

Wake-up call on road safety ahead of festive season

The festive season in Uganda is a time of joy, bustling travel and family reunion. It is also tragically one of the deadliest periods on the roads.

According to Uganda Police Force's Annual Crime report (2024), road crashes increased by 6.4 percent, rising from 23,608 in 2023 to 25,107 in 2024, with causalities reaching 25,808 people.

Recently, the Ministry of Works and Transport warned that Uganda is losing 14 people daily to road traffic accidents. These are not just numbers, they are fathers, mothers, children and friends whose lives are cut short.

Known most notorious highway blind spots in Uganda include Kampala-Entebbe highway and Jinja-Kampala highway, among others to look out for.

Some of the reasons as to why road accidents spike during festive seasons include increased traffic volumes as more people travel often long distances to visit, reunite, attend events among others. More vehicles on the roads naturally increases the probability of collisions.

Alcohol consumptions during celebrations, even small amounts of alcohol impair coordination and decision-making, leading to more crashes.

Vehicle overloading during festive trips, vehicles may carry extra passengers or luggage, affecting stability and breaking efficiency.

The stress that comes with the festive seasons, people tend to rush during holiday shopping, event planning and social commitments. This can cause dis-



tracted driving, impatience and risk taking on the roads.

Motorcycles (boda bodas) account for 53 percent of road deaths in early 2025 and 23 percent of fatalities involve pedestrians.

These are some of the ways in which we can reduce accident spikes on the roads during this festive season;

Authorities should encourage travellers to avoid peak days and hours to reduce congestion on the roads. The police and local councils should deploy traffic officers at known choke points to guide vehicles and prevent gridlocks.

Traffic police officers should conduct surprise sobriety tests, especially near bars and event

venues. The churches, youth groups and local leaders can run anti-drink driving awareness drives.

There should be strict enforcement on passenger limits by penalizing overloaded vehicles, especially buses and taxis. Also, the use of media platforms to explain how overloading affects vehicle and increases crash risks.

For the motorcycle (boda boda), helmet enforcement laws for both riders and passengers. Promotion of visibility by requiring boda Bodas to use headlights and wear reflective vests especially at night.

Uganda's road safety crisis is not just about enforcement; it is about culture. Initiatives

like SCEAP (Stop, Check, Educate, Act, Promote) encourage road safety as a lifestyle. If every Ugandan embraced this mindset, we could reverse the grim statistics.

This festive season, let us remember, the road is not just a path to celebration, it is a shared space of life and death. Every decision whether to speed, drink, and drive, or skip a helmet has consequences. Uganda cannot afford to lose 14 lives a day to preventable accidents.

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