

# KAMPALA – HOIMA ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS WALK 2026 REPORT





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## Introduction

The Joe Walker Foundation successfully completed the 2026 Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Awareness Walk, marking five years of a sustained campaign aimed at promoting safer road use across Uganda. The initiative, led by road safety champion and media practitioner Joseph Beyanga, popularly known as Joe Walker, continues to use long-distance walks on various roads in Uganda, as a platform to engage communities and highlight the urgent need to improve road safety.

The walk was officially flagged off on February 28, 2026 at Sheraton Kampala Hotel, by Gen. Edward Katumba Wamala, the Minister of Works and Transport. He commended the initiative for raising national awareness about the growing burden of road crashes in Uganda. The Minister also highlighted critical issues affecting road safety including the encroachment of pedestrian walkways by vendors, vandalism of road infrastructure, and the need for patience and responsibility among road users. The walk was held under a message reinforcing the importance of responsible road use in preventing avoidable deaths.

Uganda continues to record over a dozen road crash fatalities daily, with major causes including speeding, reckless overtaking, poor enforcement of traffic rules, and limited road safety awareness.



**joseph.beyanga@gmail.com**  
**+256 782 602 061**



Joe  
Walker

The Kampala–Hoima highway is one of Uganda’s increasingly busy transport corridors, linking the capital city to the fast-growing Hoima City, widely known as the country’s emerging oil hub. With rising economic activity in the Albertine region, traffic volumes along this highway have significantly increased, further emphasizing the importance of sustained road safety awareness and infrastructure improvements.

Over six days, the Joe Walker team trekked 213 kilometers, engaging communities, schools, boda-boda riders, transport operators, and local leaders while observing road conditions and highlighting safety hazards along the route. The walk ended with entry into Hoima City where the team carried several activities including visiting different institutions and sharing the message of road safety.

### **The Team 5 year Trail**

Over the past five years, the Joe Walker initiative has grown into one of Uganda’s most visible grassroots road safety advocacy movements, using long-distance walks to spark national conversations about road safety. The journey began on 28th February 2022, when Joseph Beyanga and a group of supporters walked 342 kilometers from Kampala to Bushenyi in the inaugural campaign dubbed “Joe Walker and Friends – Safe Roads Save Lives.” The following year, on 6th February 2023, the campaign continued with a 250-kilometer walk from Kampala to Mbale under the theme “Too Young to Die,” where the team engaged boda-boda riders, roadside communities, schools, law enforcement officers, and policymakers on responsible road use.

In 2023, the Foundation also organized additional awareness activities, including a 45-kilometer road safety walk within Kampala that brought together over 90 participants and included engagements with traffic police as well as a visit to Mulago National Referral Hospital, where road crash victims were supported in the casualty ward. Later that year, the Foundation held the first Joe Walker Remembrance Relay Walk, covering 60 kilometers to commemorate lives lost to road crashes during the global World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

The movement continued to expand in 2024 when the team walked 300 kilometers from Kampala to Fort Portal in a campaign titled “Get Home Safe,” which was flagged off by Gen. Wamala. The team was warmly received by leaders and communities in the Tooro Kingdom. That same year, the Foundation organized another large Remembrance Road Safety Relay Walk, attracting over 300 participants who walked in solidarity with road crash victims and survivors.

**joseph.beyanga@gmail.com**

**+256 782 602 061**



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In 2025, the advocacy reached new heights with a 360-kilometer walk from Kampala to Gulu under the theme “Safe Roads Save Lives.” Over ten days, the team engaged extensively with communities, road users, and authorities along the busy highway, bringing renewed public attention to road safety challenges on one of Uganda’s major transport corridors. These successive initiatives have firmly positioned the Joe Walker campaign as a sustained national effort dedicated to promoting safer roads and protecting lives across Uganda.

### **The Trail: Day-by-Day Breakdown**

#### **Day One: Kampala – Kakiri**

The walk officially commenced at Sheraton Hotel Kampala at approximately 7:30am, following the flag-off ceremony led by Minister Gen. Katumba Wamala. After remarks emphasizing patience and responsibility on the roads, the walkers set off on the first leg of the journey. As the team progressed through the outskirts of Wakiso District, early observations began highlighting challenges facing road safety infrastructure.

