



K53BN SCANDAL: HRDC's issues 5 demands against Commercial Agency and Reliance Trading Company attempt to defraud the Malawi Government.

We, the Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC), are appalled to learn that two companies that signed uniform supply contracts with the Immigration Department in 2012—Africa Commercial Agency and Reliance Trading Company—want to be paid almost K54 billion when their contracts' total price was just over K9 Billion. It is even disheartening that these suppliers want the Government of Malawi—which is presiding over the poorest people in the world—to pay this fraudulent amount when the suppliers never delivered anything to the Department of Immigration for five years from the day the Department asked the firms to do so.

For far too long, Malawians have watched with dismay certain questionable suppliers shamelessly siphoning billions out of the Government through dubious claims and inflation of invoices. Some have even been paid for goods they never supplied. This thieving must stop right now! Enough is enough Malawians have suffered for so long. This is why HRDC demands that the Malawi Government and its relevant Agencies aggressively deal with this latest attempt to abuse Malawi's hard earned Public resources and violating Finance and Economic Management (PFEM) system; brutal violations that have seen 30 percent of National Budgets stolen through fraud and mismanagement.

As HRDC we are shocked as to why the supplier was silent all these years only to start making such unnecessary and unfounded demands after 6 years. We are forced to suspect that the supplier is taking advantage of a Government that tolerated corruption and has shown no political will in ending the same. No wonder some Malawians are suspecting that this can be syndicate to defraud the government with full blessings from some senior Government officials.

In view of the foregoing, HRDC demands that:

1. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and Fiscal Police investigate Mr. Abdul Karim Batawarara, who runs Africa Commercial Agency and Reliance Trading Company for possible corruption and fraud and. Where there is reason to believe that crimes occurred; security agencies should arrest and prosecute suspects.
2. ACB and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority (PPDA) must

- investigate the award of the contracts under question.
3. The PPDA must with immediate effect disbar Africa Commercial Agency and Reliance Trading Company and any firms associated with Mr. Karim Batawarara from participating in any public tender in Malawi.
 4. Government must suspend all current contracts that Africa Commercial Agency and Reliance Trading Company or any firms associated with Mr. Karim Batawarara may have with the Malawi Government until the two companies are cleared.
 5. Should the Malawi Government not act on the above, HRDC will assume that the administration is in consort with the suppliers that want to reap from poor Malawians where they did not sow. Should that be the case, HRDC shall include this as one of the demands in the upcoming demonstrations in March 2019. The demonstrations shall be against continued plunder of public resources specifically against Mr. Karim Batawarara, his two companies and the Peter Mutharika-led Government.

Furthermore if the above will not be implemented HRDC will have no option but to legal action to prevent public resources from being abused.

Signed by

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