



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS COALITION (HRDC) STATEMENT ON THE MISSING REGISTRATION DATA KIT

We the Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) would like to register our deep shock and disappointment at the recently revealed missing and discovery of the Registration kit. We say this dully aware that the foundation of good governance is premised on free, fair and credible elections. We are further mindful that elections are not just an event but also a series of activities that collectively form an electoral process. Any incident casting aspersions on the process will trigger a lack of trust in the process that will be tantamount to a maladministered process. Its incidents like these that will culminate into chaos if not checked and contained.

MEC'S SILENCE ON THE MISSING OF THE KIT

Mindful that MEC is delegated by Malawians to manage the electoral process, it is imperative that Malawians were supposed to be informed of the missing of the registration kit in its control while transporting it to Mwanza. The silence on the missing of the gargets compels us to possibly conclude that MEC has failed to be accountable and transparent to the people who entrusted it with such a very important process in the management of elections. To say the least this erodes the trust if any Malawians had towards the electoral body; from the Officers to Commissioners. The secrecy around this important matter raises further questions as to who MEC accounts to and possibly will endeavor to account to. To this effect we feel duty bound to call for a fresh open and transparent reconstitution of the electoral body.

In view of what has happened, Malawians will not be wrong to conclude that MEC is conniving with some elements of Malawi political divide to rig the elections the expense of credibility that will thwart the aspirations of the citizenry.

OUR DEMANDS

The HRDC demands for the following:

1. That entire Commission (the Chairperson and Commissioners and management) be disbanded forthwith and replaced with a commission comprising of able citizens but selected in a transparent and accountable process.

2. An independent body comprising of all key political parties, faith based institutions and credible civil society leaders be immediately constituted to investigate the matter and present a report to Parliament within a month.
3. The suspicious and mysterious machine should not be used for the upcoming elections.
4. An independent forensic IT expert should be identified to examine the recovered machine. This IT expert should be the one to be collectively appointed by all political parties including other critical electoral stakeholders.
5. That proper stock taking of all registration equipment and their viability be commissioned and all machines accounted for within 21 days.

CONCLUSION

Mindful how emotive the electoral process is, we would hasten to say that compliance to these demands will indeed restore the lost trust Malawians have in MEC. If not carefully complied this will lead to high levels of voter apathy as Malawians would have had concluded that the process is rigged well before the voting day. To this effect, ignoring our calls will be more dangerous if not disastrous for our hard earned democracy.

If these calls are not met we are calling all political parties to mobilize their members to the streets until the demands are implemented.

Signed by

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