

'10 Abuja Uber/Bolt drivers killed by carjackers since January'

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Uber and Bolt drivers in Abuja, under the aegis of the Online Hackney Practitioners Association of Nigeria, have raised the alarm over the continued threat to their lives by carjackers, kidnappers, ritual killers and armed robbers.

According to them, over 10 drivers had been killed and their cars stolen, while many others were injured by the hoodlums.

They called on the government to compel the ride-hailing companies to profile users of their services to check the spate of killing of drivers and use of fake names by criminals.

The group said, "You want to pick a rider and you see funny names like *Ghost*, *Snake*, *Juju*, *Scorpion*, *Grave Death*, *Death*, and yet they will use Uber and Bolt platforms to request a ride and the companies are not doing anything to stop the killings. You write to them and they will tell you, 'we will let the authorities know,' and that's it."

The Chairman of OHPAN in Abuja, Emeka Emerole, told *PUNCH Metro* that several protests and letters to relevant authorities, including the police, on the menace had not brought anything positive.

He said, "This year alone, over 10 of our drivers were killed and their cars taken away and many were injured; some sustained permanent disabilities because of these carjackers.

"People like Ezekiel Akinyele, Matthew Okafor, Akin Awojabi and many other drivers were killed and their bodies dumped on the streets of Abuja. Thankfully, one of us, Moses, is alive today to tell the story himself after battling for his life at the National Hospital Abuja, but he lost his eyes

permanently. Yet, the most annoying thing is that Uber and Bolt are not doing anything serious about the situation.”

Emerole said entreaties by OHPAN that riders should be profiled fell on deaf ears, as the firms refused to listen to them.

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He said, “It is annoying that a rider will pick a SIM card, slot it into a phone, request a ride and take the driver to an unknown destination, kill the driver and take his car.

“It is untraceable because Uber and Bolt do not know him, but when it comes to the drivers, the companies have our BVNs, NINs, driving licences, addresses, pictures and many other things just to make sure that users of their services are protected.

“But to do the same in the case of riders, no, because they don’t see us as important. We are calling on the government to come to our rescue.”

A spokesperson for the police, FCT command, Mariam Yusuf, said measures were being taken to safeguard the lives of the drivers, adding that the police were also investigating reported cases.

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