



Urgent Joint Statement: Condemnation of Disturbing Deaths in Malawi and Calls for Enhanced National Security

Issued this 25th day of September 2023 at Lilongwe

We, a coalition of human rights organizations committed to the protection of fundamental rights and the promotion of justice, issue this joint statement to express our grave concern and unequivocal condemnation of the alarming wave of mysterious and brutal deaths that have recently plagued the nation of Malawi. These incidents have inflicted immeasurable suffering upon the victims and their families, and they have cast a long shadow over the safety and security of Malawi's citizens.

The recurring cases of mysterious and brutal deaths in Malawi are indicative of profound security lapses, the implications of which extend far beyond the immediate tragedy. The recent brutal killings of Agness Katengeza, Jacob Msokera, and Allan Wittika, coupled with the alarming number of deaths resulting from incidents of mob justice, serve as stark and tragic reminders of the disturbing security lapses that our society is currently grappling with. These heart-wrenching events demand our immediate attention and a comprehensive reassessment of our security measures.

The security lapses not only undermine the citizens' trust in their government but also pose a grave danger to the stability and well-being of the nation:

1. **Erosion of Citizen Trust:** The failure to address and prevent these heinous crimes erodes public trust in the institutions responsible for ensuring the safety of Malawian citizens, leading to a breakdown in the social contract between the state and its people.
2. **Human Rights Violations:** The continued brutality and loss of innocent lives constitute a gross violation of the basic human rights enshrined in international agreements and Malawi's own constitution.
3. **Threat to National Security:** The unchecked violence contributes to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, undermining the overall stability and progress of the nation.

Beyond the immediate threats to safety and security, the ongoing security lapses have profound implications for both domestic and foreign investment in Malawi:

1. **Diminished Investor Confidence:** The inability of the government to address security issues erodes investor confidence in Malawi as a safe and stable destination for investments. This can discourage both domestic and foreign investors from committing capital to the country.
2. **Reduced Economic Growth:** A decline in investments hampers economic growth and development, potentially resulting in reduced job opportunities, increased poverty, and diminished prospects for the people of Malawi.
3. **Impact on Tourism:** Malawi's tourism industry, a vital source of income, can suffer as potential visitors and tourists may be deterred by concerns over safety and security.

The persistent incidents of mysterious and brutal deaths also take a toll on the functionality and operations of the Malawi Police Service:

1. **Low Morale:** The inability to solve these cases can lead to demoralization among police officers, hindering their ability to effectively protect and serve the public.
2. **Loss of Public Trust:** Failure to address these crimes erodes public trust in the police, making it more challenging for them to fulfill their duty of maintaining law and order.

In light of these dire circumstances, we urge the government of Malawi to take immediate and decisive action to restore faith in the safety and security of its citizens. We offer the following recommendations:

1. **Thorough Investigations:** Initiate thorough, impartial, and expeditious investigations into all instances of mysterious and brutal deaths, ensuring that the perpetrators are swiftly brought to justice.
2. **Reform of Law Enforcement:** Undertake a comprehensive review and reform of the Malawi Police Service to equip it adequately, enhance training, and augment staffing levels to ensure the effective maintenance of law and order.
3. **Community Engagement:** Foster stronger connections between law enforcement agencies and local communities through community policing initiatives to build trust and cooperation.
4. **Accountability and Transparency:** Guarantee transparency in the investigative process and hold accountable any officials found negligent or implicated in human rights violations.
5. **Public Awareness:** Educate citizens about their rights and the importance of reporting suspicious activities, creating a more engaged and vigilant populace.

In conclusion, we, as a coalition of human rights organizations, express our unwavering solidarity with the people of Malawi and demand an immediate end to the wave of mysterious and brutal deaths. We fervently implore that the Malawi government, in accordance with its Constitution,

prioritize its primary duty to promote the peace and security of its citizens. Therefore, our government must take the necessary actions to protect its citizens, uphold their rights, and reinstate confidence in the nation's safety and security.

We stand committed to supporting efforts to ensure justice, accountability, and a more secure future for all Malawians. We recognize that these efforts are not only essential for the well-being of the citizens but are also crucial for the prosperity and attractiveness of Malawi as a destination for both domestic and foreign investment.

Signed on 25th September 2023 by:

1. National Advocacy Platform
2. Human Rights Defenders Coalition
3. Centre for Civil Society Strengthening
4. Civil Society Coalition on Accountability and Transparency
5. Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre
6. NGO Gender Coordination Network
7. Centre for Social Accountability and Transparency
8. Youth and Society
9. Malawi Economic Justice Network
10. Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation