



# BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

JAN-JUNE 2024  
Vol. 1/ Issue1



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## BOARD CHAIRPERSON MESSAGE

Dear esteemed members of the press and the general public, Welcome to the inaugural e-newsletter of the Media Council of Malawi (MCM).

MCM is mandated to uphold and maintain freedom and professionalism of the media in Malawi. We champion the principles of freedom of expression, the public's right to receive and impart information, and the defense of media independence against undue pressure from any source.

Our commitment to these ideals is unwavering, and we strive to create an environment where journalists can thrive while adhering to the highest ethical standards.

At the heart of our work lies the Media Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct which serves as a compass, guiding media practitioners toward accurate, balanced, and fair reporting.

As we embark on this journey, our vision is clear: to foster a vibrant, responsible, and independent media landscape in Malawi.

We believe that self-regulation, guided by ethical principles, is the cornerstone of a thriving democracy, and that through collaboration, dialogue, and continuous improvement, we can elevate journalism to new heights.

I, therefore, invite all media stakeholders, journalists, and concerned citizens to actively engage with MCM. Let us work together to safeguard media freedom, enhance accountability, and promote excellence in our profession. Your feedback, ideas, and support are invaluable.

As the sole media self-regulating organization in Malawi, MCM is actively involved in media development activities aimed at promoting professionalism and supporting media practitioners.

In this newsletter, we provide you with an update on some media development interventions that MCM has undertaken since its resuscitation in January 2020.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting venture. Together, we can shape a media trajectory that serves the public interest, upholds democratic values, and contributes to the development of our beloved nation.

Enjoy the read!

Dr. Jolly Ntaba, Board Chairperson





# MEDIA COUNCIL OF MALAWI RESOLVES TO LEGISLATED SELF-REGULATION, ELECTS NEW CHAIR



Participants at the Elective General Assembly in Lilongwe posed for a group photo after the elections

STEVEN NKHOMA

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) has resolved to adopt a legislated model of media self-regulation to strengthen its mandate amid the rapidly growing industry landscape.

The resolution was made on January 12, 2024, at an Elective General Meeting (EGM), where Jolly Ntaba was elected as the new board chairperson, replacing Wisdom Chingwede.

In an interview following his election, Ntaba emphasised the need for media co-regulation involving both the media industry and the public.

He said, like the government, which represents the public, MCM as an industry representative should be backed by law.

Ntaba argued that the rapid industry growth has allowed some to abuse the profession, threatening practitioner accountability due to the optional nature of voluntary self-regulation.

“This is a threat, as such people can bring the profession into disrepute. So, I believe this is the right time to have legislated self-regulation,” he said.

The outgoing chairperson, Chingwede, called on the new board to maintain high ethical standards.

“Together, we have championed press freedom, embraced innovation, and fostered an environment that nurtures the growth of media professionals,” he said.



Ntaba- I will support this motion

“...it can use the law to protect media outlets or practitioners in conflict with other institutions”

Chingwede expressed confidence in the incoming leadership’s capabilities, saying they would inherit not just a responsibility but an opportunity to build upon current achievements, embrace new possibilities, and steer MCM towards a brighter future.

Keynote speaker Levi Zeleza Manda echoed the call for legislated media self-regulation.



Dr Manda- MCM needs to have a ‘teeth’

“The Media Council of Malawi needs to have ‘teeth’ so that it can sanction someone when they conduct themselves contrary to professional ethics, and it can use the law to protect media outlets or practitioners in conflict with other institutions,” he said.

MCM executive director Moses Kaufa announced that the Council will work with the Ministry of Information and Digitalization and other legal experts to form a media task force to advance the regulatory process.



Former Board Chairperson Wisdom Chingwede



# ETHICAL JOURNALISM INSIGHTS

## MCM COMMITTED TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONALISM IN MEDIA INDUSTRY



Cross-section of participants during the training and insert Board Chairperson Dr. Jolly Ntaba making a speech.

BY PHILLIP CHINKHOKWE

The Media Council of Malawi has reiterated its commitment to support the transformation of the media sector in the country.

This was said by the Board Chairperson Dr. Jolly Ntaba during the opening of a one-day training workshop for journalists from different media outlets in Blantyre on 24 Jan 2024.

Dr. Ntaba, acknowledged the Councils' remarkable progress since its revival in 2020.

He credited the achievements to the positive and collaborative relationship between MCM and media stakeholders.

The board chair has encouraged journalists in Malawi to adhere to the ethical principles of journalism, saying that this would safeguard the

profession's reputation and enhance the public's confidence in the media.

"As journalists, we have a duty to maintain the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in our work.

