

BY TOBBIAS JOLLY OWINY

NWOYA. Three people have been confirmed dead after a van they were travelling in hit an elephant a few kilometres from Karuma Checkpoint inside Murchison Falls National Park. The accident occurred at about 8pm on Sunday, involving a Toyota Hiace, also leaving four others critically injured.

The URA staff who are under the Tax Education and Arua Domestic Taxes team had been in Arua City to facilitate taxpayer education sessions. It was aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs with practical knowledge on taxpayer rights and obligations, proper record-keeping practices, presumptive tax computation and compliance requirements, and voluntary tax compliance and business growth.

The training, organised under the Women Economic Empowerment

for Green Transformation (WEEG) Project of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), targeted women entrepreneurs focusing on financial planning, business formalisation, and taxation.

Three occupants, including Robert Wamala Rumanyika, died on the spot, while four others, including the driver, sustained injuries.

The incident occurred approximately 10km from Arua Junction (Karuma Checkpoint) when the vehicle knocked down an elephant, which retaliated by smashing the vehicle. Meanwhile, witness accounts indicate that the driver was likely driving beyond the prescribed speed limit within a park.

Mr Khaled Ali, one of the witnesses who helped to rescue the trapped

come productive," she says.

we must uplift their welfare if we need velopment.

How URA staff perished in Karuma crash

CAUSE OF DEATH

The driver of the Toyota Hiace, which was carrying seven officials from the URA travelling from Arua City back to Kampala after official duty, knocked down a crossing elephant and subsequently lost control of the vehicle.

occupants of the car, explained that the van overtook a trailer before it rammed into the elephant.

"While we approached the scene of the accident, a man who climbed down from the trailer, likely the turn man, flagged us to slow down, and we could

see some kind of smoke in the air ahead of us," Mr Ali, who was heading to Arua, said.

According to him, the injured elephant lay on the road in front of the van, but got up in anger and started to hit the car once they made attempts to break the car's glass and save the injured.

"We started breaking the window glasses to pull out the injured since the doors could not open, but the elephant, upon hearing the noise, rose and headed for the car and began smashing it," he explained.

The elephant started pushing the vehicle into the bush and the rescuers fled. Thereafter, the elephant lost energy and dropped down before Ali and others could return to the car to

resume the rescue before the police arrived.

While one person died instantly, two others died before police arrival since they were trapped under the weight of the vehicle.

In a statement, the traffic police spokesperson, Mr Michael Kananura, confirmed the crash, stating that the bodies of the deceased were conveyed to Anaka Hospital mortuary pending post-mortem examinations.

"Motorists are strongly urged to exercise extreme caution while driving through national parks and wildlife-protected areas, especially at night, and to strictly observe speed limits to avoid such incidents," he added.

According to Mr Kananura, police responded promptly and rushed the injured victims to Kiryandongo Hospital for medical attention.

"They were later transferred to Kampala for further management."