AFRICAN CENTRE FOR MEDIA EXCELLENCE

ACME

2024

FINAL REPORT ON

UGANDAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF ROAD SAFETY

GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

HOSTED BY: IFRC

Table of Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

2.0 BACKGROUND 2

3.0 MAIN PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH 5

3.1 Specific objectives 5

4.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 6

5.0 METHODOLOGY 7

5.1 Scope of the study 7

5.2 Methods of data collection 8

5.2.1 Content analysis 8

6.0 FINDINGS ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF ROAD SAFETY 9

6.1 Volume of Coverage 9

6.1.1 Coverage by Month 10

6.2 Prominence of stories 11

6.3 Types of road safety articles published 13

6.3.1 Type of newspaper article 13

6.3.2 Type of Television stories 14

6.3.3 Type of Online Stories 15

6.4 Reporting formats of road safety stories 15

6.5 Event-vs issue-based reporting 18

6.6 Topics or themes in the coverage 19

6.6.1 Focus on road safety stories 19

6.6.2 Focus of road traffic crash stories 21

6.6.3 Risk factors in road traffic crash stories 22

6.7 Use of background and context 23

6.8 Story origins/Prompts 25

6.9 Sources 26

6.9.1 Gender of sources 28

6.9.2 Multiplicity of sources 30

Conclusion 33

Recommendations 34

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses media coverage of road safety in Uganda between March 2023 and May 2024. It is based on analysis of reports from three daily newspapers, three television stations, and two online platforms. Using quantitative methods, the report focused on finding the number and types of stories covered, reporting formats used, topics covered, and sourcing of the stories.
The report's findings suggest that newspapers publish more stories on road safety than other platforms.

- The stories reported by the media were predominantly news and only a limited number appeared on the front pages.
- Road safety reporting is done conventionally with limited enterprise and no investigation at all.
- Majority of the reporting is event-based, focusing on road crashes.
- The data reveals an overreliance on speeding as the primary cause of road traffic accidents.

Conclusions drawn from the report show that there is still a lack of recognition of the importance and prominence of road safety stories among the media; there are no significant changes in the nature and quality of road safety coverage since the last report in 2022, but also a portrayal of the unending challenges of journalism in Uganda that affects the reporting of road safety issues.

We recommend that journalists, editors, and media houses deliberately prioritise road safety stories, that journalists and editors be professionally trained on the job to better report on road safety, and that newsrooms be supported with resources to increase their coverage of the road safety beat.

3
Newspapers

3
TV Stations

2
Online Platforms

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is published with support from the Global Road Safety Partnership. The research is part of ACME's second project phase: "Strengthening the Capacity of the Media in Uganda to Report on Road Safety Policy." We are grateful for your support.

Brian Ssenabulya (programme officer, media monitoring and research) wrote the report. Apolo Kakaire (project coordinator) and Elijah Wanyama Mangeni (monitoring and evaluation officer) provided oversight and overall coordination of the project activities.

Nsiimenta Itabaza Sabiti, Enid Keren Nabumati, and Aisha Nabuuma conducted the coding for the content analysis.

Thank you all for your contribution to the successful publication of this report.

01

INTRODUCTION

This report covers Ugandan news media coverage of road safety, focusing on the country's three main daily newspapers, three television stations and two online platforms. The study explores the attention and the nature of coverage these newspapers, television stations and online platforms paid to road safety (including road traffic crashes and measures to mitigate them) from 1 March 2023 to 31 May 2024. The publications studied were Bukedde (a Luganda-language daily), Daily Monitor, and New Vision (the only two English-language dailies). The television stations were NBS, NTV Uganda, and UBC while the online platforms were ChimpReports and Uganda Radio Network (URN).

Relying mainly on quantitative content analysis, the study explores the quantity of stories on road safety, the types of articles published (news, analysis, opinion, features, etc.), the reporting formats employed, the topics covered, and sourcing of the stories. The analysis also covers the use of background and context in stories and the attention paid to the key behavioural risk factors of drink-driving, speed, use of seat-belts, and use of motorcycle crash helmets. Operation of vehicles in "dangerous mechanical condition" also features.

In 2021, with funding from the Global Road Safety Partnership, ACME started implementation of a project titled "Strengthening the capacity of the media to report on road safety policy." As part of the project, an endline research study was conducted from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022 to assess the nature of media coverage of road safety in Uganda. This study, therefore, builds on that research and attempts to make comparisons in the coverage.

02

BACKGROUND

Uganda predominantly relies on road transport to move goods and people. However, this dominant mode of transport is unsafe. According to a 2018 UN report, the country loses about 10 people every day in road traffic crashes, the highest level in East Africa. The causes range from poor condition of vehicles to poor road use.[1]

Uganda is falling behind in the achievement of SDG 3.6 that targets halving deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes. The country didn't meet the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) target of stabilising and reducing road fatalities.

The new Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, [2] echoes SDG 3.6 by requiring countries, including Uganda, to "reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50% during that period".

The 2018 UN report notes: "At present, Uganda seems highly unlikely to achieve the goals of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, of stabilizing and reducing the forecast level of road fatalities by 2020."[3] Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6 required the halving of the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020. Uganda is falling behind this target. The report says that "unless effective interventions are implemented, road crashes [in Uganda] are likely to increase and

Uganda loses about

10 people

every day in road traffic crashes,

" Uganda is falling behind in the achievement of SDG 3.6 that targets halving deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes."

1 UN Report. (2018). Road Safety Performance Review: Uganda

2 https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/safety-and-mobility/decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030#:~:text=In%20September%202020%2C%20the%20UN,deaths%20and%20injuries%20by%202030.

3 UN Report. (2018). Road Safety Performance Review: Uganda

even double within the next ten years." [4] According to the 2022 police report, there was a 17% increase in road crashes from 2021, and the number of fatal crashes increased by 16.9%. The report indicates that 4,534 were killed in road crashes, increasing by 9% from 2021. [5]

The same report noted that 10 people die every day in Uganda due to road crashes.[6] The situation may be worse. Preliminary research findings released in 2019 by Makerere University School of Public Health suggest that about 9,000 people die in road traffic accidents a year, a number three times higher than what the police reports.

The media plays a pivotal role in increasing awareness and changing behavior around public health issues. According to the University of California, Berkeley, effective communications about road safety, whether in the media, in safety campaign materials or in community outreach efforts play an important role in ensuring the safe mobility for all road users.[7] How the public thinks about the problem of traffic injury and fatalities

4 UN Report. (2018). Road Safety Performance Review: Uganda

5 Police Report. (2022). Annual Crime Report: Uganda

6 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/business/auto/10-people-die-per-day-due-to-road-crashes-3390458

7 https://catsip.berkeley.edu/resources/role-media-and-road-safety

influenced by how the media reports on it.[8]

Mogambi and Nyakeri, (2015), who investigated how newspapers in Kenya report on road safety issues found that: "studies about media coverage of road traffic crashes have found that most news reports tend to be episodic rather than thematic, focusing on the traffic event and the parties involved in the crash".[9]

Studies have also found that media coverage tends to ignore preventive measures for injuries and fatalities in road traffic crashes (Yankson et al, 2010).[10] Mogambi and Nyakeri (2015) observed that road accident issues were not placed prominently in the newspapers. They noted that most of the stories on road traffic accidents were buried in the inside pages of the newspapers. Even then, these stories were less prominent in those pages because they were placed as either third lead stories or as briefs.[11]

8 https://catsip.berkeley.edu/resources/role-media-and-road-safety

9 Mogambi, H., & Nyakeri, F. (2015). Media priming of road traffic accidents in Kenya: Praxis, patterns, and issues. Sage Open, 5(4), 2158244015606491

10 Yankson, I. K., Browne, E. N., Tagbor, H., Donkor, P., Quansah, R., Asare, G. E., ... & Ebel, B. E. (2010). Reporting on road traffic injury: content analysis of injuries and prevention opportunities in Ghanaian newspapers. Injury prevention, 16(3), 194-197.

11 Mogambi, H., & Nyakeri, F. (2015). Media priming of road traffic accidents in Kenya: Praxis, patterns, and issues. Sage Open, 5(4), 2158244015606491

ACME, in its 2022 endline report on media coverage of road safety[12] found that:

1.	Media coverage of road safety in Uganda is dominated by 'hard news,' event-based reporting, and single and gender-imbalanced sourcing.
2.	The media in Uganda does not treat road traffic crashes and road safety in general as a serious public policy issue.
3.	Many stories related to road safety are either relegated to pages beyond page five in newspapers or sometimes unreported.
4.	The lack of enterprise stories implied that road safety issues only become newsworthy when a fatal road traffic crash occurs.

12 https://acme-ug.org/2022/10/24/endline-report-on-ugandan-media-coverage-of-road-safety/

03

MAIN PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The main objective of this research is to assess how the media report on road safety issues in order to provide evidence that can inform interventions intended to improve journalists' coverage of road traffic crashes

3.1 Specific objectives

1.	To establish the volume of stories on road safety.
2.	To investigate the prominence and frequency of road safety stories in newspapers.
3.	To find out what type of articles are used to tell road safety stories.
4.	To examine the formats that are employed to cover road safety issues.
5.	To establish triggers and origins of road safety stories.
6.	To find out the topics or themes of road safety stories.
7.	To examine whether background and context are used in road safety news coverage.
8.	To assess how human sources are used in the media coverage of road safety issues.
9.	To establish the type and gender of voices that dominate the coverage of road safety stories.
10.	To find out why the coverage of road safety issues is in its current form.

