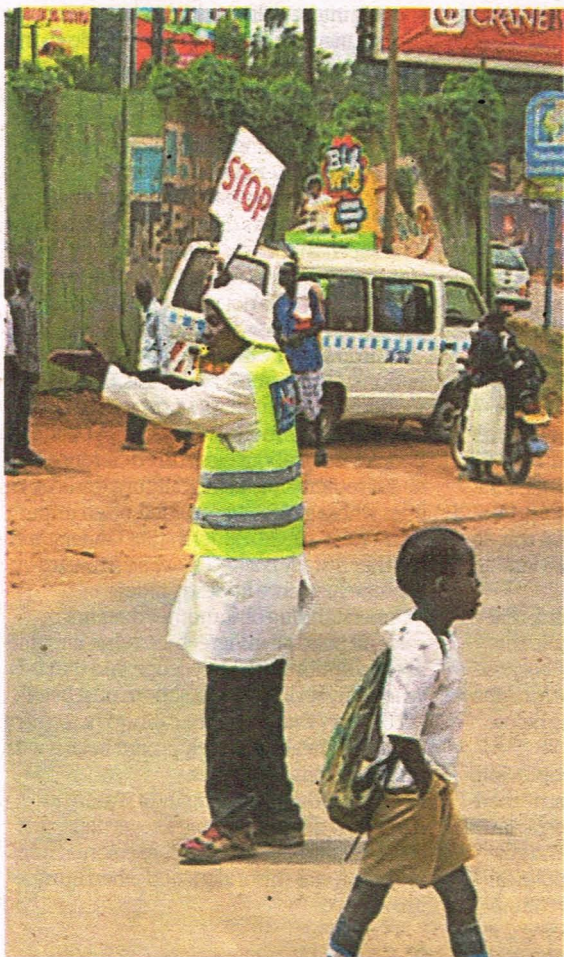


As schools reopen, protecting our children must come first



Tomorrow, schools across Uganda will reopen. Classrooms will be full again. Dormitories will be noisy. Parents will be busy. This is a good moment for our country. Education is the future, and our children are that future. But as we welcome students back to school, we must also remember one very important thing: their safety comes first.

School reopening is not only about books, uniforms, and fees. It is also about how children move from home to school, how they cross roads, how they travel in buses, taxis, and school vans, and how they are protected every day. We all know what happens on reporting days. Roads are crowded. Traffic increases. Drivers rush. Some forget that children are on the road. This is dangerous.

I would like to call upon all drivers, private cars, taxis, boda bodas, and school buses to be extra careful. Slow down near schools. Respect road signs. Give way to pedestrians. A child's life is more important than arriving early.

To parents and guardians, please guide your children. Talk to them about road safety. Teach them to cross roads carefully, to avoid playing near traffic, and to listen to teachers and school authorities. If possible, escort younger children to school or ensure they are in safe transport. To schools and administrators, safety should be a priority. Ensure school buses are in good condition. Make sure drivers are responsible and not reckless. Put clear rules in place to protect students within and outside school premises.

I also ask traffic police and local leaders to be visible during this time. Your presence on the roads can save lives. Help control traffic, especially near schools, markets, and busy junctions.

To fellow Ugandans, this is a shared responsibility. Whether you are a parent or not, whether you have children in school or not, every child on the road is our child. Let us be patient. Let us be kind. Let us look out for them.

As schools reopen, let us not only celebrate learning, but also commit ourselves to safety. When we protect our children today, we protect Uganda's tomorrow. Let this school term begin with care, responsibility, and love for our children.