



The college bus in which three young girls died and four were critically injured on October 18, 2010, Oman's first traffic safety day

KOM road deaths

- Juhaina and Sara, two MECIT students die when their car hits a lamp post, May 2010
- Jassim and Al Azhar, two students die in a head-on collision, October 2010
- Three MECIT students die in bus crash, October 2010

How many more have to die?

More heartbreak and suffering

Three young girl students from Oman's Middle East College of Information and Technology (MECIT) died and 31 were injured, when the bus taking them home spun out of control, crashed into a parked truck, hit a third vehicle, burst through a railing and rolled down a bank on Monday October 18.

With supreme irony, this appalling tragedy took place on the first anniversary of His Majesty's speech challenging the nation urgently to

address and eliminate, as far as possible, death on our roads.

We can only guess at the immense heartbreak and suffering of the parents, family and friends of the dead. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them and to those who wait by the four girls lying in Sultan Qaboos University Hospital intensive care unit as Muscat residents are urged to donate blood.

(Click [here](#) and watch His Majesty's speech on our new blog.)

We were warned

Let us not dismiss this tragedy as another 'accident'. Like the majority of fatal and non-fatal crashes that cost Oman and society at large so dearly, this is a crash, caused by human error and, as such, could and should have been avoided.

And the error is not just that of the driver. The ROP crash investigation will no doubt prove what and who was the immediate cause of the loss of control, driver's speed and

or distraction, tire burst or hazard in the path of the bus.

However, major contributing factors are likely to be state of maintenance of the bus, level of the driver's training, truck parked on hard shoulder as well as road design and infrastructure or lack thereof. All of these are factors for which other parties are responsible.

In fact, this stretch of road in the vicinity of Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM) is well-known for fatal crashes.



2010 : Wreckage of car in which Juhaina and Sara died

2008 : Five school girls die on their way to school in Musanaa



Wreckage of mini-bus in which nine school girls perished on May 2nd, 2006

For more, visit our News page and crash archive: [link](#)

We were warned cont..

Only a few days before the crash, an article entitled [Faulty KOM road designs leave a trail of tragedies](#), in the Times of Oman catalogued the crash deaths on this road and called for remedial action.

On October 17, a concerned parent wrote to MECIT College urging them to lobby the authorities for traffic calming measures and driver awareness "to avoid having the lives of more young people and their families tragically ruined."

From anguish to action

Urgent remedial action is called for to address defects in road design and infrastructure near KOM in line with the Recommendations adopted by The Traffic Safety Symposium in May (see box) and approved by His Majesty, Recommendation 10 requires black spots where crashes are frequent to be re-engineered **to international standards**.

This tragedy also highlights the case for urgent policy and regulatory reform of our student transport system to overhaul **to international standards**:

- driver training and licensing;
- vehicle specifications;
- training of vehicle operators in school transport management;
- safe routes, drop off and pick up zones;
- effective fines and penalties for violations.

Fundamental to a safe student transport policy is the allocation of responsibilities and obligations between the education authorities, schools managements, operators, drivers, students and guardians.

Our half a million or more students are bused to and from school every day at the mercy of forces which expose them to death or serious injury in a crash. These children are the country's future. Let's take action to implement the vision of **safe student transport for all** without delay. Our children and young people deserve nothing less.



Inspector General Lt General Malik bin Sulaiman Al Ma'amari addresses the National Traffic Safety Symposium in Muscat, May 15-19 2010.

[Symposium recommendations](#) (pdf)

[World Report on Traffic 2004](#) (pdf)

[More on Oman road safety](#) (webpage)

[Get the facts and statistics](#) (webpage)

Sustainability llc is a 100% Omani-owned non-profit company active in research and advocacy committed to raising awareness of the risk factors leading to death and disability in road crashes. As developer of **Salim and Salimah, Safe and Sound™** السلامة مع سالم و سلامة، a pioneering child passenger safety campaign for the Arab world, and producer of a bi-lingual award-winning film "Doesn't your child deserve a safe ride?", Sustainability is part of WHO's network of global NGOs advocating for road safety, Make Roads Safe campaign, the Road Traffic Injuries Research Network, the European Road Safety Charter and the Middle East Partnership Initiative.



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