

# Product Liability: Families to Bring Class Action against Ford in South Africa

January 25, 2017 Overaye Akpotaire



Ford South Africa may be facing a class action in South Africa. The class action is being led by the family of Reshall Jimmy, who died when his Ford Kuga burst into flames.

Last week, the motor manufacturer announced a safety recall of Ford Kuga models with 1.6 litre engines and produced from 2012 to 2014, after approximately 46 vehicles were reported to have burst into flames over the past year. Ford claims it is aware of 39 cases.

Kaveen and Renisha Jimmy, speaking at the National Press Club in Pretoria, said Ford's decision, taken only last week, to initiate a safety recall isn't good enough.

*"They are misleading the media and are trying to save the face of their brand. If anything they are digging a deeper hole for them to get out of. The South African Police Division provided exceptional investigation in my brother's matter, they managed to uncover in four weeks what Ford has taken 18 months to get to", said Kaveen Jimmy*

Reshall's Kuga was a 2014 model but Ford continues to insist that there is no connection "as far as the fire" with this recall.



Ford South Africa's chief executive, Jeff Nemeth, said the recall would include safety checks on affected vehicles, which would be returned to the road once the checks are concluded.

Some owners of other Ford models that are not part of the recall have joined a class action against the manufacturer alleging their cars have also caught fire.

The claims — contained in a dossier given to the National Consumer Commission — challenges Ford's insistence that only the 1.6l EcoBoost Kuga built between 2012 and 2014 has a fire-causing problem which they say they will fix in the recall of 4,556 cars. But the claims filed throw the net wider. Included are claims for the 2.5l Kuga and the newly manufactured 1.5l EcoBoost.

The National Consumer Commission has stated that it would not take incidence of this sort lightly. Commissioner Ebrahim Mohammed stated that "South Africa will not tolerate any product that are inferior quality or are not safe."

The Kuga is not manufactured in South Africa rather it is manufactured in Spain and sold in other markets in Europe.