POLICY BRIEFING / 7 NOVEMBER 2026

Road safety in Zambia's 2027 National Budget

What the Budget Address and Yellow Book show about funding to prevent deaths and serious injuries.

K18.15bn

Proposed for road infrastructure

2,286

Police-recorded road deaths, January to September 2026

ZAMBIA ROAD SAFETY TRUST

zambianroadsafety.org • info@zambianroadsafety.org

DECISION BRIEF

Contents and principal finding

For Members of Parliament, officials responsible for roads, policing and health, and journalists reporting on the Budget.

03 What the Budget proposes

The road allocation, agency transfers and enforcement targets.

04 What police records show

Comparable crash and death figures, with the limits of injury data.

05 What ZRST asks Parliament and Government to do

Three requests that can be tracked through estimates, contracts and reporting.

06 Sources and verification notes

References, reconciliation and the economic cost estimate.

ZRST's finding

The Yellow Book explicitly includes road safety programmes in the K17.09 billion roads sub-programme. It also identifies funding for police Road Traffic Services and a transfer to RTSA. Parliament can now ask how much will be spent on each safety measure, where it will be delivered and who will report progress. [1, 6]

> **The immediate decision**
>
> During scrutiny of the estimates, Parliament should request a costed schedule for safer road design, speed enforcement and post-crash care, with a responsible agency and a reporting date for each item.

What the Budget proposes

Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane, Minister of Finance and National Planning, presented the 2027 Budget to the National Assembly on 6 November 2026. [1]

The Address proposes K18.15 billion for road infrastructure, compared with K14.5 billion in the 2026 Address, and sets out plans to build, upgrade or rehabilitate 787 km. The Yellow Book identifies the following lines within the detailed Estimates. [1, 2, 6]

Yellow Book line	2026 approved	2027 estimate	Page
Road infrastructure & management	K13.50bn	K17.09bn	246–247
Police Road Traffic Services	K852,568	K1,252,569	117–118
Transfer to RTSA	K155.64m	K155.64m	574
Operational transfer to RDA	K138.32m	K138.32m	625
Primary Health Services[1]	K9.29bn	K11.71bn	537

[1] Sub-programme. It includes emergency ambulance services alongside other health services. The table identifies distinct budget entries, which should be read with their scope and should not be added to the Address headline.

What the new detail establishes

Head 21 says the K17.09 billion line will finance road safety programmes alongside construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and other works. It gives no separate amount for safety. The police Road Traffic Services line rises by about 47% in nominal terms. The RTSA and Road Development Agency (RDA) transfers are unchanged in nominal terms and their entries do not specify spending by safety activity. [6]

The Ministry of Transport and Logistics targets six joint highway patrols and four joint road safety enforcement operations, the same targets as in 2026. These are ministry targets for joint operations. Parliament should ask which roads they will cover, how often enforcement will take place and how it will be funded. [6]

Verification boundary. The Estimates identify planned spending and outputs. They do not establish Treasury releases, actual expenditure or contracts awarded.

What police records show

National police figures as compiled by ZRST. The comparison covers January to September in both years. [3]

Indicator	2025	2026	Change
Recorded crashes	28,312	33,711	+19.1%
Fatal crashes	1,515	1,876	+23.8%
People killed	1,893	2,286	+20.8%
People seriously injured	Incomplete	5,519	See below

Deaths rose in each of the three quarters

Police recorded 681 deaths in the first quarter of 2026, 746 in the second and 859 in the third. Each quarter exceeded its 2025 counterpart. The nine-month increase was 393 deaths. A fatal crash can kill more than one person, so the count of fatal crashes and the count of deaths serve different purposes. [3]

Serious injuries require a different comparison

The 2026 quarterly counts sum to 5,519 people seriously injured. ZRST's published series has no equivalent figure for the third quarter of 2025. A nine-month percentage change would require mixing annual and quarterly figures, so we leave it out. [3]

> **How to read the trend**
>
> These are police-recorded figures. They show the scale and direction of recorded harm before the 2027 Budget was presented. Assessing the Budget's effect will require data from after the measures are delivered.

What ZRST asks Parliament and Government to do

Budget scrutiny should establish who will pay for safety measures, where they will be delivered and how the public can follow progress.

1. Publish a costed schedule during budget scrutiny

The Ministry of Finance and National Planning should ask the responsible agencies to break down the road safety programmes, police traffic services, RTSA workplan and crash response costs, and to identify any gaps. Publish each budget line, responsible agency and intended output for safer road design, speed enforcement and emergency response. Report releases and expenditure against those lines during 2027.

2. Specify safety works before road tenders go out

The Road Development Agency and councils should identify where the proposed road works pass schools, markets and clinics. Include costed crossings, continuous footpaths and speed-calming measures where site assessments show they are needed. Publish priority sites and require contractors to verify delivery before handover.

3. Publish comparable crash and injury data each quarter

Zambia Police and RTSA should publish quarterly tables and reconcile them with the annual release. Break out children, pedestrians and cyclists where the records permit. With the Ministry of Health, agree how to match police and hospital records for serious injuries, starting with a pilot on selected routes.

> **A result Zambia can already measure**
>
> At five Lusaka schools, ZRST's 2025 case study reported average speeds of 51.3 km/h before works and 35.8 km/h afterwards. All five remained above 30 km/h on average. The study had no comparison schools and did not establish a change in deaths or injuries. [4]

Sources and verification notes

Budget facts come from the Budget Addresses and detailed Estimates. Crash and programme figures come from ZRST's published evidence.

[1] 2027 Budget Address

Supplied copy. Cover and opening identify the Minister and date. See paragraph 51 (p. 9), expenditure table (p. 17), paragraphs 102(b), 104 and 106 (pp. 18–19), and paragraph 121(c) (p. 22).

[2] 2026 Budget Address

Official speech. See paragraphs 150 and 157 for the total and the road allocation.

[3] ZRST | Accidents in Zambia

Quarterly police figures compiled by ZRST. Original police releases for the complete comparison were not independently obtained for this revision.

[4] ZRST | Safe School Zones case study

December 2025 case study of the Yango–ZRST project at five Lusaka schools.

[5] ZRST | What road crashes cost Zambia

November 2026 briefing summarising the earlier national investment case and ZRST's subsequent calculation.

[6] 2027 Output Based Annual Budget (Yellow Book)

Supplied copy. Head 11, pp. 117–118. Head 21, pp. 246–247. Head 46, pp. 537–538. Head 51, pp. 574–576. Head 54, pp. 625–626. Page numbers follow the printed Estimates.

Reconciliation and economic cost

ZRST's compilation gives 2,560 deaths when the four 2025 quarterly counts are added and 2,567 in the police annual statement. The nine-month comparison uses the published quarterly series for both years. [3]

ZRST's previous briefing cites the earlier investment case estimate of K16.7 billion a year, equivalent to about 4.7% of GDP at the time. The later K43 billion figure applies that same percentage to estimated 2026 GDP. It is a scenario based on an assumed constant share, so this briefing uses it only to explain the method. Economic losses and budget appropriations measure different things. [5]