

Nursing officer charged over illegal surgery

BY JULIET KIGONGO

KAMPALA. An assistant nursing officer has been charged with illegally practising medicine, performing an unauthorised surgical procedure, and conducting a negligent act likely to spread infection.

Mr John Bosco Otim, 37, appeared before Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court yesterday, where Chief Magistrate Ritah Neube Kidasa read out the charges against him. Mr Otim denied all the allegations.

Prosecution, led by Senior State Attorney Grace Amy, told the court that investigations into the matter are still ongoing. "The accused person is hereby remanded until March 2," Ms Kidasa ruled.

According to court documents, Mr Otim, a resident of Bukedea Town Council in Bukedea District, faces three counts arising from events at Atatur General Hospital in Kumi District.

The first count alleges practising without a licence, contrary to Sections 24(1) and 53 of the Nurses and Midwives Act, Cap 301. Prosecutors contend that from March 31, 2014, Otim worked at Atatur General Hospital without a valid practising licence from the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council. His licence reportedly expired on December 31, 2014.

The second count concerns practising without registration or authority, contrary to Section 47(b)(f) of the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act, Cap 300. Prosecutors say on April 30, 2025, Mr Otim performed a surgical procedure on a patient, Aisu Micheal, outside his scope of practice and without proper authorisation as a medical practitioner.

The third count relates to negligence likely to spread infection, contrary to Section 154 of the Penal Code Act, Cap 128. The court papers allege that Mr Otim conducted surgery in a room that was not a designated operating theatre and lacked sterile surgical instruments, creating serious risks to the patient's life.

Background

Court records indicate that Mr Otim allegedly removed the patient from the ward without permission and performed an umbilical hernia operation in an improvised room within the hospital premises. The assigned medical doctor later found the patient back in the male ward, prompting inquiries that revealed the procedure had already been carried out.

The case originated from information received by the State House Health Monitoring Unit from hospital leadership and the patient. Following verification, a General Enquiry File was registered, and on May 2, 2025, an intelligence-led operation led to Mr Otim's arrest at Kumi Central Police Station.

According to court documents, Mr Otim admitted during statement recording that he conducted the procedure, acknowledging it was beyond his scope of practice. Records also indicate that the patient's attendant allegedly paid him Shs100,000, believing he was a qualified doctor.