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UGANDA LAW SOCIETY

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THE BLOODY TEN DAYS: ULS MOURNS UNNECESSARY LOSS OF LIFE AND CONDEMNS PERFORMATIVE RESPONSES TO ROAD CARNAGE

Kampala, Uganda – 18 July 2026: It is with profound sorrow and a heavy heart that the Uganda Law Society (ULS) mourns the devastating loss of innocent lives in a series of tragic road accidents over the past ten days. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who have lost loved ones — especially the children, students, teachers, and fellow citizens whose futures have been cut short. We extend our deepest condolences to all bereaved families and wish the injured a full and speedy recovery. May the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace.

In what has sadly become known as **"The Bloody Ten Days,"** Uganda has witnessed multiple preventable tragedies that have shaken the nation:

1. **July 7, Bobi Trading Centre, Omoro District (Kampala-Gulu Highway):** An Opit Travellers bus collided head-on with a trailer, claiming **14 lives** and injuring **28 others.**
2. **July 10, Mukono District:** A school bus collided with a train at a railway crossing, resulting in **1 death** and several injuries.
3. **July 14, Mbale–Iganga Highway (Bugweri District):** A school bus rammed into a stationary trailer, killing **1 person** (the driver) and injuring **15 others**, many of them students.
4. **July 16, Kapchorwa District (Chekwatit Hill):** A bus belonging to King David Junior School overturned, tragically killing **at least 25 pupils** and **1 adult** (the school's founder and director), with dozens more injured.

These incidents compound an already dire national crisis. According to the Uganda Police Annual Crime Report released on 30 March 2026, **5,383 people** died on our roads in 2025 — an average of approximately **15 lives lost every single day**. This follows **5,144 deaths** in 2024, **4,806** in 2023,and **4,534** in 2022. Highways such as Kampala-Gulu have become sites of repeated tragedy, and our children are no longer safe even on educational journeys.

This is not mere misfortune. It is the cumulative result of systemic challenges that demand urgent, decisive leadership. As a nation, we must confront weak enforcement, unroadworthy vehicles, reckless driving, inadequately protected railway crossings, and gaps in accountability with firmness, fairness, and foresight.

In the spirit of solidarity and compassion, **Hon. Norbert Mao**, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, together with a ULS delegation comprising **Egaru Emmanuel** (Council Member and Northern Representative), **Calvin Kilama** and **Olanya Isaac** (Section 3C Committee Members), and others, visited survivors of the Opit Bus accident at St. Mary's Hospital Lacor on 17 July 2026. The delegation, representing ULS President **Isaac Ssemakadde, SC**, offered a listening ear and support to the injured while expressing condolences to the bereaved families. We commend this gesture of empathy and remain committed to supporting victims.

While the ULS notes the announcement of a blanket suspension of all school trips by the acting Minister of Education and Sports, we condemn this as a kneejerk, performative panacea that punishes educational institutions and students without addressing the root causes of the carnage. Such measures may offer the appearance of action but fail to deliver genuine safety; they sidestep the hard work of systemic reform in vehicle standards, infrastructure, enforcement, and driver accountability that is truly required.

The ULS therefore calls upon the Government, as the steward of public safety, to act decisively and compassionately as a firm, fair, and foresighted guardian of Ugandan lives. We urge the following immediate and sustained measures:

1. **Immediate nationwide inspection and impounding** of all unroadworthy public transport and school vehicles, coupled with strict licensing and maintenance standards.

2. **Rigorous enforcement** of speed governors, regulated driver working hours, sobriety checks, and enhanced traffic policing on all major highways, with technology and visible deterrence where needed.

3. **Securing of all railway crossings** through installation of barriers, improved signage, lighting, and dedicated personnel to prevent collisions.

4. **Lifting of the interdiction** on renowned road safety expert **Ronald Amanyire**, Principal Road Safety Officer at the Ministry of Works and Transport, to enable his expertise and voice to contribute meaningfully to national road safety efforts.

5. **A comprehensive public audit** of road safety budgets, infrastructure maintenance, and emergency response capabilities, with transparent reporting to restore public confidence.

6. **Provision of timely compensation,** medical care, and psychosocial support to all victims and their families, recognizing the profound human cost of these losses.

We stand ready to support collaborative efforts that prioritize life over complacency. The blood on our roads must spur unified action — not division. Every Ugandan child, parent, and traveler deserves to journey in safety. Let this moment mark a turning point toward a safer Uganda through resolute leadership, accountability, and investment in prevention.

Enough is enough. The time for meaningful, lasting change is now.

Asiimwe Anthony
VICE PRESIDENT, UGANDA LAW SOCIETY







L-R: Adv. Olanya Isaac (Section 3C Commitee Member), Hon. Egaru Emmanuel Omiat (Council Member), Adv. Calvin Kilama (Section 3C Commitee Member) addressing the press in Gulu, following the visit to St. Mary's Lacor Hospital.