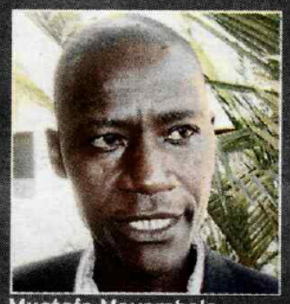
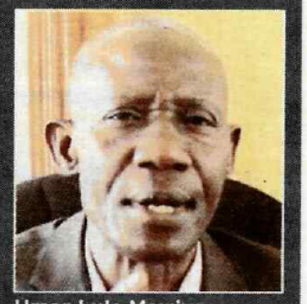
GOVT ORDERS ILLEGAL BUS, TAXI PARKS OUT OF CITY


Winstone Katushabe


Mustafa Mayambala


Benon Kigenyi


Umar Lule Mawiya

By Charles Etukuri

In a move to decongest Kampala, the Government has resolved to remove all ungazetted bus and taxi parks from the city centre.

This follows complaints from members of the public about the messy state of Kampala's transport sector. To sort this out, the works and transport ministry wrote to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) notifying them about the need to streamline the transport sector operations in the city.

Winstone Katushabe, the commissioner for transport regulation and safety at the works ministry, wrote to KCCA requesting for a meeting to discuss the challenges associated with public transport in the city.

He raised concerns over buses not operating from terminals that are designated by KCCA, noting that Section 64 of the Traffic and Road Safety Act, 1998, Chapter 361, requires the works minister to organise [illegible]ansport industry on a route basis and to ensure that operators keep within their catchment area and on their designated routes.

Katushabe observed that there are a number of bus terminals that were opened without KCCA approval, and which do not meet the ministry's requirements.

"Pursuant to this section, the works ministry works with local governments to designate bus terminals for bus operations. The ministry, therefore, requires all buses that operate within Kampala to originate from bus terminals that are designated by KCCA. However, of late, buses have moved away from their designated bus terminals to the streets and other undesignated p[illegible]poss including washing bays and[illegible]el stations," he said.

Katushabe said the proliferation of illegal bus terminals and parking places in the city has had a negative effect on public transport, creating disorganisation, congestion and non-compliance with statutory requirements such as Public Service Vehicles (PSV) licences, route charts and payment of third party insurance.

He noted that the bus industry has been hijacked by brokers, who set up offices around bus terminals and on streets, and fleece unsuspecting travellers, charging them three times the actual transport fare.

"Sometimes the passengers are abandoned after paying the fare, leaving them stranded," Katushabe noted in his letter dated October 23, 2025.

Although KCCA took long to respond, in a letter dated February 27, 2026, the authority's deputy executive director, Benon Higenyi, said: "KCCA recognises the growing challenges associated with public transport in the city and considers this meeting timely and important in supporting joint efforts to streamline their operations."

Katushabe said the ministry and KCCA conducted a joint verification of bus terminals in the city, during which a number of terminals and parking places that had not been approved by KCCA and did not meet the ministry's requirements were closed, but have since resumed operations. Consequently, a meeting between officials from KCCA and the works ministry has been scheduled for Wednesday, during which the issue of banning ungazetted taxi and bus parks will be further discussed.

The move comes hardly a week after KCCA unveiled a new transport plan that effectively bans all taxis from picking up and dropping off passengers outside designated stops, and restricted bodabodas from entering the central business district (CBD).

By 2020, a total of 400,000 taxis were estimated to be in the country, of which about 15,000 operate in Kampala metropolitan area, according to the works ministry.

Similarly, the Uganda Bus Owners' Association (UBOA) estimates that there are about 700 buses in the country, operated by about 80 companies.

BUS, TAXI LEADERS SPEAK OUT

Solomon Nsiimire, the UBOA chairperson and managing director of Link Bus Services Limited, welcomed the government decision to ban ungazetted parks, saying there were so many illegal terminals and offices. He said there were about 40 illegal terminals and offices set up in different parts of Kampala.

"Most of them are operated by people who don't own buses. They set up an office and call it a terminal. They are fleecing the public. For a journey that costs sh40,000, they ask for sh60,000 or sh70,000. They then take the passenger to a bus company and pay less. It is something that we bus owners have been fighting," he said.

Asked how many designated bus terminals are in Kampala, Nsiimire said: "We have two general bus parks; Kisenyi and Namayiba, which have different bus owners operating from there. Then, we have about six other bus companies that have their own gazetted parks. The majority of the offices that KCCA and the ministry are talking about don't belong to us."

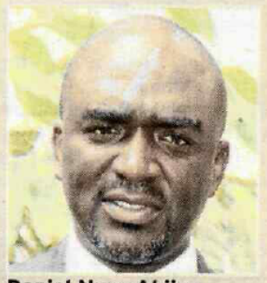
Nsiimire said there were some buses that load from the streets, especially those on the West Nile route, adding that they had received several complaints from people who had been cheated.

On his part, Mustafa Mayambala, the vice-chairperson of Uganda Taxi Operators Federation (UTOF), criticised KCCA for rushing the decision to ban taxis from undesignated stages, saying they had not implemented most of the resolutions reached during in their meeting with President Yoweri Museveni at State House Entebbe five years ago.

"We had agreed that KCCA designate several stages along the major roads in and around Kampala. The President also directed KCCA to secure land in different divisions in and around Kampala for setting up taxi stages, but they have never done that," Mayambala stated.

"They are rushing the implementation of this decision. Let them take into account the distances involved. You don't expect someone who stays in Kireka and works along Jinja Road to go back to the park to board a taxi, yet he could just walk across the road and board a taxi if KCCA had designated a stage on Jinja Road," He added.

Mayambala said they had in the meantime set up holding centres to ensure KCCA does not take advantage of the directive to arrest innocent drivers since the space in the park is not even enough for all of them.


Daniel NuweAbiine

KCCA SPEAKS OUT ON BAN

KCCA spokesperson Daniel NuweAbiine said the ban on taxis from picking passengers outside the designated places was aimed at restoring order, improving urban mobility and addressing persistent traffic congestion in the capital.

"We are putting an end to illegal stages and all taxis must operate within designated parks. We are working with the leadership of UTOF to ensure these people get back to their designated places. For instance, all taxis plying the Entebbe route must go into Usafi Park, and we are already in the process of enforcing that," he said.

On February 20, Kampala deputy resident city commissioner Haji Umar Lule Mawiya, implemented the removal of illegal taxi and bodaboda stages, as well as street vendors. The crackdown followed the expiry of a two-week ultimatum issued by Kampala minister Minsa Kabanda.

Mawiya said the operation was conducted by the KCAA enforcement team together with the district security committee all over the five divisions of Kampala.

KCCA said bodabodas would be banned from the CBD under a new plan, creating 929 stages for 27,870 registered riders across the city.