04

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Results of this report were based on the following research questions.

1.	What was the volume or quantity of stories on road safety?
2.	What was the prominence of road safety stories? What was the frequency of road safety stories on newspaper front pages? How were road safety stories placed on other pages?
3.	What types of articles were used to tell the road safety story?
4.	What reporting formats were employed to cover road safety?
5.	What prompted the road safety stories? What was the origin of the articles?
6.	What topics or themes did stories about road safety focus on?
7.	How was the use of background and context in road safety coverage?
8.	How was human sourcing used in road safety coverage?
9.	Which voices (categories of human sources and their gender) dominated the coverage?
10.	What explains the nature of coverage?

05 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Scope of the study

The study focused on Ugandan newspapers, television and online coverage of road safety issues. The study was designed to cover all articles related to road safety published in Bukedde, Daily Monitor and New Vision from 1 March 2023 to 31 May 2024. These included all articles that fell under news, commentary/ opinion, features, letters, Q & A, and profiles. A total of 556 newspaper articles were analysed. A total of 371 stories from the three television stations, namely: NBS, NTV Uganda, and UBC were analysed. Another 260 stories from the two online platforms – ChimpReports and URN were also analysed along the same dimensions.

Bukedde, Daily Monitor, and New Vision were selected because they are Uganda's major dailies and are considered to have significant influence on the national conversation. For television, NBS and NTV were included because they are the leading stations in public affairs programming. UBC was selected because it is the national broadcaster that is expected to offer comprehensive news and a diversity of programming without paying as much attention to profit as the private stations do.

The online platforms, ChimpReports was selected because of its popularity. It is believed to have the largest audience among online news websites. URN[13] was selected because of its wide news coverage in the different parts of the country.

It also supplies news articles to over 80 radio stations and other media platforms in Uganda and has 18 active bureaus where news is produced located in Kampala, Entebbe, Mukono, Luweero, Masaka, Mbarara, Kabale, Jinja, Mbale, Kabarole, Hoima, Kasese, Gulu, Lira, Kitgum, Arua, Soroti and Moroto.

To cover all articles related to road safety published in Bukedde, Daily Monitor and New Vision from:

1 March 2023 to 31 May 2024.

556

Total number of newspaper articles analysed

3 Televisions; NTV, NBS and UBC

371

Total number of television stories analysed

ChimpReports, URN

260

Total number of online stories analysed

13 https://ugandaradionetwork.com/s/about/

5.2 Methods of data collection

The study relied mainly on quantitative content analysis of coverage of road safety issues by the selected publications, television stations and online platforms.

5.2.1 Content analysis

We analysed manifest content. "Manifest content refers to what is explicitly stated and draws on the objective and replicable qualities of quantitative methods" (Hilton and Hunt (2010).[14] However, where appropriate and necessary, we also undertook qualitative analysis of latent content.[15]

Content analysis was used to get an all-round sense of the nature of coverage in terms of both quantity and quality. Stories were coded and analysed based on a detailed coding sheet that contained a number of variables that were necessary to answer the set research questions. The variables included the following:

1	*Publication [name, type, etc]*
2	*Volume of road safety articles or stories*
3	*Prominence/placement of road safety stories on the front page and other pages*
4	*Prominence/placement of road safety stories on other pages*
5.	*Type of road safety articles published*
6.	*Road safety story prompts or origins*
7.	*Event-vs issue-based coverage*
8.	*Reporting formats employed*
9.	*Topics or themes in the coverage*
10.	*Use of background and context in road safety stories*
11.	*Number of sources*
12.	*Occupation of sources*
13	*Gender of sources*

14 Hilton, S. & Hunt, K. (2010). UK newspaper representations of the 2009-10 outbreak of swine flue: one health scare not over-hyped by the media?" Research Report, J Epidemiol, Community Health

15 See, Krippendorf, K. (2004). Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

06

FINDINGS ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF ROAD SAFETY

6.1 Volume of Coverage

Between March 2023 and May 2024, a combined total of 1,187 stories related to road safety were identified across the three media types monitored. Like observed in ACME's previous report on road safety,[16] newspapers produced the highest volume of stories followed by television.

In terms of publications, Bukedde had the highest number of articles, followed by Daily Monitor. The television stations monitored aired a total of 371 stories with NTV Uganda leading the pack followed by NBS. The two online platforms published a total of 260 stories. URN with 164 had the majority share of the total number of online stories.

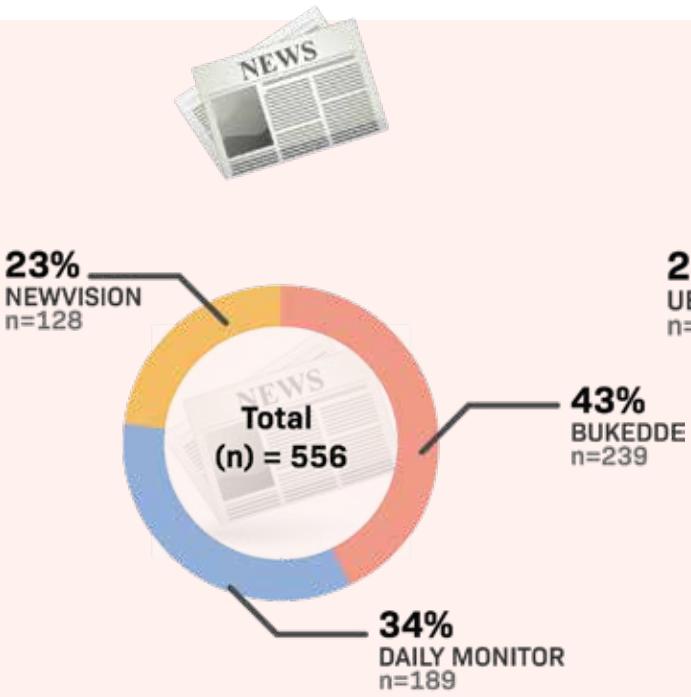


Fig 1 (a): Number of stories on road safety by newspaper

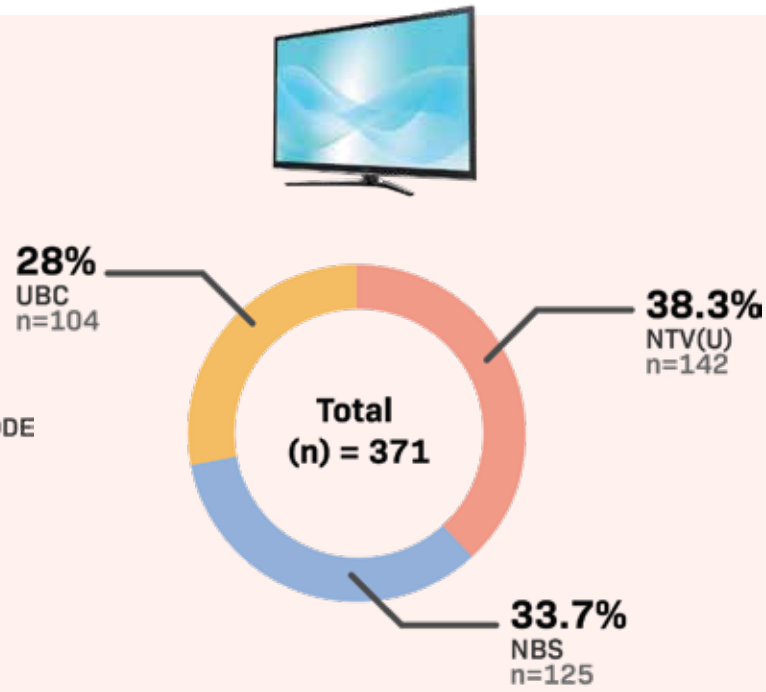


Fig 1 (b): Number of stories on road safety by TV station

16 https://acme-ug.org/2022/10/24/endline-report-on-ugandan-media-coverage-of-road-safety/

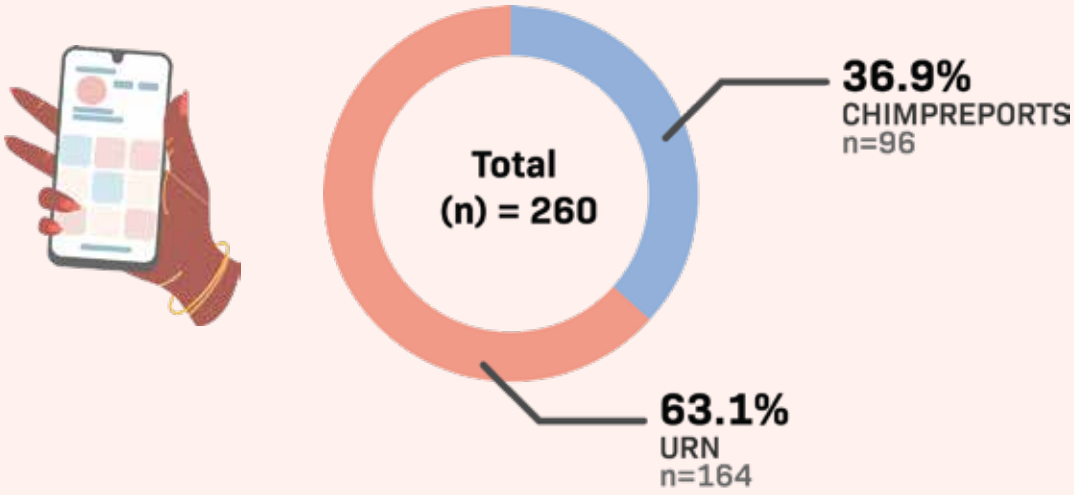


Fig 1 (c): Number of stories on road safety by online platform

These findings suggest that newspapers give more space to stories on road safety stories in their coverage compared to other platforms

6.1.1 Coverage by Month

A look at the volume of coverage by month shows a significant increase in the volume of stories published on road safety in July across the three media types. The increased volume of stories in that month is attributed to the fatal crash involving prominent businessman, Apollo Nyegamahe, aka Aponye on July 6, 2023 along Kabale – Mbarara highway that attracted a lot of attention and coverage.[17]

The month of December also registered significant coverage of road safety issues in newspapers and television.

