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The Mutale Bridge, between Tshandama and Makonde, is in a terrible state after it was damaged by rains last year.

Damaged Mutale bridge a death trap for commuters

By Victor Mukwevho

Motorists from Niani and the surrounding areas are accusing the government of putting their lives at risk because of negligence in repairing the Mutale Bridge between Tshandama and Makonde. Part of the left lane was swept away by rains more than a year ago, leaving the bridge severely damaged.

The bridge is now in such poor condition that two cars cannot cross simultaneously as one side has been washed away, leaving a significant gap in the road.

Mr Konanani Nekhavhambe, a taxi driver from the area who transports commuters to and from work, expressed his concerns about the dangerous condition of the road, particularly in the evening. He worries that someone unfamiliar with the area might use the bridge at night and accidentally drive into the hole, ending up in the river below.

Nekhavhambe stated, "I don't understand why the government is not addressing this bridge issue urgently. It has been like this since last year." He also pointed out that when vehicles from Tshilamba and Thengwe meet on the bridge, they are forced to stop. This situation provides an oppor-

tunity for criminals hiding in the nearby bushes to target taxi drivers and passengers. "As taxi drivers, we sometimes have to leave passengers behind who finish work late because we need to cross the bridge while it's still light, to avoid the risk of being robbed at night," he added.

A government official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, revealed that he also uses this road daily for commuting to work. He had previously raised the issue with his superiors, but no action has been taken to address the problem. He criticised the government's response, stating, "Even high-ranking government officials travelled along this road during the Heritage Day celebrations at Zwigodini last month. They witnessed the bridge's condition, yet nothing is being done. The government often seems to wait for something tragic to occur before taking action."

This newspaper sent an inquiry to the Public Works spokesperson, but at the time of our going to press, no response had been received.

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