At Namusera, the team encountered severe vandalism of road furniture. Guardrails designed to prevent vehicles from veering off the road had been repeatedly hit by vehicles and eventually damaged beyond repair. In some sections, parts of the rail had even been cut off to create informal junctions serving private developments.

Upon entering Kakiri, another concern emerged — the widespread abuse of pedestrian walkways. Vendors, boda-boda riders, and motorists were occupying spaces intended for pedestrians. One notable encounter involved a heated debate with a driving school instructor who defended parking a vehicle on a pedestrian walkway, arguing that there was no road sign prohibiting the action. The incident raised concerns about the quality of driver training and the attitudes being passed on to future road users.

The day concluded with reflections on the need for emerging urban centers such as Kakiri and Nansana to adopt better road discipline before they replicate the congestion and disorder historically experienced in Kampala.



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## Day Two: Kakiri – Kikandwa

The team resumed the journey at 7am, setting off from Kakiri toward Kikandwa, continuing the second day of the Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk. As the walkers moved along the route, the conversations and reflections among participants were heavily influenced by a powerful message shared earlier by Rev. Benoni Magarura, widely known as Uncle Ben. He had met the team at Kayunga Wakiso and spoke candidly about his personal experience as a survivor of a devastating road crash. The accident left him with multiple broken bones and injuries that required more than two and a half years of recovery. Drawing from this painful experience, Uncle Ben urged road users to embrace patience, caution, and empathy while using the road. His central message was simple but profound: if every road user exercised patience and respect for others, the chances of everyone arriving home safely would increase significantly.

As the team progressed along the highway, they continued engaging with road users and roadside communities, sharing road safety messages and them of their shared responsibility in preventing crashes. The day's walk was long and physically demanding, but the spirit among the participants remained strong and focused on the mission of saving lives through awareness.

[joseph.beyanga@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.beyanga@gmail.com)

+256 782 602 061



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Walker

By late evening, the team had successfully arrived in Kikandwa, where they prepared to camp for the night. Although morale remained high, the physical toll of the journey was beginning to show, with some walkers developing painful blisters on their feet after covering long distances over consecutive days. Fortunately, the team included a resident medical professional who attended to the affected walkers, treating the blisters and ensuring everyone was fit to continue the journey. As night fell, the walkers settled into their camping arrangements, resting and preparing themselves physically and mentally for the next stage of the road safety journey.



### Day Three: Kikandwa – Kiboga

Day three of the Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk began at 8am, with the team departing Kikandwa and setting out for Kiboga, covering approximately 49.5 kilometers. The morning's journey quickly turned into a meaningful engagement when the walkers stopped at Victory Junior School Kituuma, a school located directly along the busy highway. Here, the team interacted with pupils and teachers, discussing the realities of navigating a school environment situated on a major transport corridor. Teachers shared worrying accounts of past road incidents involving children who cross the highway daily to access the school. Due to the persistent danger posed by speeding vehicles, the headteacher has taken on the responsibility of personally helping pupils cross the road during peak traffic hours.

**[joseph.beyanga@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.beyanga@gmail.com)**

**+256 782 602 061**



Joe  
Walker

The conversation highlighted the vulnerability of school children who live and study along major highways and reinforced the urgent need for safety interventions such as speed calming measures, clearly marked pedestrian crossings, and improved road signage near schools.

The day's walk was also sadly marked by a tragic reminder of the dangers present on the road. That afternoon, a cargo truck overturned at Kagobe, just a few kilometers outside Kiboga town. Rescue teams worked tirelessly to retrieve the occupants trapped inside the wreckage, though early indications suggested that the driver and the turn-boy may not have survived the crash. The accident occurred on a stretch of road currently under construction where warning signs were reportedly absent or poorly visible, raising serious concerns about contractor compliance with road safety standards. The day concluded with the team arriving at Kiboga School of Nursing and Midwifery, where they set up camp for the night, reflecting on both the meaningful engagements and the sobering realities encountered along the route.





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### **Day Four: Kiboga – Kyenda**

The fourth day of the Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk began with the team reflecting on the tragic events of the previous evening. As the walkers prepared to resume their journey, they revisited the wreckage of the cargo truck that had overturned near Kagobe, which was now stationed at Kiboga Police Station. The sight of the damaged truck served as a sobering reminder of the devastating consequences that road crashes can have.