Fig 1 (d): Trend in coverage of road safety issues by month.

17 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/how-billionaire-aponye-perished-in-ntungamo-road-crash-4295682 https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/businessman-aponyes-accident-blamed-on-over-speeding-lack-of-warning-signs#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20lorry%20that%20Aponye's%20Vehicle,Dr.

6.2 Prominence of stories

Only 41 stories (representing 7.4%) on road safety were on the front page in the 15 months monitored. Bukedde (27) published the highest number of front-page stories compared to Daily Monitor (nine) and New Vision (five). The number of front-page stories seen in this monitoring period was much higher than what was identified in the previous ACME report on road safety that identified only 18 page one articles in a period of 12 months.[18]

The majority of road safety stories (78.6%) appeared on pages beyond page 5. This was a similar pattern observed in ACME's baseline and endline reports on Ugandan media coverage of road safety in 2022 where the figure stood at 84.3% and 78.1% respectively.

An editor interviewed in our 2022 endline report attributed the limited prominence given to road safety stories to audience fatigue. "The New Vision coverage of road safety was a priority in the 90's and early 2000's with many stories appearing on page 1. However, the public wants something to give [them] hope. While it is important, people get fed up with news about death. This is why we look at aspects of the economy, farming, and jobs which give people hope," he said.[19]

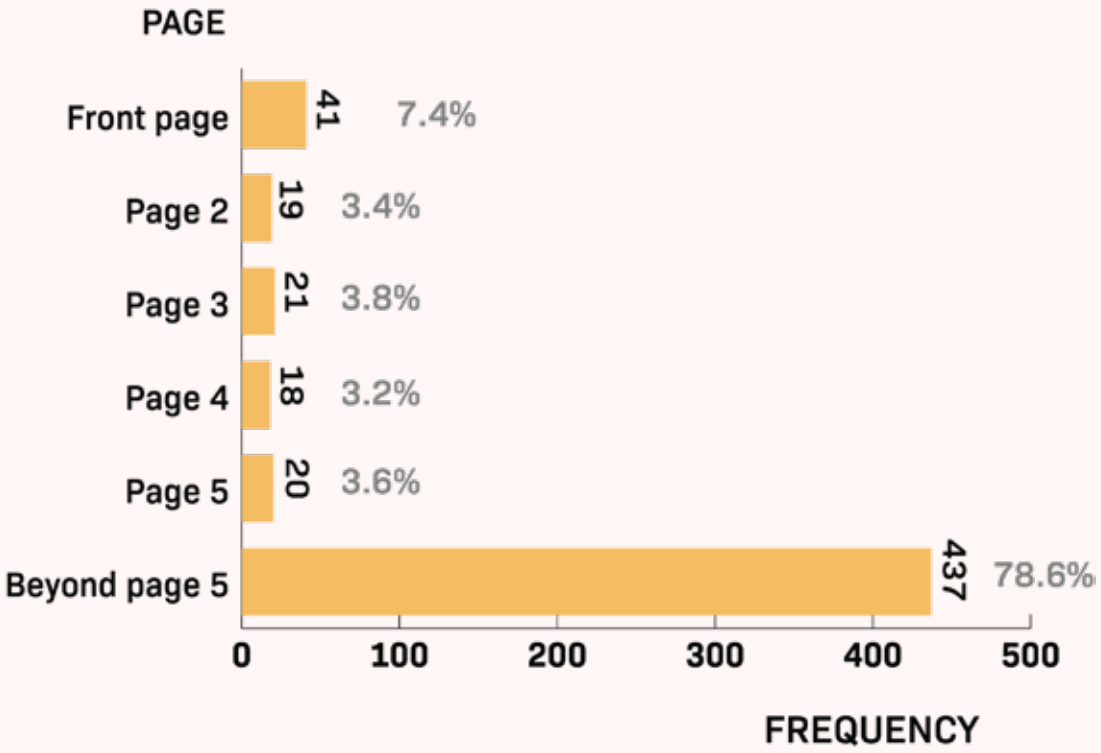


Fig 2: Page location of road safety stories

18 https://acme-ug.org/2022/10/24/endline-report-on-ugandan-media-coverage-of-road-safety/

19 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.

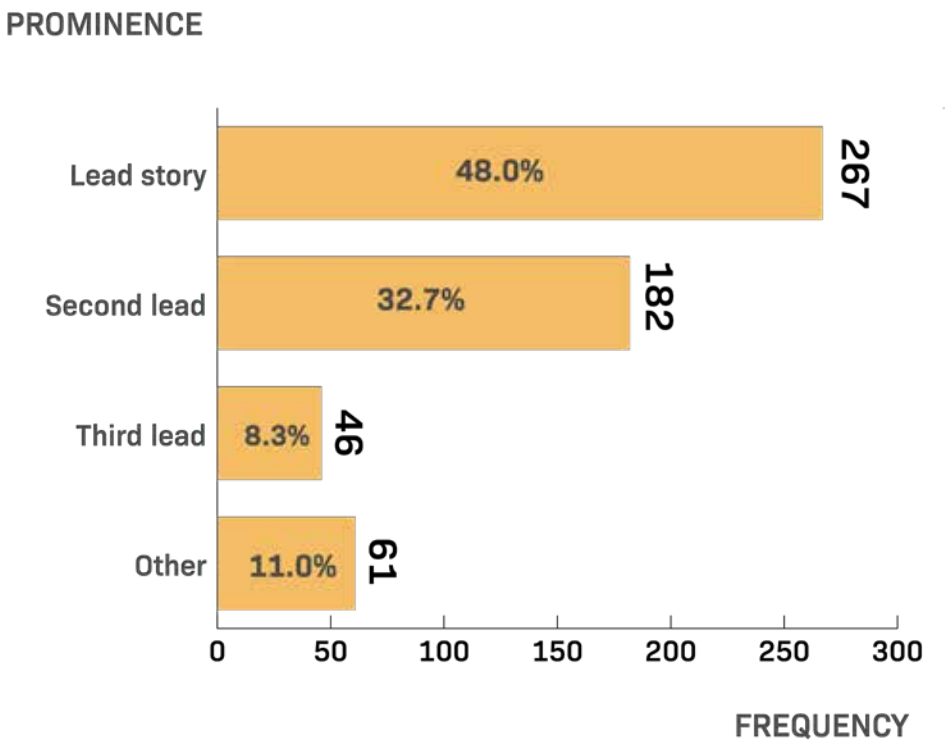


Fig 3: Page placement of road safety stories

Prominence	Bukedde (n=239)	Daily Monitor (n=189)	New Vision (n=128)
Lead story	38.5	55.6	54.7
Second lead	23.8	39.7	39.1
Third lead	12.6	4.2	6.3
Other	25.1	0.5	0.0

Table 1: Page placement of road safety stories by publication

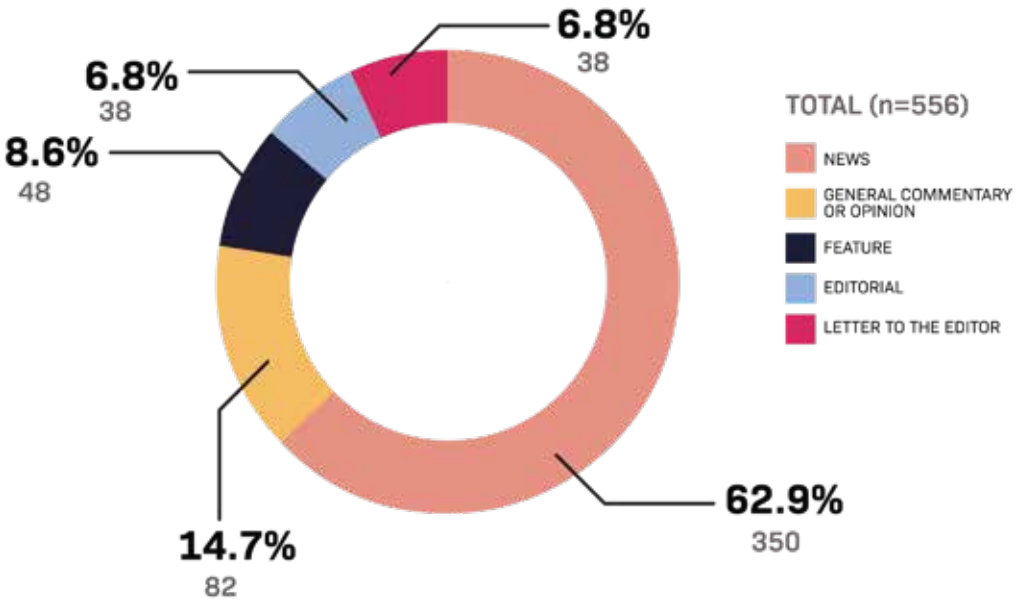
Daily Monitor (55.6%) published more road safety stories as page leads followed by New Vision (54.7%) and Bukedde (38.5%).

