



## **STATEMENT ON PROPAGANDA, THREATS AND ATTACKS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

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The Human Rights Defenders Coalition expresses concern over intensified and systematic attacks, intimidation, defamation and libel targeted at the leadership of our noble institution. The attacks are nothing but aimed at discrediting our noble work. The media has of late been awash with propaganda, shamelessly churned by our distractors to the effect that HRDC leadership is compromised. We express our disgust at the current regime's attempts to drag HRDC name into corruption and the abduction and killing of persons with albinism scandals.

We at HRDC are not easily and usually drawn into commenting on trivia and social media gossip, but we just want to take this opportunity to set the record straight once and for all that we will not be intimidated and muted by whatever amount of propaganda. We and indeed all well-meaning Malawians are aware that the current regime is fast running of ideas to address the rampant corruption and indeed how to address the killing of person with albinism and have resorted into attacking all those that have stood up against these vices.

Ours voice is noble cause and cannot be muted. We stand up against impunity and speak truth to power and do not expect monetary gains. It is therefore disheartening and laughable at the same time to read in the media that we have received kickbacks from Batawalala of the immigration-gate fame to look away from the alleged mess. Corruption and fraud allegations that have been level against Batawalala are grave and Malawians appreciate the interest that HRDC has shown to make sure that the due process of the law takes its course without any undue interference.

We, at HRDC are aware that the media propaganda in question is a deliberate machination to discredit our advocacy and lobbying work. We are aware that the Democratic Progressive Party led government is in panic mode so much that it is desperately trying to cover its deficiencies by way of blaming it on us. The 21<sup>st</sup> May Tripartite Elections have taken a toll on the regime and is desperately employing lame strategies in an attempt to duck voter's scrutiny.

What is more worrying but not surprising is that are threats, intimidation and mudslinging are intensifying by each passing day. These systematic and sponsored propaganda are absurd and only aimed at gagging our voice of reason in calling for strong leadership to address challenges that Malawi is facing including delayed justice

for victims of killings of persons with albinism and corruption.

It is becoming a habit that every time we hold a demonstration to hold government accountable, regime propagandist charm some lies to the effect that we have been sponsored by regime change agents to do so. Malawians will recall that after the April 2018 demonstrations, another false story circulated about HRDC enjoying donor money in Mauritania.

These are futile attempts by failed leaders to stall demands for transparency and accountability

In view of the above we make the following demands.

- The Police must abide working principles to institute investigations and arrest all culprits connected to making threats directed to all Human Rights Defenders.
- The Police to assure Malawians that they shall desist from partisanship in terms of discharging their duties. As such, they must, at all times, protect freedom of expression, assembly among other rights
- We demand the DPP to stop using the youth to advance political violence against its critics

Signed by

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