

BY HERBERT KAMOGA

NAKASEKE. The man entrusted to run a government health facility in Nakaseke District has been arrested after solar batteries powering the maternity ward were allegedly recovered hidden beneath his bed, in what authorities said is part of a deeply troubling pattern of theft at the facility.

The officer-in-charge at Ngoma Health Centre IV was taken into custody last Friday.

The saga began last Thursday, when a member of support staff working in the maternity ward noticed two 200AH Gel-type solar batteries had been disconnected from the immunisation room's power supply. The batteries are also critical to lighting the maternity wing at the facility.

Curious, the staff member asked the facility's security guard for an explanation.

The guard disclosed that the officer-in-charge had reportedly instructed him to move the batteries to Kalege Health Centre III in Nakaseke South Constituency.

Health centre boss arrested over allegedly stealing govt property

When pressed on whether proper authorisation from the district health officer (DHO) had been obtained, the guard said he was not sure. But the guard later indicated the facility's officer-in-charge had since told him to drop the matter entirely.

Alarmed, the staff member photographed the disconnected batteries where they lay and posted the images to the facility's staff WhatsApp group, alerting colleagues and cautioning the security guard that handling government property without clearance was a serious offence.

"I told him to take it seriously before he is handcuffed, because this is government property," the staff member, who preferred anonymity, said.

The facility's officer-in-charge reportedly responded on the same WhatsApp group, stating that management was aware of the situation, a response that drew more questions.

The following morning, the batteries were gone. The security guard later said

the health unit's officer-in-charge had returned in his personal vehicle, asked for the guard's assistance to open the power room, placed the batteries in the car and drove away.

Police officers intervened. Savannah Regional Police Spokesperson ASP Sam Twineamazima said: "On April 17, 2026, at around 0800hrs, police recovered two 200AH Gel-type solar batteries, China-made, stolen from the power room at Ngoma Health Centre IV."

Police said the facility's officer-in-

Action taken.

Acting on intelligence, police rushed to the suspect's residence, recovered the batteries from the children's room in his main house, and arrested him," - ASP Sam Twineamazima, the Savannah Regional Police spokesperson

charge had disconnected the batteries on April 16 at noon without informing staff, before returning the next morning and taking them away.

"Acting on intelligence, police rushed to the suspect's residence, recovered the batteries from the children's room in his main house, and arrested him," ASP Twineamazima said.

A search certificate was issued, and witness statements were recorded. The facility's officer-in-charge, a resident of Ngoma B Zone in Ngoma Town Council, is also said to operate a private medical facility in the same area, raising questions about the intended destination of the stolen equipment.

Under questioning, the officer-in-charge claimed he was transporting the batteries to the district health officer's office in line with a meeting held on April 8, 2026, during which a decision was allegedly made to redistribute equipment to other health centres. Confirmation of this account from the district health officer's (DHO) office re-

mains pending, police said.

This incident is not the first to raise red flags at Ngoma Health Centre IV. Sources familiar with operations of the facility said a microscope and two computers previously went missing under unclear circumstances, and inquiries into that matter are said to be ongoing.

A source, who preferred anonymity citing fear of victimisation, said a crisis meeting of the health unit management committee was expected to be convened to address the deepening governance crisis at the facility.

Beyond his administrative role at the health centre, the facility's officer-in-charge is a member of the Uganda Medical Association.

The officer-in-charge is currently held at Butalangu Central Police Station, facing charges of theft and abuse of office.

Inquiries are continuing, with police indicating that further developments are expected as the DHO's office responds to queries about the alleged April 8 redistribution meeting.