PETITION TO THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA THROUGH THE RT. HON. SPEAKER

RE: URGENT ROAD SAFETY INTERVENTIONS FOLLOWING THE JULY 7th ACCIDENT INVOLVING OPIT BUS COMPANY ON THE GULU-KAMPALA HIGHWAY

We, the undersigned citizens and road users of Uganda, respectfully submit this petition to the Parliament of Uganda through the Rt. Hon. Speaker, seek urgent government intervention to address persistent road safety hazards along the Gulu-Kampala Highway, while tasking the government to develop a long-term solution.

INTRODUCTION

The Gulu-Kampala Highway remains one of the most critical transport corridors in Uganda, linking the Northern region to the central business hub. However, over the past five years, this highway has increasingly become synonymous with fatal road traffic accidents involving public service buses, many resulting in significant loss of life, severe injuries, and destruction of property.

National data from the Uganda Police Traffic Directorate indicates a worsening road safety crisis, with fatalities rising from **4,534 deaths in 2022** to **4,806 in 2023**, **5,144 in 2024**, and **5,383 in 2025**, averaging approximately **15 deaths per day nationwide**.

Within this broader crisis, the Gulu-Kampala Highway is consistently identified as one of the most dangerous routes in Uganda due to its narrow carriageways and high-speed traffic conditions.

Over the past five years, the highway has recorded multiple fatal accidents involving buses, including:

- **January 6, 2023:** A passenger bus travelling from Kampala to Gulu crashed, killing **at least 16 people and injuring 21 others**.
- **October 22, 2025 (Kiryandongo District):** A **head-on collision between two buses** (reported to include companies such as Nile Star and others) resulted in **at least 46 confirmed deaths**, with earlier reports indicating up to 63 fatalities, making it one of the deadliest road crashes in Uganda's recent history.
- **October 2025 (same corridor):** Another major crash involving **two buses and additional vehicles** led to **46 deaths and dozens of injuries**, attributed largely to dangerous overtaking and high speed.
- **March 2026 (Kiryandongo stretch):** A **bus travelling from Gulu to Kampala collided with a stationary truck**, killing **5 people and injuring at least 11 others**.

The most recent tragedy occurred on **07 July 2026, at Bobi Trading Centre (Omoro District),** involving a bus belonging to **Opit Bus Company** and a Kenya-registered trailer that collided with a bus belonging to **Opit Bus Company (Opit Travellers)**, resulting in **at least 14 deaths and over 28 injuries**.

We solemnly recognise and honour the lives lost in the **07 July 2026** accident:

- **Abdul Ismail** - Bus Driver
- **Ahmed Aden** - Trailer Passenger
- **Umar Ahmed Husein** - Trailer Driver
- **Aguti Justine Jesse** - Bus Passenger
- **Ojok Bosco** - Bus Passenger
- **Ajok Harriet** - Bus Passenger
- **Odoch Stanley Uhuru** - Bus Staff
- **Apiyo Ros**e - Bus Passenger
- **Ausi Justine** - Bus Passenger
- **Ojok John Paul** - Bus Passenger

- **Odong Walter Uhuru** - Bus Passenger and brother of **Odoch Stanley Uhuru**
- **Watmon John** - Bus Passenger
- **Kinyera Godfrey Acire** - Bus Passenger
- **Maniriho Philip** - Bus Passenger
- **Kadara Musamin** - Bus Passenger

These individuals represent not just statistics, but families, communities, and livelihoods irreversibly affected by preventable road safety failures, which demonstrate a clear and consistent pattern: bus-related crashes, often involving speeding, overtaking, and poor road visibility, are a leading cause of fatalities on this highway.

Within this broader crisis, the Gulu-Kampala Highway stands out as one of the most dangerous routes, with repeated high-fatality crashes involving passenger buses and heavy trucks.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

This petition is anchored in the **Traffic and Road Safety Act, Cap. 361**, which mandates safe road use, regulates public service vehicles, establishes speed controls, and empowers government agencies to enforce safety standards and infrastructure requirements.

Despite this legal framework, recurring accidents point to significant enforcement and infrastructure gaps.

PETITIONERS' CONCERNS

We note with concern that:

1. Large sections of the Gulu Kampala Highway lack reflective road markings, increasing risk, especially at night.

2. Public service buses lack onboard passenger safety and communication systems.
3. Over speeding and reckless driving persist despite existing regulations.
4. Routine mechanical inspection of buses is inconsistent and weakly enforced.
5. Many drivers operate without regular medical fitness assessments.
6. There is limited emphasis on continuous professional training, such as defensive driving.
7. Fatal accident sites remain unmarked, with no memorials or warning systems.

PRAYERS AND REQUESTS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

In light of the above, we humbly petition Parliament to:

1. **Enforce Installation of Reflective Road Markings**
   Direct the Ministry of Works and Transport and UNRA to install and maintain reflective lane markings and road studs along the highway.
2. **Mandate Onboard Passenger Information Systems**
   Require all buses to install onboard visual systems displaying speed, alerts, and safety messages.
3. **Strengthen Enforcement of Speed Governors with Audible Alerts**
   Ensure all buses are fitted with calibrated speed governors linked to audible warning systems.
4. **Mandatory Mechanical Inspection of Buses**
   Institute strict and routine inspection schedules for all public service buses to ensure roadworthiness, with penalties for non-compliance.
5. **Mandatory Medical Testing for Drivers**
   Require periodic medical examinations for all commercial drivers, including vision, hearing, fatigue-related conditions, and substance use screening.

6. **Compulsory Defensive Driving Refresher Courses**
   Introduce mandatory periodic refresher training in defensive driving for all public service vehicle drivers as a condition for license renewal.
7. **Erect a Memorial at the Accident Site**
   Establish a permanent memorial at Bobi Trading Centre in honour of the victims listed above, serving both as remembrance and a road safety warning.

CONCLUSION

Rt. Hon. Speaker, the recurring tragedies on the Gulu Kampala Highway are preventable. The loss of the individuals named above and many others demands urgent and decisive action.

We urge Parliament to exercise its oversight role to ensure full enforcement of existing laws and immediate implementation of practical safety interventions to protect Ugandan lives.