From Kiboga, the walk continued toward Kyenda, taking the team through several stretches of road that are currently under construction. Along the way, the walkers closely observed the road conditions and safety measures in place. Across the corridor stretching from Busunju through Kiboga toward Hoima, the team consistently encountered worrying gaps in road safety management at construction sites.

Several sections lacked clearly visible warning signage, while others had deep excavations and open trenches without barriers or proper markings to alert motorists. In some areas, there were no reflective signs or speed reduction indicators to warn approaching drivers of ongoing construction works. These conditions pose a significant risk, particularly to drivers unfamiliar with the road who may not anticipate sudden hazards along the highway.

The observations strengthened the team’s call for stricter supervision and enforcement of safety standards for contractors responsible for road construction works. Ensuring proper signage, barriers, and safety precautions at construction sites is essential to protecting road users and preventing avoidable crashes along Uganda’s highways.

### **Day Five: Kyenda – Kikonda**

On the fifth day of the Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk, the team began the day with an engagement with boda-boda riders in Kyankwanzi, particularly members of the Bukwiri Boda Boda Association. The discussion created an open platform for riders to share their experiences and concerns about road safety along the highway. Many riders highlighted the everyday risks they face while operating on roads that are often narrow and lack dedicated space for motorcycles. They also pointed to the dangerous behavior of some motorists, especially drivers of heavy trucks who frequently speed, overtake recklessly, and show little regard for other road users. Another major concern raised was the vulnerability of school children who walk along the roads without pedestrian walkways, often forced to share the same narrow road space with fast-moving vehicles.

**joseph.beyanga@gmail.com**

**+256 782 602 061**



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The engagement was supported by Ronald Bakumwany, the Officer in Charge of Traffic in Kyankwanzi, who offered practical road safety advice to the riders. He emphasized the importance of discipline on the road, including respecting traffic rules, avoiding speeding, wearing protective gear, and exercising patience while sharing the road with other users. Later in the day, the team proceeded to Kyabanjonjo Primary School, where more than 800 pupils participated in a road safety awareness session. The discussion focused on teaching children practical ways to navigate roads safely, particularly in environments where zebra crossings, sidewalks, and pedestrian infrastructure are absent. The pupils were encouraged to remain alert when walking near roads, cross at safer points, and look out for approaching vehicles.

As the team continued toward Nsambya, they encountered a major hazard at Kyakabuga in the form of two large potholes on the highway. According to local residents, these potholes had already contributed to more than nine serious crashes, including a recent collision involving a bus and a truck that claimed seven lives. The dangerous condition of the road highlighted how small infrastructure defects, when left unattended, can quickly turn into deadly hazards for road users.

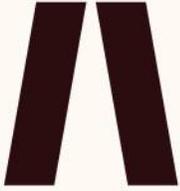
### **Day Six: Arrival in Hoima**

After six days on the road and a total distance of 213 kilometers, the Joe Walker team successfully arrived in Hoima, marking the completion of the 2026 Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk. While reaching the destination was a significant milestone, the team continued with a series of road safety engagements within the city aimed at reinforcing the campaign's message of responsible road use and protecting lives.

One of the most inspiring moments during the engagements in Hoima was the recognition of Ivan Tibaijuka, a local boda-boda rider who has taken it upon himself to help improve safety for school children in his community. Every morning at 6am, before beginning his daily work, Ivan voluntarily positions himself along a busy section of the road to help children safely cross on their way to school. His dedication and selfless service to the community earned him recognition from the Rotary Club of Bunyoro Kitara, which presented him with a service award. To further improve safety at the location where he assists the children, a zebra crossing was also painted to provide a safer crossing point for pedestrians.

**joseph.beyanga@gmail.com**

**+256 782 602 061**

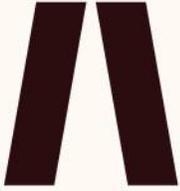


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The team also visited Hoima Regional Referral Hospital, where they met with the hospital's director, Ibrahim Bwaga. During the visit, Dr. Bwaga shared sobering statistics that illustrate the burden road crashes place on the health system. According to the hospital's records, the facility treats over 1,000 victims of road crashes every year and performs approximately 30 orthopaedic surgeries each month, with the majority of cases linked to motorcycle-related accidents.

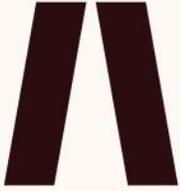
The road safety walk concluded with community engagements and a study walk through Hoima City involving students and local participants. The team also toured Hoima City Stadium, where participants reflected on the importance of safety, proper planning, and consistent maintenance in public infrastructure. The stadium's high safety standards and attention to detail served as an important example of how infrastructure can be designed and managed with safety at its core.



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[joseph.beyanga@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.beyanga@gmail.com)  
+256 782 602 061



## Key Observations

Throughout the Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk, the team observed several recurring road safety challenges that pose significant risks to road users and highlight systemic gaps in road management, infrastructure maintenance, and public awareness. Key observations included the following:

### **Vandalism and Damage to Road Infrastructure:**

Several sections of the highway showed clear signs of vandalism and repeated damage to essential road safety infrastructure, including guardrails and protective barriers. In some cases, damaged guardrails had been left unrepaired for extended periods, while in others, portions appeared to have been deliberately cut or removed to create informal access points to nearby developments. Such damage significantly reduces the effectiveness of these structures, which are designed to prevent vehicles from veering off the road and to protect motorists and pedestrians from severe crashes.

### **Encroachment on Pedestrian Walkways:**

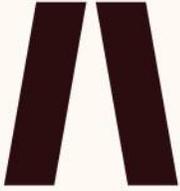
In many trading centers and rapidly growing urban areas along the route, pedestrian walkways were frequently occupied by roadside vendors, boda-boda riders, and parked vehicles. This encroachment forces pedestrians—including school children and the elderly—to walk directly on the roadway alongside moving traffic. The absence of protected walking spaces greatly increases the risk of pedestrian-related crashes.

### **Poor Driver Discipline and Risky Road Behavior:**

The team observed widespread instances of unsafe driving practices, including excessive speeding, reckless overtaking, failure to observe traffic regulations, and the use of mobile phones while driving. These behaviors were particularly evident along newly paved or open stretches of road, where motorists tended to accelerate significantly, creating dangerous conditions for other road users.

### **Unsafe Road Construction Zones:**

Several stretches of the highway currently under construction lacked adequate safety precautions. Observations included poor or non-existent warning signage, deep excavations without protective barriers, and limited visibility of construction zones, especially for drivers unfamiliar with the road. These conditions increase the likelihood of crashes, particularly at night or during poor weather conditions.



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### **Delayed Maintenance of Hazardous Road Defects:**

Multiple sections of the road contained large potholes and surface defects that had reportedly existed for extended periods without repair. Local residents indicated that some of these defects had already contributed to several serious crashes. When left unattended, even minor road defects can gradually develop into major hazards capable of causing fatal accidents.

### **Substance Abuse Among Some Boda-Boda Riders:**

In several locations along the route, the team encountered motorcycle riders who appeared to be operating under the influence of alcohol or other substances. Such behavior poses a serious safety threat not only to the riders themselves but to passengers, pedestrians, and other road users.

### **Limited Road Safety Awareness Among School Children:**

Engagements with schools revealed that many pupils who live and study near major highways have limited knowledge of safe road usage. Many children cross busy roads daily without access to zebra crossings, pedestrian bridges, or traffic wardens, making them highly vulnerable to road crashes.

### **Increasing Traffic Pressure in Emerging Urban Centers:**

Rapid urban growth along the Kampala–Hoima corridor has resulted in increased traffic volumes in towns and trading centers that were not originally designed to accommodate high levels of motorized transport. In many of these areas, road infrastructure such as pedestrian walkways, road markings, signage, and traffic control measures has not kept pace with the rate of urbanization, creating congested and potentially dangerous road environments.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the observations and engagements conducted during the Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk, the team developed several recommendations aimed at improving road safety, strengthening infrastructure management, and promoting responsible road use. These recommendations are intended to guide government agencies, contractors, law enforcement authorities, and community stakeholders in addressing the challenges identified along the corridor.



### **1. Strengthen Supervision and Compliance of Road Construction Contractors**

There is a need for stricter oversight of road construction contractors to ensure full compliance with established road safety and construction standards. All roadworks should be accompanied by clearly visible warning signs, reflective markers, protective barriers, and properly designated diversions where necessary. Construction zones should be well marked both during the day and at night to alert approaching drivers and reduce the risk of crashes. Regulatory authorities should also conduct routine inspections to ensure contractors adhere to safety requirements throughout the construction period.

### **2. Enhance Enforcement of Traffic Regulations**

Traffic law enforcement agencies should intensify efforts to enforce road safety regulations, particularly those related to speeding, reckless overtaking, distracted driving, and the misuse of pedestrian walkways. Increased patrols, speed monitoring, and targeted enforcement in high-risk areas can help discourage dangerous driving behavior. Additionally, stronger enforcement measures are needed in trading centers where vendors, boda-boda riders, and motorists frequently encroach on pedestrian walkways.

### **3. Expand Road Safety Education in Schools**

Road safety education should be integrated more systematically into school learning programs, particularly for schools located near major highways. Introducing structured lessons based on the Uganda Highway Code can equip children with essential knowledge on how to safely cross roads, identify traffic signs, and navigate busy road environments. Schools should also work with local authorities to organize periodic road safety awareness sessions for pupils.

### **4. Introduce Speed-Calming Infrastructure Near Schools and Trading Centers**

Areas with high pedestrian activity—especially schools, markets, and trading centers—should be equipped with speed-calming measures such as speed bumps, rumble strips, zebra crossings, and clear warning signage. These interventions help slow down traffic and improve visibility for both drivers and pedestrians, significantly reducing the risk of pedestrian-related accidents.

### **5. Improve Timely Maintenance of Road Infrastructure**

Road authorities should establish more responsive maintenance systems to address emerging road defects before they become major hazards. Potholes, damaged guardrails, faded road markings, and broken signage should be repaired promptly to maintain safe road conditions. Regular inspections and preventive maintenance can significantly reduce the likelihood of accidents caused by deteriorating road surfaces or missing safety infrastructure.



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## **6. Promote Responsible Boda-Boda Operations**

Motorcycle transport operators should be encouraged to adopt safer riding practices through training programs, stricter regulation, and collaboration with boda-boda associations. Particular attention should be given to addressing issues such as substance abuse, failure to wear protective gear, and reckless riding. Strengthening rider education and accountability within associations can contribute significantly to reducing motorcycle-related crashes.

## **7. Integrate Road Safety in Planning for Emerging Urban Centers**

As towns and trading centers along major highways continue to expand, it is critical that road infrastructure development keeps pace with urban growth. Authorities should proactively incorporate pedestrian walkways, road markings, traffic signage, and safe crossing points into urban planning processes. Early investment in road safety infrastructure can help prevent the chaotic and hazardous conditions that often emerge when towns grow without adequate transport planning.

## **Gratitude to Partners and Participants**

The Joe Walker Foundation extends sincere appreciation to the partners and organizations that supported the **2026 Kampala–Hoima Road Safety Walk**, including:

1. Uganda National Oil Company
2. Pride Bank Limited
3. Nicole Foundation
4. Sheraton Kampala Hotel
5. Next Media Services
6. Bunyoro Kingdom
7. Safe Way Right Way
8. Newman's Snacks
9. Spice FM
10. Rotary Club of Hoima-Kitara

Special appreciation goes to all walkers, volunteers, medical personnel, local leaders, law enforcement officers, schools, and communities who welcomed and supported the team along the route. Through collective effort and continued advocacy, the Joe Walker Foundation remains committed to ensuring that every road user travels safely and arrives home alive.

**Safe Roads Save Lives.**

**joseph.beyanga@gmail.com**

**+256 782 602 061**



Joe  
Walker

## MEDIA

<https://www.ugbulletin.co.ug/gen-katumba-warns-against-vandalism-of-road-signs-as-joe-walker-embarks-on-212km-trek-to-hoima/>

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# A BIG THANK YOU

to JoeWalker partners and fellow walkers for  
your participation in the Kampala to Hoima  
road safety Walk.

