

BY MONITOR TEAM

KAMPALA. Passengers in Uganda, particularly in Kampala, could soon enjoy safer and cleaner public transport after the government announced a sweeping crackdown targeting old and poorly maintained taxis blamed for endangering commuters.

Under a 20-day directive issued yesterday by Works State Minister Fred Byamukama, authorities will begin removing unroadworthy taxis from the streets starting April 8. The move aims to protect passengers and reduce the rising number of road accidents linked to unsafe vehicles.

Mr Byamukama said it is time for all taxi drivers to ensure their vehicles meet safety standards, emphasising the directive is intended to reduce accidents.

Govt bans vehicles in dangerous mechanical condition

"From April 8, we do not expect any old taxis on the roads. We gave owners enough time to bring their cars for inspection, yet the majority have not passed the test," Mr Byamukama declared.

He noted that many vehicles in poor condition have repeatedly failed to report for inspection despite warnings.

"There are taxis we don't really need on the roads. You find vehicles full of ropes in front, back, and inside. Others use super glue to support the seats," he said.

"Some are dusty, dirty, and emit bad smells. We want to protect passengers from this mess," he added.

The minister urged all taxi drivers

across Uganda to take their vehicles for inspection at designated centres to avoid violating traffic regulations.

"All taxis that defy the directive will

BACKGROUND

The urgency of the crackdown is underscored by road safety data. According to the Police Annual Crime Report 2024, 5,144 Ugandans died in traffic accidents last year, averaging 14 deaths daily, up from 4,806 in 2023, which translated to 13 deaths per day.

be apprehended. The operation will be carried out in cooperation with the traffic police. Hundreds of unfit taxis are expected to be removed from Kampala streets, leaving only roadworthy vehicles for commuters," he said.

Taxi leaders welcomed the move but criticised the plan for not engaging key stakeholders.

Mr Rhasid Ssekindi, the chairperson of the Uganda Taxi Operators Federation, supported the safety initiative but challenged the minister for not consulting drivers.

"I am learning about this from the media. Our drivers are not sensitised about the directive. Drivers must understand the dangers and be

prepared for the way forward," Mr Ssekindi said.

Mr Moses Balagadde, the secretary of defence at Busabala-Kategula stage, Makindye Division, echoed the concern.

"There is nothing a minister will lose by organising seminars for taxi drivers. When the president appoints a minister, they must reach where the president cannot. We must be involved as key stakeholders," he said.

The directive signals the government's commitment to improving public transport safety, ensuring only roadworthy taxis operate on Uganda's roads.

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