

Enforcement. Some of the measures include installing digital speed limiters on commercial cars and inspecting cargo trucks.

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KAMPALA. Government has declared new and revived old stringent measures to curb the increasing cases of road carnage following the Friday night grisly accident in Kiryandongo District that killed at least 22 people and injured dozens of others.

The accident involved Gaagaa Bus, a tractor and a truck in Nanda Village, 12km after Karuma bridge on the Kampala-Gulu highway.

On Monday, Cabinet approved a raft of stringent measures proposed by the Ministry of Works to address road carnage.

According to the plan, commercial vehicles are obliged to install digital speed limiters; all cargo trucks will fulfill certain regulatory requirements, including inspection for their road worthiness.

Drivers of cargo vehicles will require accreditation and there will also be introduction of a Graduated Driving Licence that will compel drivers of commercial vehicles to undergo periodic refresher courses and training.

While briefing journalists about the Cabinet resolutions yesterday, ICT minister Frank Tumwebaze said the ministry of Works also intends to establish automated driver test centres in selected parts of the country.

"This system is intended to minimise human bias and to allow learner drivers to undergo rigorous testing to confirm their competencies to drive before issuance of driving permits."

Govt revives strict rules to reduce road carnage



Tragedy. The wreckage of Gaagaa bus after the Friday accident in Kiryandongo District that killed 22 people. COURTESY PHOTO

Mr Tumwebaze said.

He said the government will step up road safety sensitisation and strengthen coordination of road safety activities.

When contacted and asked whether the new measures will be enforced, the Works minister, Ms Ntege Azuba, declined to comment.

"I have not been in office and I am also on my way out. Let me give you

someone who will give you all the information you need," she said and referred us to Mr Winston Katushabe, the secretary to the Transport Licensing Board.

Our repeated calls to Mr Katushabe went unanswered and he did not respond to our text messages either.

The Uganda Driving Standards Agency (UDSA) that trains a professional drivers was skeptical on the

new measures, saying the ministry has never implemented the existing laws some of which are as old as 20 years as contained in the 1998 Traffic and Road Safety Act.

"These regulations and laws have been in place since 1998. It is not that we do not have the laws, but enforcement has been the problem. This time they must not only sit back in their offices but move to enforce the mea-

asures," Mr Innocent Muhangi, the UDSA director, said.

Mr Muhangi said road carnage is increasing because Uganda has no minimum standards for drivers.

He said many people learn driving from their colleagues, without going for formal training in established driving schools to understand basic traffic rules.

"Most drivers are not trained. There are those that learn from others. They do not have refresher trainings and the biggest danger comes from such group of drivers," Mr Muhangi said.

After the accident, President Museveni declared three days of national mourning and flags to fly at half-mast across the country.

He also offered Shs3m to each survivor and Shs5m to each bereaved family.

PREVIOUS MEASURES

This is not the first time government has announced several stringent measures to curb road carnage. In 2004 after the death of former Attorney General Francis Ayume, government introduced mandatory installation of speed governors in all passenger vehicles. It also declared mandatory wearing of seat belts in all vehicles. Non-compliance attracted instant penalties on the offenders by traffic police officers. However, there has been laxity in enforcing these measures.