, just hours after birth. Since then, the couple has faulted both hospital authorities and police for what they describe as delayed and inadequate investigations.

The situation worsened recently when the couple was arrested by police after they attempted to follow up on the case.

On Wednesday, Kayunga District probation officer Collins Kafeero identified the couple as Mr Ivan Sserumansi, 21, and his wife, Ms Zanula Namulondo, 20, residents of Kiteredde Village in Kayunga Sub-county.

Narrating the ordeal, Mr Sserumansi said his wife developed labour pains in July last year and was admitted to Kayunga Regional Referral Hospital.

"My wife underwent an operation. She delivered a baby girl. However, while she was still in

pain, an unknown woman at the ward offered to carry the baby for her but later disappeared with it," he said.

Ms Namulondo said they immediately reported the matter to hospital authorities, but they were accused of negligence for entrusting their baby to a stranger.

"They promised to work with police to recover our baby, but since July last year, we have not received any update," she said.

Mr Kafeero said his office became involved after receiving information that police in Kayunga had arrested a woman suspected of stealing a baby.

"When the couple heard about the arrest, they came to my office hoping that the recovered baby could be theirs," he said.

BACKGROUND

According to the Uganda Police Annual Crime Report, more than 1,140 cases of missing children were recorded in 2024 alone, highlighting the scale of the problem nationwide.

However, after confirming that the baby in question was not theirs, Mr Kafeero advised them to formally report the matter at Kayunga Central Police Station.

Instead, the couple was arrested, with police alleging that the mother was underage and had been defiled.

The couple has since claimed that their arrest was intended to divert attention from their demands for justice.

But Kayunga Regional Referral Hospital senior administrator Salim Kivejinja denied any involvement in the arrest.

"We handed over CCTV footage showing a woman leaving the ward with the baby, but the images are not clear. We are waiting for police investigations to progress," he said.

The hospital has tightened security, with individuals leaving the facility with babies now required to provide identification and documentation.

Kayunga District criminal investigations officer Boniface Okello said inquiries into the case are ongoing.

He added that the mother has been released on police bond, while the father remains under investigation over allegations of defilement.