

Following a tip off by one of the key informants Health Monitoring Unit arrested an individual businessman in Kampala with stolen embossed government of Uganda drugs. On interrogation the suspect gave the investigators more information and contacts of the other people involved in selling of stolen government drugs. This information proved valuable as it led to more arrests in the districts of Amur, Gulu, Apac, Kole, Lira and Kampala bringing the total number of suspects arrested to nine. These arrests have led to a recovery of an assortment of medicines worth about 400M Uganda shillings on the open market.

Among the arrested are drug inspectors from Kole he is a senior clinical officer of Aboke, intern pharmacists from Gulu regional referral Hospital, Police ambulance driver attached to Gulu central police and others are business men. The accused will have their day in court once their file is ready which will soon be submitted to DPP for perusal and advice. Some of the suspects will be charged with abuse of office while others will be charged with being in possession of government stores. Recently a team of detectives from Health Monitoring Unit arrested a pharmacist intern from Mulago National referral hospital after 44 boxes of Coartem an anti-malarial drug went missing. The habit of government health workers stealing from government is on the increase but they must be warned their time is up and whoever is involved in aiding, facilitating or stealing of government drugs once found will be arrested and prosecuted accordingly.

Evidence points to connivance of government health workers and local business people who pilferage and sell government medicines to the unsuspecting public both in Uganda and across the borders of Uganda. The information received from suspects is that these drugs are shipped to Sudan, DR Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania. What is more worrying is the way these drugs are handled, sometimes makes these drugs not fit for human consumption since they are hidden in all sorts of places as they are being shipped out. Because of poor handling and storage the drug's efficacy becomes untenable and the public must desist from purchasing such drugs.

However this also points to negligence in handling and storing medicines once delivered to health units. It also speaks volume on the supervision function for these health workers which perhaps are due to other endemic problems like absenteeism which means unauthorized persons working or assisting in the health units end up in charge of stores/ pharmacies in the

hospitals and health centers which is against the law. The public and all arms of government and relevant departments like NDA, NMS ,police,ISO,RDC,Local leaders & MOH must work together to stamp out the vice.