AN IRISH travel agent who claimed he had been abducted and raped after disappearing in Paris has been charged by French police in connection with reporting a false crime.

John Kennelly (47), who was missing for 57 days, walked into a Paris police station last week, claiming he had been abducted, drugged and sexually assaulted.

Mr Kennelly, from Co Kerry, was the subject of a massive missing person's hunt which included appeals to travelling Irish supporters during the Rugby World Cup.

However, it has since emerged Mr Kennelly was in Nice, in the south of France, during the period he was missing.

"Mr Kennelly went to the police station voluntarily and acknowledged it (the abduction claim) was untrue," his solicitor Louis McDonagh said.

He confirmed Mr Kennelly had been charged with the misdemeanour of reporting a false crime. Mr Kennelly has returned to Ireland, where he is receiving medical treatment in Dublin.

The Listowel travel agent and father-of-three disappeared while on a trip to Paris with his wife, Marie, and children Eoin (21) and daughter Claire (18).

Around the time he went missing, his family said he had not taken his daily medication for a blood pressure condition with him.

They believed he might have been suffering from temporary memory loss. His family said his reappearance on November 5 was the "most tremendous relief to his family and many friends".

However, they said it was tinged "with sadness".
"John has been under medical supervision since his return. Medical advice indicates that John suffers from a condition, which has resulted in actions on John's part, which have been wholly uncharacteristic of him," the family said.

His actions caused anguish to his family and friends and disruption to others who have helped them, the family said.

They insisted again it was "utterly out of character" for him and could only be explained by his medical condition.

Mr Kennelly disappeared after leaving his hotel, the Meridien Etoile, at 7am on September 9 after telling his wife he was going for a walk.

The Kerry travel agent is a well-known figure in the county as a former minor football goalkeeper and a member of Listowel Emmets GAA club.