

Global Firepower (GFP) highlight the significant advancements in Africa's

Zambia Army is earnestly pursuing modernisation efforts, and the experiences from the

country's commitment to embracing technological advancements to enhance its operational effectiveness.

methodologies. "Our trip to Ethiopia is very important where knowledge

Ethiopian Defence Force, Gen. Sinyinza also called on Chief of General Staff of the Ethiopian

modernisation agenda. Accompanied by senior officers from Zambia Army

of modernising and enhancing productivity of the defence forces.

Clearing air on road tolls, fine, fair play



MUTALE MPUNDU

LIFE on the road is fast-paced, and in the daily rush, it's easy to overlook small responsibilities that have a big impact. One such issue that's raising concern across the country is the growing number of motorists skipping toll stations without paying the required fees. The National Road Fund Agency (NRFA) wants to have a candid, friendly conversation with road users; not to point fingers, but to raise awareness and highlight why tolls matter and what happens when they're ignored.

country.

Tolls, though often seen as a routine part of travel, play a critical role in the development and maintenance of Zambia's road network. These funds go directly into repairing damaged roads, constructing new ones, and ensuring safer, more efficient travel for everyone. They also support emergency response services and enhance public transport infrastructure. Each toll payment is a small but vital contribution towards building a better-connected and safer Zambia.

According to the Tolls Act, the penalties for toll evasion can be severe. Suppose a person is caught fraudulently or forcibly passing through a toll point without paying. In that case, they are liable to a fine of up to 300,000 penalty units – equivalent to K120,000 – or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years, or both. In cases where the offender accepts responsibility and is willing to pay a spot fine, the law allows for a summary penalty not exceeding 6,000 penalty units, which translates to K2,400, plus the cost of the skipped toll. However, failure to settle this fine can result in criminal prosecution, with potentially much higher financial and legal consequences.



POLICE cars are exempted from paying road tolls.

of vehicles are granted general exemptions from paying on Zambia's toll roads. This policy is designed to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted movement of vehicles that serve critical public functions and national interests.

Exempt vehicles include authorised emergency vehicles such as fire trucks, police cars, and both public and private ambulances, as well as those transporting essential medical supplies like blood and tissue banks. Military vehicles are also exempt. However, it is important to clarify that this exemption applies strictly to military-branded vehicles bearing official military number plates.

It does not extend to security personnel, such as police officers or soldiers, who may be in uniform while driving privately owned vehicles; they must still pay the applicable tolls.

Additionally, contractors' vehicles actively engaged in road construction, maintenance, or improvement are toll-exempt, as is the official motorcade of the republican President and Vice-President.

NRFA has also observed a concerning trend where some motorists deliberately attempt to avoid toll payment by trailing closely behind exempted

vehicles or those that have already paid. This behavior is illegal and undermines the tolling system, which plays a vital role in funding road maintenance and infrastructure development across the country. All motorists are therefore urged to comply with toll regulations and support national efforts to improve road networks.

In response to these growing concerns, NRFA, in collaboration with the Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA) and other enforcement bodies, has introduced several measures to detect and deter toll evasion. These include

surveillance systems, licence plate recognition cameras, and digital tracking tools. Vehicles that skip tolls can now be flagged in real time, blacklisted, and followed up for penalties or possible impounding.

Despite these enforcement efforts, the best deterrent remains public cooperation. Motorists are encouraged to always pay their road tolls and to report any accidental non-payment immediately at the nearest toll station. Citizens are also urged to promote accountability among fellow drivers and to report suspected toll evasion where observed.



AMBULANCES and vehicles transporting blood tissue are also exempted from paying road tolls.

NRFA remains committed to transparency, fairness and efficiency in road fund management. We believe that by working together with the public, we can uphold the integrity of the tolling system and continue improving the roads that connect our lives, businesses and communities. Toll fees are not a punishment; they are a shared investment in the country's future. The smoother, safer roads we all want are only possible when each of us does our part, one toll at a time.

Tolling isn't just a transaction – it's a promise; a promise to

help maintain and develop a road network that drives Zambia forward. Let's all pay it forward, proudly and responsibly.

To learn more about how to obtain your E-Toll card, recharge options, or for general inquiries, please visit the official NRFA website at www.nrfa.org.zm or contact the NRFA Customer Care Centre by dialing 700. Let's move together towards a sustainable and dynamic road fund and drive cashless.

The author is NRFA control centre operator-tolling operations.



Toll absconding refers to any act where a driver avoids paying road tolls, whether by speeding past a toll booth, using unauthorised routes, or misusing exemption tags meant for special vehicles. While it may seem minor or harmless to some, it's important to know that such actions are considered an offence under Zambia's Tolls Act No. 14 of 2011, the law that governs the tolling system in our

Some may think skipping a toll once or twice doesn't do much harm, but the collective impact of toll evasion is significant. It slows down road maintenance, delays the undertaking of new projects, increases safety risks, and places an unnecessary burden on law-abiding motorists who pay their dues. Ultimately, everyone loses when tolls go unpaid.

Under the provisions of the

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By James Goyo