6.3 Types of road safety articles published

6.3.1 Type of newspaper article

News remained the most frequent type of road safety newspaper article (62.9%), a pattern similar to what was observed in ACME's road safety report of 2022[20]. It was followed by general commentary or opinions, which came a distant second at 14.7%. Features came in third while editorials and letter to the editor were the least used types of newspaper articles on road safety.

Fig 4 (a): Frequency of different types of road safety articles



Bukedde carried more news than any other type of articles on road safety. New Vision and Daily Monitor carried more variety of articles compared to Bukedde. Daily Monitor carried the highest number of letters to the editor and editorials while New Vision published the highest of commentaries or opinions and features.

Table 2: Frequency of different types of road safety articles by publication

Article type	Bukedde (n=239)	Daily Monitor (n=189)	New Vision (n=128)
News	83.3	47.6	47.7
General commentary or opinion	14.6	8.5	24.2
Feature	2.1	13.2	14.1
Editorial	0.0	14.3	8.6
Letter to the Editor	0.0	16.4	5.5

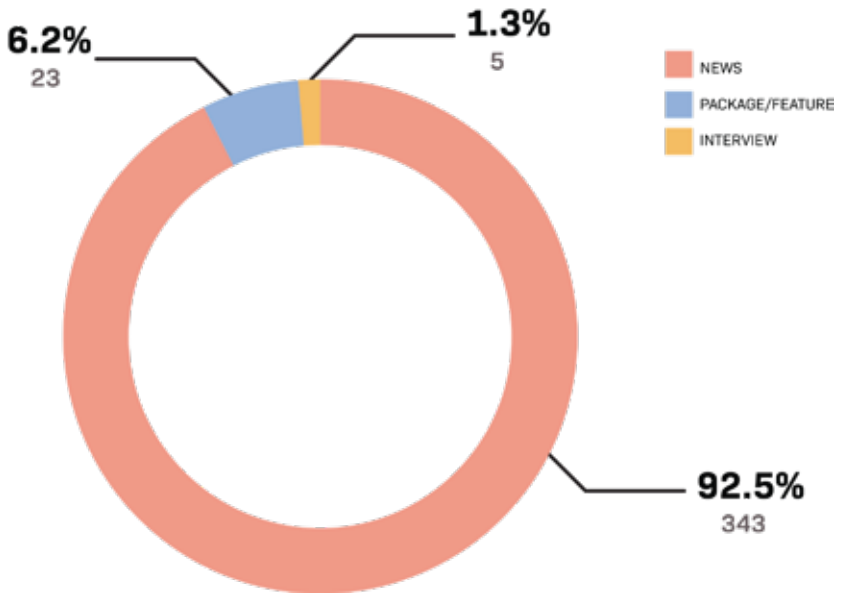
20 https://acme-ug.org/2022/10/24/endline-report-on-ugandan-media-coverage-of-road-safety/

6.3.2 Type of Television stories

News made up nine out of every 10 stories on road safety on television. Only 23 features and five interviews were identified in the 15 months monitored. This finding is not different from what was observed in the 2022 endline report that saw news stories making up 96% of the coverage on road safety. It is also consistent with ACME's research on media coverage of public affairs in Uganda that showed that 89% stories covered by TV were in the news format.[2] [1]

An editor at NTV interviewed in our 2022 report attributed the high number of news stories compared to features to crashes that trigger the reporting. "The road safety stories tend to follow either an incident or a series of incidents. It is usually a crash that will spark the conversation. I don't think it's about audience interest, I think it's just the way the media covers the issues," he said.[22]

Fig 4 (b): Frequency of different types of road safety articles by television



NBS carried the highest variety of television stories. It also produced the highest proportion of features on road safety.

Table 3: Frequency of different types of road safety articles by television station

Type of story	NTV Uganda (n=142)	NBS (n=125)	UBC (n=104)
News	97.9	80.8	99.0
Package/feature	1.4	16.0	1.0
Interview	0.7	3.2	0.0

21 https://acme-ug.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-Annual-Report-on-Coverage-of-Covid-19-and-Other-Public-Affairs-1.pdf

22 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala.

6.3.3 Type of Online Stories

Nearly all stories produced by the two online platforms monitored were of the news type. Only one opinion was identified in the 15 months under study. It was published by Uganda Radio Network.

"Media houses don't usually provide adequate guidance and resources to enable journalists take time to prepare long features on road safety. Road safety is not a 'selling' story," explained an online editor when asked why news dominates coverage.

6.4 Reporting formats of road safety stories

Conventional hard news reporting (he-said-she-said) continued to dominate the coverage on road safety across the three media types. Conventional reporting accounted for eight in every 10 newspaper and television stories and nine in 10 online stories. Newspapers carried more enterprise stories (17.1%) on road safety than television (11.7%) and online platforms (0.4%). It is notable that investigative reporting on road safety has remained at zero across platforms.

Reporters and editors have in the past attributed the dearth of investigative and enterprise stories on road safety reporting to limited resources. "The manpower in the newsroom is very little. As a result, the amount of time you spend doing a story is dictated,
yet such investigative and enterprise stories require more time to complete".[23] "Most media houses are not able to invest in investigative reporting because it's expensive and requires experienced and investigative journalists who are not common in our newsrooms. And also, the topic doesn't seem to attract plenty of readership." [24]

Table 4: Reporting formats across the three media platforms

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Format	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Conventional	330	82.9	323	88.3	258	99.6
Enterprise and interpretive	68	17.1	43	11.7	1	0.4
Investigative	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	**398**	**100.0**	**366**	**100.0**	**259**	**100.0**

23 Key Informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala

24 Key informant Interview, April 2022, Kampala

As we have previously noted, fact-finding is the dominant posture under the conventional reporting format with common characteristics such as the following: spot or hard news that tends to focus on events; neutral and often uncritical transmission of facts; tendency to assign equal weight to all positions; faithful recording of the observed event or issue; suppression of the journalist's prior knowledge of the subject; depends largely or entirely on material provided by others; and tends to be event-centred.

Under the enterprise or interpretive reporting format, the story is usually of the journalist's own initiative and effort. The coverage follows more leads than the usual straight news story and depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter's independent efforts. Enterprise stories tend to explore issues in greater depth usually with the aid of narrative or literary techniques. These stories are traditionally presented as features. Instead of focusing on breaking news, enterprise stories focus on the forces that shape the events that may or may not be in the news.

Exposition is the dominant posture under the investigative reporting format, with common characteristics such as the following: the story is the journalist's original initiative; reporting depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter's own effort; reporting uncovers information that an individual or entity may have tried to conceal from public scrutiny or information that an individual or entity may have had an interest in keeping out of the public domain; resources and evidence used by the journalist are clearly discernible; there is evidence of strong documentation (the paper trail) and sourcing.

Bukedde, at 94.1% had the highest percentage of road safety stories that employed the conventional hard news or straight reporting format. New Vision carried the highest proportion of enterprise stories (31.6%).

Table 5: Reporting formats by publication

Format	Bukedde (n=204)	Daily Monitor (n=115)	New Vision (n=79)
Conventional	94.1	73.0	68.4
Enterprise and interpretive	5.9	27.0	31.6
Investigative	0.0	0.0	0.0

NBS aired the highest percentage of enterprise stories (20.7%) followed by NTV Uganda (9.9%). This shows an increase in the number of enterprise stories for television from the 2022 road safety coverage report where NTV Uganda aired the highest enterprise stories (8.6%) followed by NBS (5.3%).

Table 6: Reporting formats by television station

Format	NTV Uganda (n=141)	NBS (n=121)	UBC (n=104)
Conventional	90.1	79.3	96.2
Enterprise and interpretive	9.9	20.7	3.8
Investigative	0.0	0.0	0.0

The only enterprise story on road safety published by the online platforms was carried by URN.

Table 7: Reporting formats by online platform

Format	ChimpReports (n=96)	URN (n=163)
Conventional	100.0	99.4
Enterprise and interpretive	0.0	0.6
Investigative	0.0	0.0

6.5 Event-vs issue-based reporting

All three media platforms monitored continued to rely heavily on event-based reporting and much less on issue-based coverage, a pattern similar to what was observed in the 2022 ACME report on road safety. Event-based reports accounted for eight out of every 10 newspaper and television stories and nine in 10 online articles. Newspapers carried more issue-based stories (17.3%) than television (11.2%) and online platforms (0.4%).

Compared to the 2022 report, there was a decline in issue-based reporting of road safety by both newspaper (20.6% to 17.3%) and online (5.2% to 0.4%). Television, however, saw an increase in issue-based reporting from 5.2% to 11.2%.

Table 8: Event-vs issue-based reporting across the three media platforms

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Reporting type	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Event-based reporting	329	82.7	325	88.8	258	99.6
Issue-based reporting	69	17.3	41	11.2	1	0.4
Total	**398**	**100.0**	**366**	**100.0**	**259**	**100.0**

New Vision carried the highest proportion of issue-based road safety stories (31.6%), followed by Daily Monitor (27.8%).

Reporting type	Bukedde (n=204)	Daily Monitor (n=115)	New Vision (n=79)
Event-based reporting	94.1	40.7	26.5
Issue-based reporting	5.9	27.8	31.6

Table 9: Event-vs issue-based reporting by publication

NBS had the highest proportion of stories based on issue-based reporting, followed by NTV.

Table 10: Event-vs issue-based reporting by television station

Reporting type	**NTV Uganda (n=141)**	**NBS (n=121)**	**UBC (n=104)**
Event-based reporting	90.8	79.3	97.1
Issue-based reporting	9.2	20.7	2.9

The only issue-based story on road safety published by the online platforms was carried by URN

Table 11: Event-vs issue-based reporting by online platform

Reporting type	ChimpReports (n=96)	URN (n=163)
Event-based reporting	100.0	99.4
Issue-based reporting	0.0	0.6

6.6 Topics or themes in the coverage

6.6.1 Focus on road safety stories

i. Road traffic crashes, just like in our 2022 road safety report, continued to dominate much of the coverage on road safety across the three media platforms, accounting for 26.3% of newspaper, 35% of television and 58.5% of online coverage. Online media carried a significantly higher proportion of stories on road traffic crashes compared to newspaper and television.

ii. Enforcement of road safety measures and regulations came in second place in newspapers and online platforms as the focus of stories, accounting for 18.9% of newspaper and 19.2% of online coverage.

iii. Road infrastructure featured in second place on television.

Compared to the 2022 road safety report, road infrastructure received a higher proportion of stories in the 15 months monitored. The increased coverage of road safety stories focusing on road infrastructure was informed by a Twitter campaign[25]that started on April 17, 2023 titled #KampalaPotholeExhibition. The campaign was started by cartoonist, Dr. Jimmy Spire Ssentongo, and saw a section of Ugandans on social media express their anger at the poor state of roads in Kampala through sharing of photos of roads with potholes across the city. Later on, the campaign led to interventions from Kampala Capital City Authority and central government to cover the potholes.

25 https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/ugandans-showcase-potholes-in-kampala-as-govt-drags-feet-to-repair-damaged-roads-4203184
https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/how-kampala-pothole-exhibition-forced-government-into-action-4206008

Table 12: Topics/focus of road safety stories across the three media platforms

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Focus of the story	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Road traffic crash (deaths, injuries, immediate causes, etc)	146	26.3	130	35.0	152	58.5
Enforcement of road safety measures and regulations	105	18.9	66	17.8	50	19.2
Road infrastructure	85	15.3	79	21.3	26	10.0
Vehicles	66	11.9	1	0.3	1	0.4
Systemic causes of road traffic crashes	46	8.3	29	7.8	8	3.1
Tips on safe road use	33	5.9	20	5.4	1	0.4
Effects of crashes (beyond the event)/ cost of road crashes	30	5.4	16	4.3	6	2.3
Road safety policy	19	3.4	11	3.0	2	0.8
Trends in road traffic crashes/road safety	14	2.5	16	4.3	12	4.6
Other	12	2.2	3	0.8	2	0.8
Total	**556**	**100.0**	**371**	**100.0**	**260**	**100.0**

6.6.2 Focus of road traffic crash stories

The majority of stories about road traffic crashes from all the three media types focused on motor vehicles, taking up seven out of every 10 newspapers, eight out of every 10 television and six in every 10 online.

Motorcycles and pedestrians were the second and third highest focus of road traffic crashes respectively across the three media types.
Pedestrians took a higher percentage of focus of road traffic crashes on online media (13.7%) compared to television and newspapers at 6.8%.

Fig 5 (a): Focus of road traffic crash stories in newspapers

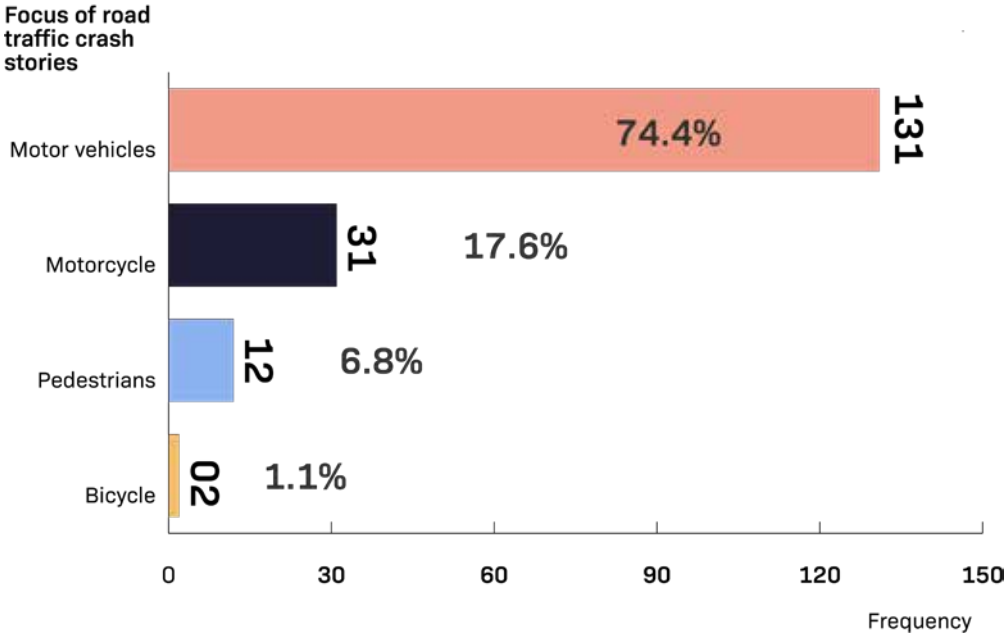


Fig 5 (b): Focus of road traffic crash stories on television

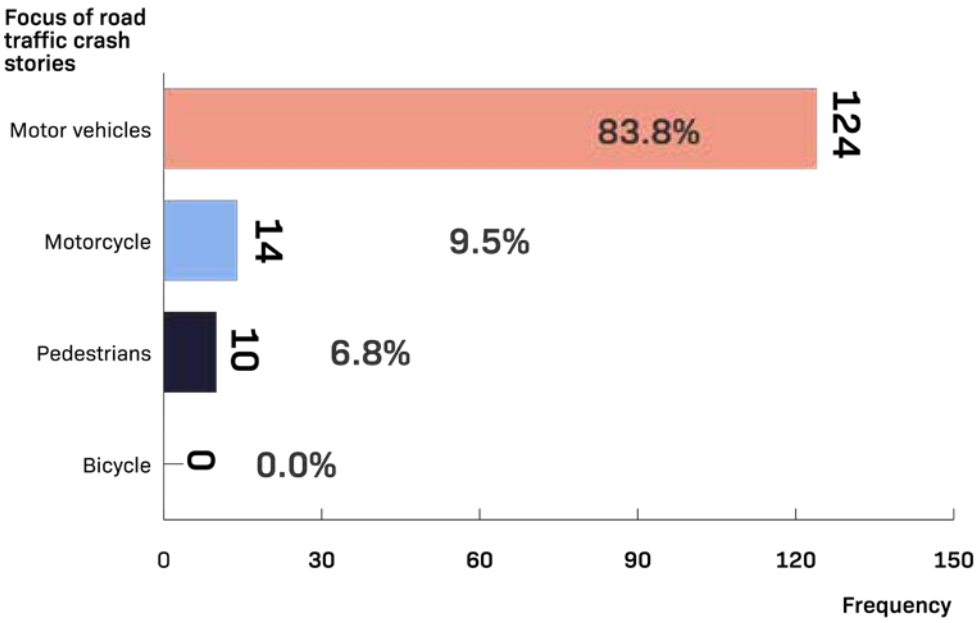
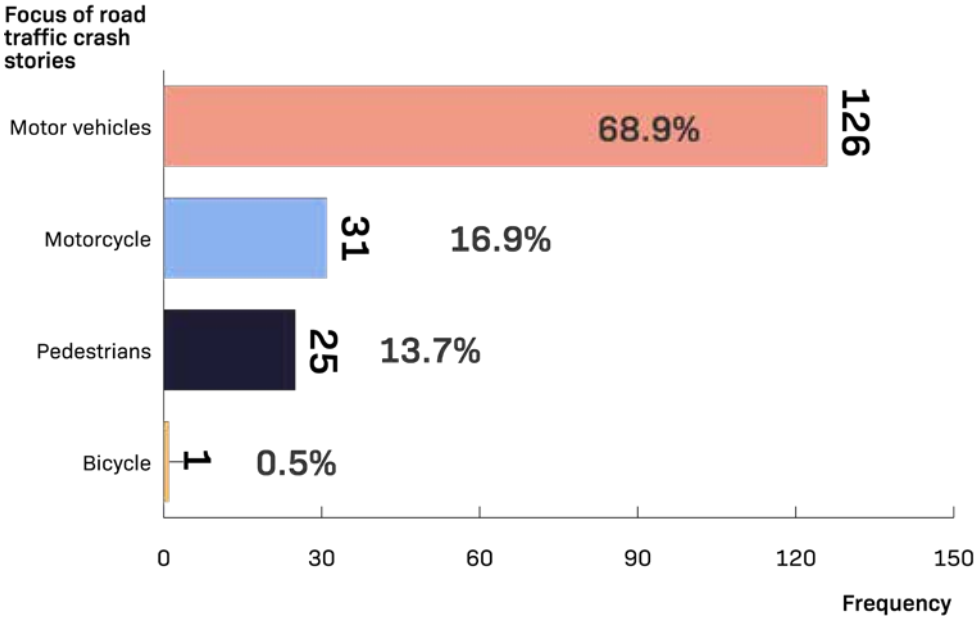


Fig 5 (c): Focus of road traffic crash stories on online platforms



6.6.3 Risk factors in road traffic crash stories

Speeding remained the most frequent road safety risk factor mentioned in the coverage, accounting for six in every 10 newspaper articles and seven out of every 10 television and online stories. Vehicles in dangerous mechanical condition came second across all the three media platforms, accounting for 21.3% of newspaper, 24.4% of television and 14.5% of online crash stories.

Table 13: Risk factors mentioned in road traffic crash stories

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Risk factors	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Speeding	96	68.1	94	71.8	104	71.7
Vehicles in dangerous mechanical condition	30	21.3	32	24.4	21	14.5
Drink-driving	4	2.8	0	0	5	3.4
Environmental (visibility, roaming animals, flooding)	3	2.1	0	0	4	2.8
Distracted-driving (phone use)	1	0.7	0	0	1	0.7
Helmets	1	0.7	1	0.8	0	0.0
Stationary vehicle	0	0.0	0	0	7	4.8
Other	6	4.3	4	3.1	3	2.1
Total	**141**	**100.0**	**131**	**100.0**	**145**	**100.0**

6.7 Use of background and context

Just four out of every 10 newspaper and online stories and slightly more than a half of television stories contained background and context that could help the reader put developments in perspective. More than half of stories from newspapers and online platforms did not contain background and context. These findings show an improvement when compared to the 2022 report where stories with background and context stood at 37.7% in newspapers, 47.4% on television and 35.4% on the online platforms.

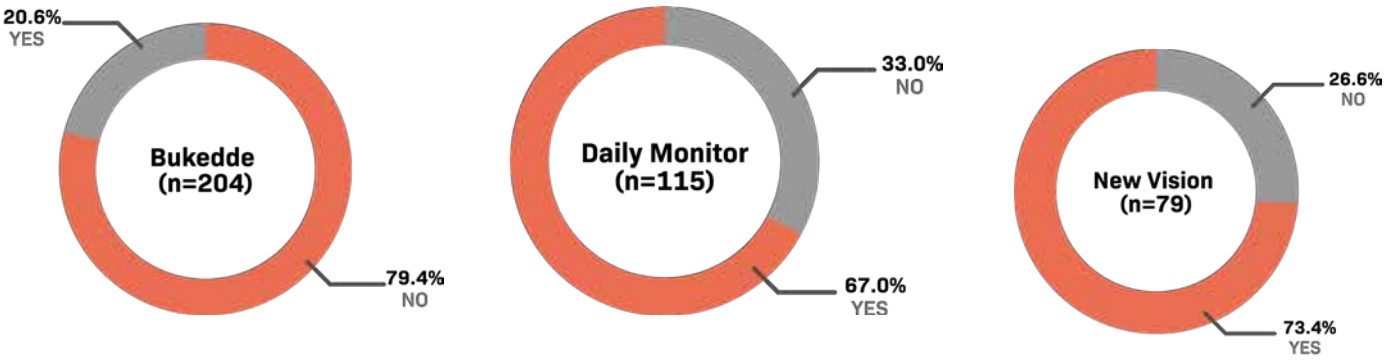
Like we have previously said, background and context in road safety coverage would include information such as the annual incidence of road crashes, death and injury rates, systemic causes and the cost of road crashes, measures and regulations to promote road safety, policy, and so on.

Table 14: Use of background and context across the three media platforms

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Background & context	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
No	221	55.5	177	48.4	153	59.1
Yes	177	44.5	189	51.6	106	40.9
Total	**398**	**100.0**	**366**	**100.0**	**259**	**100.0**

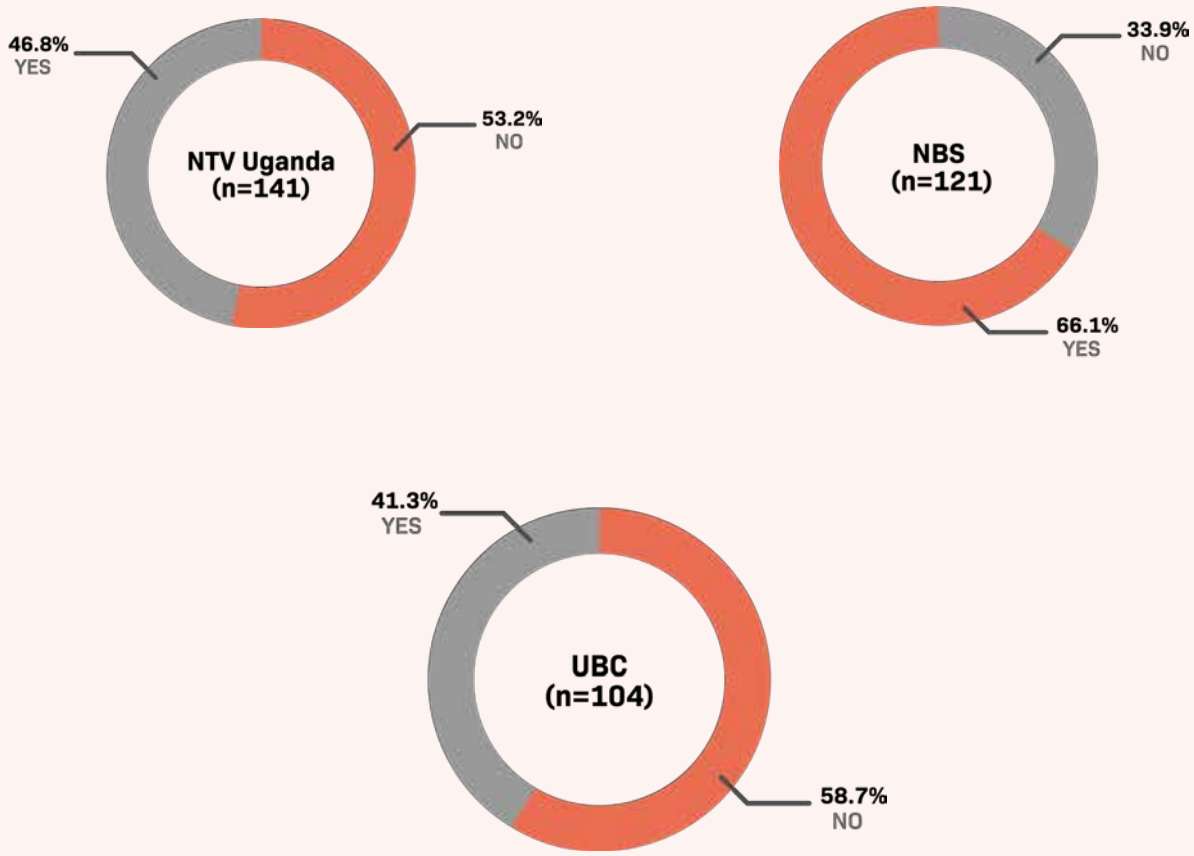
New Vision had the highest proportion of stories with background and context, followed by Daily Monitor. The majority of stories in Bukedde had no background and context.

Fig 6 (a): Use of background and context by publication



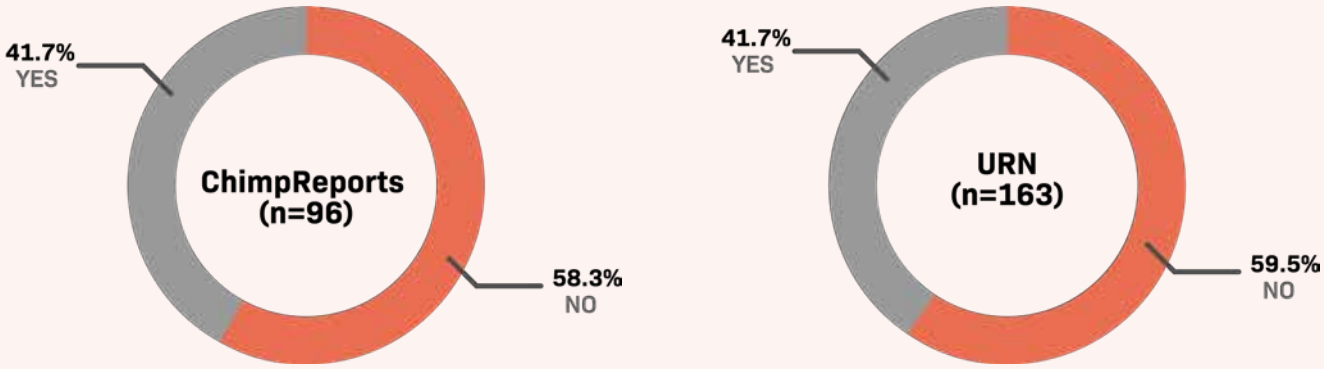
NBS TV had the highest percentage of stories with background and context. Over six in every 10 road safety stories aired by NBS TV contained background and context. All television stations recorded an increase in use of context and background in their stories from the last report.

Fig 6 (b): Use of background and context by television station



Five in every 10 road safety stories on URN and ChimpReports did not contain background and context.

Fig 6 (c): Use of background and context by online platform



6.8 Story origins/Prompts

Most of the stories on road safety from all the three media platforms were prompted by a road traffic crash. Road crashes accounted for three out of every 10 newspaper and television stories and 54.8% of online stories. This, however, saw a decline across all the three media types from the 2022 endline report.

News conferences came in second place in television and online media while independent reporting was second in newspaper coverage.

Online media depended more on road crashes as a source of news compared to newspaper and television.

Newspapers and television carried more stories (compared to the 2022 endline report) originating from independent reporting compared to online media.

Table 15: Origin of the story

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Origin	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Road traffic crash	142	35.7	124	33.9	142	54.8
Independent reporting, research or investigation by the journalist/outlet	65	16.3	42	11.5	1	0.4
News conference	38	9.5	72	19.7	30	11.6
Newsworthy occurrence	37	9.3	26	7.1	6	2.3
Police activity	35	8.8	21	5.7	23	8.9
Government activity	29	7.3	38	10.4	14	5.4
NGO/civil society activity	16	4.0	14	3.8	19	7.3
Parliament or legislative process	12	3.0	12	3.3	4	1.5
Document e.g. report, study/research	9	2.3	7	1.9	4	1.5
News release	9	2.3	3	0.8	9	3.5
Court or judicial process	4	1.0	2	0.5	5	1.9
Other	2	0.5	5	1.4	2	0.8
Total	**398**	**100.0**	**366**	**100.0**	**259**	**100.0**

6.9 Sources

Police officers accounted for the biggest number of sources on road safety coverage across the three media types. Ordinary persons followed in second place in newspapers and television while eyewitnesses were the second most cited sources on online platforms.

Online platforms carried a significantly higher proportion of police officers as sources compared to newspapers and television while the two media types used more ordinary people as voices in the road stories compared to online media. Eyewitnesses made up a significant proportion of television sources (14%).

Table 16: Frequency of human sources in road safety stories

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Sources	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Police officers	215	22.7	207	19.7	191	39.3
Ordinary person quoted in their individual capacity	135	14.2	157	14.9	30	6.2
Professional driver	89	9.4	60	5.7	20	4.1
Eyewitnesses	71	7.5	147	14.0	37	7.6
Local government official	68	7.2	70	6.7	29	6.0
Experts e.g independent researchers	57	6.0	15	1.4	3	0.6
Members of Parliament	45	4.7	61	5.8	20	4.1
Officials of Ministry of Works and Transport (includes ministers, commissioners, etc)	42	4.4	50	4.8	23	4.7
Persons involved in crash (driver/rider, victim)	40	4.2	56	5.3	10	2.1
Civil society representatives (includes Red Cross and other local and international NGOs	27	2.8	33	3.1	35	7.2
Other central government officials	27	2.8	24	2.3	18	3.7
Business representative	26	2.7	22	2.1	11	2.3
UNRA officials	25	2.6	51	4.9	14	2.9
KCCA officials	17	1.8	21	2.0	6	1.2
Ministers	15	1.6	13	1.2	10	2.1
Medical practitioners e.g doctor, paramedics, nurse, etc	15	1.6	36	3.4	7	1.4
Religious representative	8	0.8	11	1.0	2	0.4
President	6	0.6	3	0.3	4	0.8
Military/security representative	5	0.5	0	0.0	3	0.6
Speaker of Parliament	4	0.4	7	0.7	4	0.8
Politician or political operative	3	0.3	3	0.3	4	0.8
Judicial personnel	2	0.2	2	0.2	2	0.4
Other	7	0.7	2	0.2	3	0.6
Total	**949**	**100.0**	**1051**	**100.0**	**486**	**100.0**

6.9.1 Gender of sources

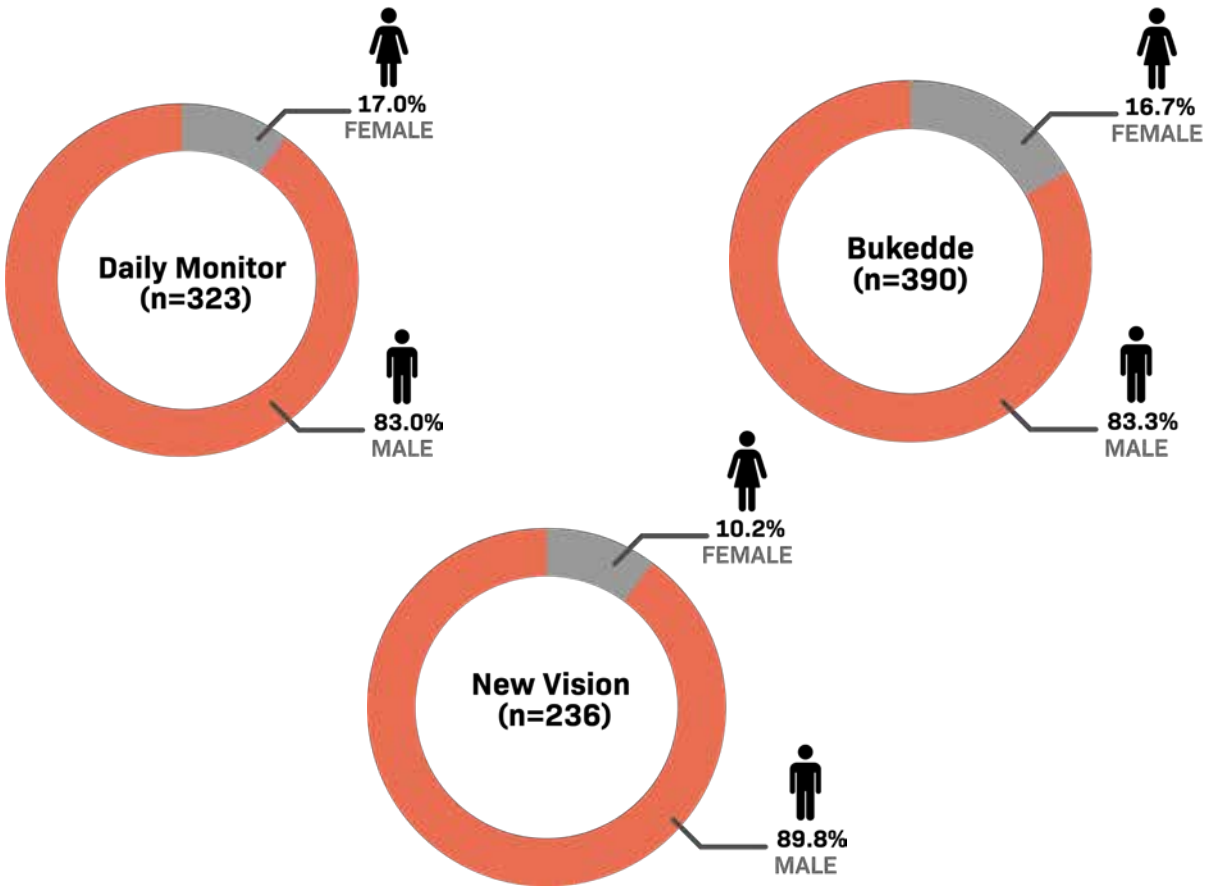
Men continued to dominate coverage of road safety, a pattern similar to what was observed in the 2022 end line report. However, the proportion of female sources seen in this report fell compared to what was observed in the 2022 report. The figures were 23% for newspaper, 18.8% for television and 30.4% for online media.

Table 17: Gender of sources across the three media platforms

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Gender	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Female	144	15.2	132	12.6	68	14.0
Male	805	84.8	919	87.4	418	86.0
Total	949	100.0	1051	100.0	486	100.0

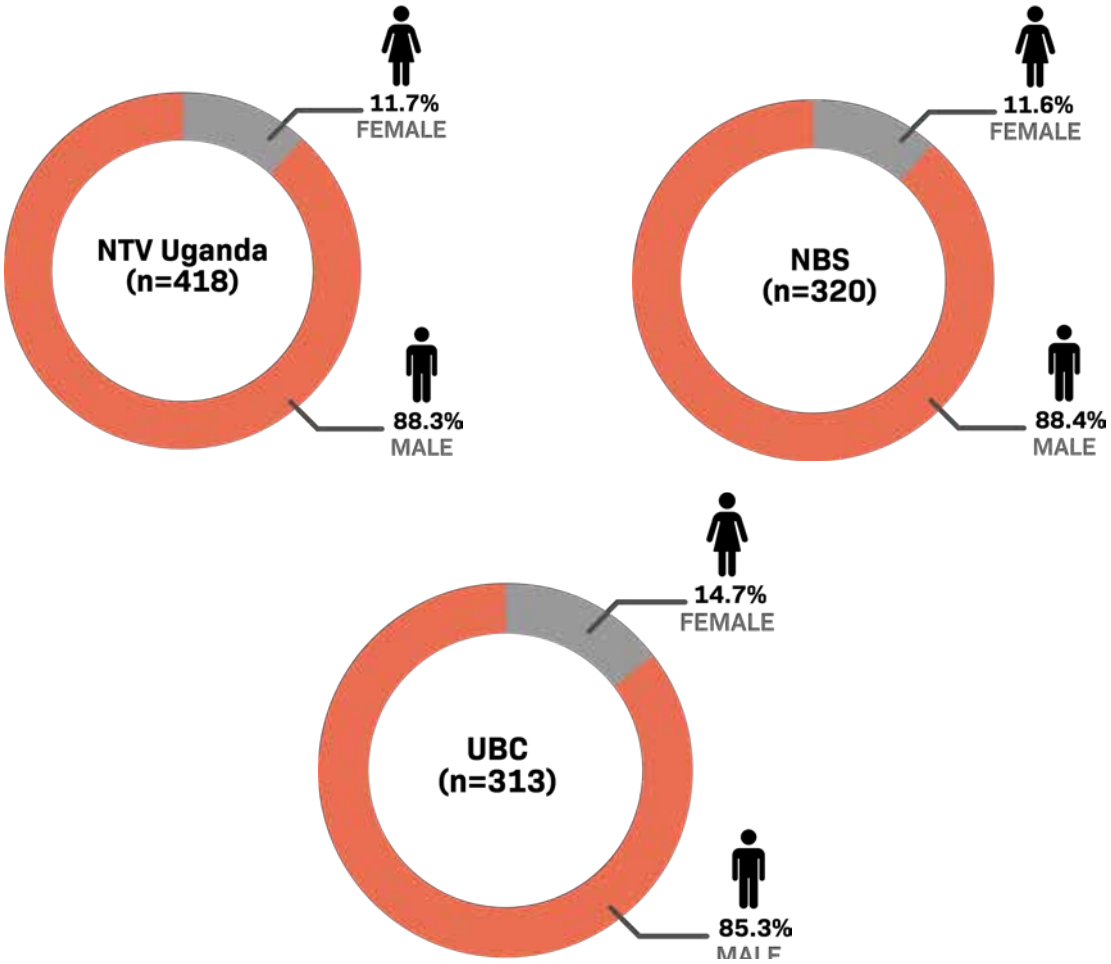
Daily Monitor closely followed by Bukedde carried a higher proportion of female sources compared to New Vision.

Fig 7 (a): Gender of sources by publication



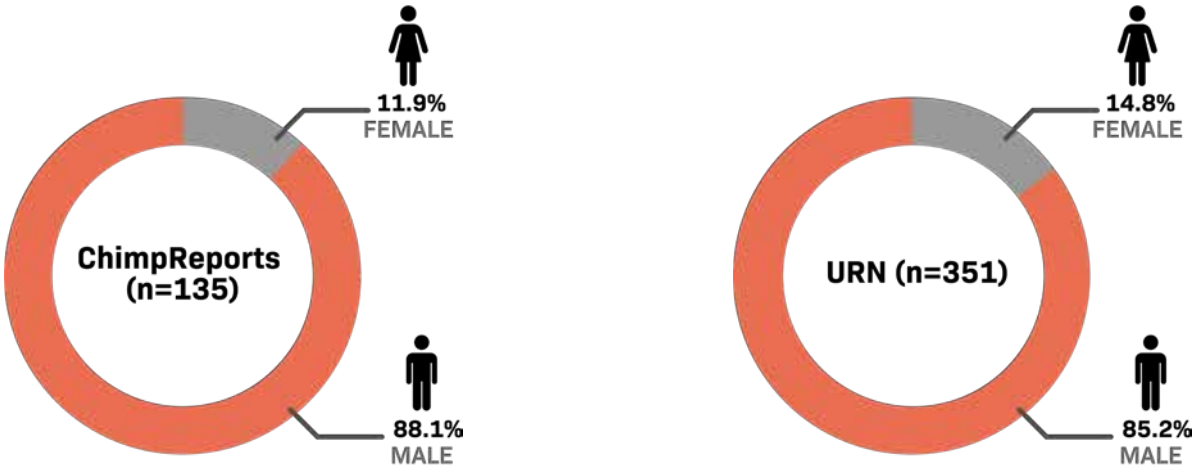
NBS TV and NTV had the lowest number of women as sources in road safety coverage across the television stations monitored.

Fig 7 (b): Gender of sources by television station



URN recorded a higher percentage of female sources compared to ChimpReports.

Fig 7 (c): Gender of sources by online platform



6.9.2 Multiplicity of sources

Reporting on road safety continued to use single sources especially among online stories, a trend similar to what was observed in our 2022 road safety report. 53.7% of online stories had either one source or no source at all.

Television stories were more likely to have three or more sources (51.9%) compared to newspapers (36.9%) and online platforms (24.7%).

Table 18: Number of sources in road safety stories across three media platforms

	Newspaper		Television		Online	
Number of sources	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
No source	20	5.0	2	0.5	6	2.3
1 source	145	36.4	104	28.4	133	51.4
2 sources	86	21.6	70	19.1	56	21.6
3 sources	53	13.3	71	19.4	33	12.7
4 sources	41	10.3	51	13.9	18	6.9
5 or more sources	53	13.3	68	18.6	13	5.0
Total	**398**	**100.0**	**366**	**100.0**	**259**	**100.0**

Bukedde had the highest share of stories with one or no source (62.3%). New Vision had the highest proportion of stories with three or more sources (54.4%), followed by Daily Monitor (52.2%)
All stories in New Vision had at least one source.

Table 19: Number of sources in road safety stories by publication

Number of sources	Bukedde (n=204)	Daily Monitor (n=115)	New Vision (n=79)
No source	8.3	2.6	0.0
1 source	53.9	20.0	15.2
2 sources	16.2	25.2	30.4
3 sources	5.4	20.9	22.8
4 sources	3.4	16.5	19.0
5 or more sources	12.7	14.8	12.7

UBC had the highest proportion of stories with three or more sources (55.8%) followed by NTV (52.5%). NBS had the highest percentage single-sourced stories (38%). UBC TV had no stories without a source.

Table 20: Number of sources in road safety stories by television station

Number of sources	NTV Uganda (n=141)	NBS (n=121)	UBC (n=104)
No source	0.7	0.8	0.0
1 source	24.8	38.0	22.1
2 sources	22.0	13.2	22.1
3 sources	18.4	19.8	20.2
4 sources	14.2	9.1	19.2
5 or more sources	19.9	19.0	16.3

Three quarters of the road safety stories published by ChimpReports contained just one source.

Table 21: Number of sources in road safety stories by online platform

Number of sources	ChimpReports (n=96)	URN (n=163)
No source	1.0	3.1
1 source	75.0	37.4
2 sources	15.6	25.2
3 sources	2.1	19.0
4 sources	3.1	9.2
5 or more sources	3.1	6.1

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that there is lack of appreciation of the importance of road safety stories to society. The media houses continue to relegate road safety stories, which continue to be driven by events (especially road crashes), covered as predominantly news and relegated to the inner pages of the newspapers.

The findings of this study also show that the nature and quality of coverage of road safety issues has not significantly changed from what was observed in the 2022 report. Despite a few improvements in enterprise reporting, and use of background and context in road safety stories, coverage continues to be dominated by conventional news reporting, road crashes remained the main focus of the media.

This report as well demonstrates the enduring challenges facing journalism in Uganda, in terms of allocation of resources for enterprise and investigative journalism, the lack of expertise in the newsrooms, among others. This can be seen in the increasing gender imbalance on sourcing the road safety stories, as well as the limited sourcing for stories.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations suffice:

1

Journalists, editors and media organisations should deliberately make efforts to prioritize the coverage and prominent publication of road safety stories. This will set the agenda for road safety as an important public and policy issue. This can be done through more enterprise and issue-based reporting.

2

Continued on-job professional training for journalists to appreciate issues about road safety. This is particularly important because of the high turnover of journalists across all media platforms in Uganda, and the lack of focus on road safety training in university curricular.

3

Media organisations need to commit more resources to boost the coverage of road safety. Some of these resources may include having reporters specialise in covering road safety, creating desks related to road safety or at least assigning an editor to the beat, and committing more funds and space for road safety reporting.

4

Journalists and media houses should make deliberate efforts to include female sources in their stories so that the media coverage of road safety reflects both male and female perspectives.

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR
MEDIA EXCELLENCE

Plot 130 Nanjala Road (Bunga-Soya), off Ggaba Road
P. O. Box 137930 Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 393 202 351
info@acme-ug.org
www.acme-ug.org
Facebook: ACME.UG
Twitter: @ACME_Africa