

The government of Uganda has said it is halting all school trips until further notice in response to a school bus which crashed during its return to Kampala from a trip to the Sipi Falls.

The government has temporarily halted all school trips in response, as families mourn at least 20 dead children and an adult.

Parents and other relatives rushed to the elementary schoolyard in Kampala on Friday morning seeking information about their loved ones.

Uganda Police Force community liaison officer Michael Kananura said in a statement on social media that the crash took place late on Thursday in Chekwatit Village in the Kapchorwa district of eastern Uganda.

The Suzuki bus belonging to the King David Junior School in the capital Kampala from an excursion to the Sipi Falls waterfalls in the region.

Kananura said that 20 pupils and one adult male had been confirmed dead after the crash.

“Several survivors, whose identities are yet to be established” were rushed to local hospitals for treatment, he said, later saying that three adult males and “several juveniles” sustained injuries in the crash.

“Preliminary investigations indicate that the school bus had taken pupils on an educational tour to Sipi Falls in Kapchorwa District,” Kananura said. “While returning from the tour, the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle, which veered off the road, struck a large stone along the roadside, and overturned.”

Police were still investigating the exact cause of the crash and would provide updates as soon as possible, he said.

Uganda’s Ministry of Works and Transport said on Friday that Education Minister Chrysotom Muyingo had “put on hold all school trips and excursions, effective immediately and until further notice.”

The sparsely populated Kapchorwa district in eastern Uganda near the border to Kenya is home to the Sipi Falls in the Mount Algon national park.

Road accidents are common in the East African nation and are often blamed on

poorly maintained vehicles, reckless driving and poor road conditions, which are problems across Africa. Infrastructure-related problems are often exacerbated further in more isolated regions.

At least 14 people died when a bus collided with a truck in a remote area of northern Uganda earlier this month. Last October, 46 people were killed in a crash on a major highway between the capital Kampala and the northern city of Gulu.

According to World Health Organization and United Nations data, Africa has the worst continental road safety record in the world on a per capita basis, with around 26 deaths per 100,000 people per year, just under three times the rate in Europe.