

'A person dies on Uganda's roads every 97 minutes'

The suspension of the operations of Nile Star bus company by the Minister of State for Transport Fred Byamukama on May 6 for a month is a welcome move. It paves the way for inspection of the mechanical conditions of the company buses, as well as the competence of their drivers.

Police reports indicated that Nile Star buses were recently involved in 11 different crashes, killing 56 people and injuring 91. Similarly, the recently launched 2025 Uganda Police Annual crime report worryingly revealed that 15 Ugandans die daily due to road crashes, a crisis that has been continuous over the last few years.

In 2025, traffic police recorded 26,044 road traffic crashes. Of these, 4,602 were fatal, 13,563 were serious, and 7,879 were minor. The total death toll reached 5,383 people, an increase of 4.7 percent from 2024.

In a global context, the World Health Organisation reports that Africa accounts for nearly one-fifth of all road crash deaths despite owning just

There is, however, one hopeful signal. Deaths among children aged five to 11 fell by 8.1 percent, and those aged 12 to 17 by 0.9 percent, the group most exposed to school road safety education, which deserves urgent investment to improve the situation among children.

By week, Fridays recorded the most crashes at 3,921, while Sunday recorded the most fatalities with 810. The single deadliest two-hour window is 6pm to 8pm, during which 711 people were killed. This is the evening rush where motorcyclists carry two or three passengers, racing against time and money.

By months, December was the deadliest month with 2,443 crashes, while October had the highest fatality count at 523. These are not surprising patterns but are predictable, documented and entirely addressable. Sixty percent of all crashes occur on straight road stretches. Careless overtaking was the single leading cause of crashes at 25 percent, followed by speeding at 20.5 percent. Together, they caused more than 45 percent of all crashes. There is no road engineering fix for impunity behind the wheel.

There's need for accountability, sustained enforcement and consequences that change driver behaviour. There's need to regulate the boda boda sector. If a motorcyclist has no licence or helmet, their motorcycle should be impounded, not a fine paid and forgotten by sunset. A rider carrying four passengers is operating a mobile deathtrap that traffic police must act upon.

While a private motorist without or who forgets their permit should be stopped and fined heavily, a dangerous mechanical condition commercial taxi should not be allowed to roam. Speeding, overloading, and operating an unroadworthy vehicle are not administrative irregularities. They kill people. Traffic officers must be directed and held accountable for prioritising the offences that carry the highest lethality, not the easiest ones to issue a ticket.

Uganda has a weak documented cycle: an operation launches, briefly crashes, declines and ends. Within weeks, roads return to lawlessness. Sustained, intelligence-led deployment at the times and locations this report identifies, Friday to Sunday evenings, major highways, and straight rural roads must become standard practice.

The data already tells us where people are dying.



Ronnie W. Kyazze
Road crashes



three percent of the world's vehicles. Uganda, with one of the lowest vehicle ownership rates in Africa, is producing some of the highest road crash death rates on the continent.

Motorcyclists bear the heaviest burden, accounting for 35 percent of all crashes, with 55 percent of all seriously injured road users. Motorcyclists and their passengers recorded 2,525 deaths in 2025, the highest of any road user category, followed by pedestrians at 1,776 deaths.

The most alarming revelation in the report is the number of young people affected. Fatalities among those aged 18 to 24 increased by 19.7 percent in one year, from 731 deaths in 2024 to 875 in 2025. No other age group came close to that magnitude. This is the generation riding motorcycles as a livelihood.

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