



CONDEMNING RECENT POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTION: AN APPEAL FOR PEACE, UNITY, SOBERNESS, LOVE , TOLERANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

Human Rights Defenders Coalition expresses shock and worry over the recent political violence that has rocked the nation. We note that such violence has always the backing of top leadership in political parties. The political violence has emerged with the growing political tension on the country's political landscape ahead of the 2019 general elections. We learn with great concern the recent political hate remarks by political leaders with the recent one being in Mzuzu where the State President, Professor Peter Mutharika addressed a crowd at Katoto while coming from Umthetho cultural event in Mzimba. The President threatened to deal with his political opponents by "dropping a ton of bricks" on them. Such provocative statements could potentially be misinterpreted by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) followers as an endorsement of violence against political opponents.

It comes as no surprise, to us, that following the irate remarks made by the State President, two vehicles belonging to United Transformation Movement were torched in Mangochi by unknown vandals.. As Rights Defenders Coalition, we strongly condemn such barbaric acts and demand fresh investigations by the Malawi Police and bring the culprits to justice.

We further demand answers from the State President who we regard as a voice behind the political violence. It needs no emphasizing that the country's constitution

does not tolerate political violence as a tool to intimidate political opponents. We believe that political leaders have to be held accountable for decisions they make in preserving the good political environment in the country. . Its high time political parties and leaders played civilized and issue-based politics during campaigns and political gatherings. We are in the 21st Century where we need to appreciate the fruits of Democracy. Political violence will not take this country anywhere.

As the country heads towards 2019, it's important that political parties understand the concept of democracy and avoid influencing party cadets to incite violence.

The act of using intimidation ahead of the 2019 polls does not accord the true freedom that Malawians are entitled to. The democratic environment in Malawi provides for freedom of association and expression. We appeal to all political parties to stop from indulging themselves in any politically-motivated violence

As a nation, we believe we are guided by laws which supports inclusiveness and rule of law as enshrined in the Constitution of the Malawi.

Signed:

TIMOTHY PAGONACHI MTAMBO

Chairperson HRDC

GIFT TRAPENCE

Vice Chairperson HRDC

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