

**A**t the weekend I travelled with some friends to Kabale. It was my first time to go that side of the country.

The journey was an epic experience and for sure I would have wanted, and it is still in my plans, to have it again and again.

The scenery, the roads hanging above the valleys and the vegetation sloping down hills was a sight in itself.

However, the worst part of the journey was the driving that at some point was characterised by sudden brakes and a driver who thought he knew it all.

First, we had hired a car with a driver but between the journey, the driver had some family issues and had to return to Kampala as we drove on.

Among us, were five drivers and one of us had to drive from Masaka to Mbarara before another colleague got behind the wheel.

#### Enter sudden brakes

It is like hell had broken loose and for sure I could not even afford to dose off amid sudden brakes and a semblance of reckless driving characterised by overtaking in corners and speeding.

All this was happening at about 11pm on a road that this particular driver was driving on for the first time. I chose to be the voice of reason and cautioned the driver to cut back on the speed. Some supported me while others cheered on.

But as we continued, those who had been cheering started to see sense in what I had said earlier after we squeezed between a Toyota Corolla and an oncoming bus.

Meanwhile the driver did not see sense in what majority of us were saying. He continued to speed away as some kept on with batted hope for safe arrival.

At about 1am we safely drove into Kabale Town and parked for the long weekend.

On Sunday we got on the road to return to Kampala and against my

# Do not be held hostage by a reckless driver

advice and a few silent voices, this particular driver, who I have known to be reckless, got behind the wheel for the return journey.

And just like the previous night, he continued to speed away this time more reckless than ever amid voiced up resistance from myself in particular and others who actually had previously cheered on.

Between the journey, police stopped us twice for speeding and we were only cautioned after pleading wit the officers.

Even with such caution, the bad driving never stopped as the driver continued to negotiate corners at a speed (130 kilometres per hour) that I thought was out of this world.

In all this, he kept committing the

same mistakes as before and would arrogantly brush off suggestions requesting that he cut back on speed.

His argument, a lame one at that, was he knew what he was doing and was on a highway thus would not drive as if he was on town roads.

#### Not fair

I thought this was not fair to the rest of us and I had to insist that we could not be driven by someone with such a sense of arrogance.

And as such I braved the bad driving through Mbarara up to Lukaya, where I made it known to him that he needed to handover the car to someone else.

The road to Kabale through Masaka and Mbarara is a smooth ride and it

is so tempting to speed even at black spots. To my recollection, all the speed limit reminders I saw on the road, read below 100 kilometres per hour but at several intervals we were travelling at 120 or more kilometres per hour.

Many drivers tend to be tempted to engage in a chase game as cars speed past overtaking dangerously.

Speeding, according to Ivan Kyeyune, a Land Rover specialised mechanic in Nsambya, Kampala blurs one's capacity to control the car in case of an emergency and as such it is discouraged.

"If anything scares you be sure it might end up fatal. It might be something suddenly crossing the road or inside the car," he says.

## Different speed limits on Ugandan roads

Every country has a prescribed speed limit for a specific road that considers the activities in the areas and the traffic flow.

In Uganda, every driver is required not to exceed 30 kilometres per hour when driving around schools and hospitals, while driving within cities and streets, the driver is required not to exceed 40 kilometres per hour.

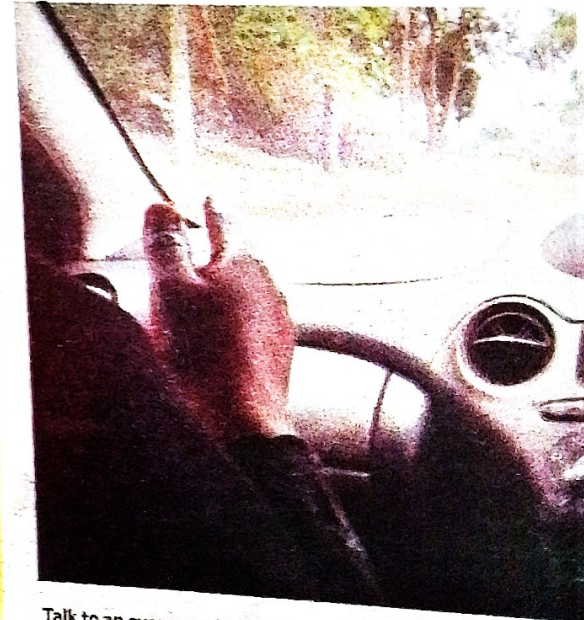
These speed limits are contained in the National Traffic guideline, which are enforced by the traffic police.

In 2013, Kampala Capital City Authority proposed that speed limit within Kampala is reduced to 30 kilometres per

hour from 40 kilometres per hour because of increasing congestion. On city roads connecting to the main highways and motorways, a driver is required to drive below or at 50 kilometres per hour.

Single carriage ways have a speed limit of not more than 80 kilometres per hour while expressways and double carriage ways have a speed limit of between 80 and 100 kilometres per hour.

However, particular road spots, especially those that are deemed dangerous, especially on highways have proportionate speed limits that go up to 50 kilometres per hour.



Talk to an over speeding driver to recude speed before it is too