By following the code of ethics and professional conduct, we not only preserve our credibility and respect, but also serve the public interest and promote a culture of trust and openness in our profession," Ntaba said.

The Chairperson further advised journalists to always review and abide by the code of ethics and professional conduct, and to report any breaches or issues to the relevant authorities.

"We should always aim to report the truth, respect the dignity and

"As journalists, we have a duty to maintain the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in our work. By following the code of ethics and professional conduct, we not only preserve our credibility and respect, but also serve the public interest and promote a culture of trust and openness in our profession."

privacy of our sources and subjects, avoid conflicts of interest and prejudice, and act with honesty and responsibility," He said.

Dr. Ntaba stressed that journalism can be a noble and honourable profession that contributes to the development of society and democracy.

The training at Malawi Sun Hotel was attended by 25 journalists.

The training focused on Enhancing Media Professionalism through Media Ethics and Access to Information.

The training was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

## MCM TRAINS JOURNALISTS ON ETHICAL GBV AND CHILD REPORTING



Cross section of the reporters being trained.

BY STEVEN NKHOMA AND TIONGE HARA

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) has intensified efforts to improve ethical reporting on gender-based violence (GBV) and related issues through a series of training sessions across the country.

On May 4-5, 2023, MCM conducted a two-day workshop in Nkhotakota for 22 media professionals, including 12 reporters, five editors, and five district information officers from five districts.

The training focused on the Access to Information (ATI) Act and ethical reporting on GBV.

MCM executive director Moses Kaufa said the initiative aligns with the council's 2020-

2025 strategic plan, which aims to address media development needs in Malawi.

He said: "We need to ensure that our reporting is accurate, informative, and respectful of the victims. "By doing so, we can help raise awareness of these issues and work towards creating a more just and inclusive society."

The council later extended similar training to journalists in the northern region, covering media ethics, the Access to Information Act, and information governance.

Participants discussed the media's role in reporting on GBV and violence against children.

## MCM URGES TRANSPARENCY TO BOOST PUBLIC TRUST

BY STEVEN NKHOMA

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) has called for greater transparency among media ombudspersons to restore public trust in the industry.

During a meeting with ombudspersons from the Southern region in Blantyre, MCM Board Chairperson Dr. Jolly Ntaba stressed the importance of openness as election excitement builds.

"This forum provides a timely opportunity for us to move together in the direction that we all want to see Malawi media take,"

"Let us appreciate the power of transparency, openness, and responsiveness in building trust with our audience." Ntaba said.

Ntaba emphasized the crucial role of media self-regulation in maintaining the industry's watchdog function without external pressure.

NPL Deputy Editor Michael Mmeya highlighted the need for swift complaint resolution to maintain public confidence in ombudspersons.

The meeting, attended by 16 media ombudspersons from various outlets, is part of MCM's efforts to strengthen media self-regulation in Malawi.

The initiative, was supported by National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

## MALAWI PRESIDENT PLEDGES MEDIA FREEDOM SUPPORT ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY



Chakwera: committed to media freedom and freedom of expression

BY STEVEN NKHOMA

President Lazarus Chakwera reaffirmed his commitment to protect media independence and press freedom during a breakfast meeting with journalists at Kamuzu Palace on May 3, 2024, marking World Press Freedom Day.

Chakwera denied ordering the police to arrest journalists critical of his government.

He said: "I can assure you that I have never issued orders to the police to arrest anyone, much less a journalist, because such an order would be a violation of the very constitution I swore an oath to protect."

Delivering her speech, Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa) Malawi Vice Chairperson Chisomo Ngulube highlighted challenges facing the media industry, particularly arbitrary arrests by the Malawi Police Service and the use of criminal defamation laws in the Penal Code.

Ngulube urged the President to review "draconian" laws in the Penal Code ahead of the September 16, 2025 General Elections.

"Criminal defamation laws in the Penal Code

and the Electronic and Cybersecurity Act [2016] are being implemented in a manner that is becoming a threat to media freedom," she said.

In his remarks, Minister of Information and Digitalisation Moses Kumkuyu acknowledged the need for continued engagement between the media and government, emphasizing their shared purpose of serving the public.

The 2024 World Press Freedom Day is celebrated under the theme "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis." but locally it is celebrated under the theme "Guardians of Democracy: Championing Media Independence for Credible Elections" to cast the spotlight on the importance of a free and independent media to ensure free, fair and credible elections, sustainable development and democracy.



# PRESS FREEDOM ADVOCACY

## NAVIGATING JOURNALISM ETHICS AMID CHALLENGES IN MALAWI

In a nation where a free press is enshrined in the Constitution, Malawian journalists find themselves at a crossroads.

The evolving media landscape presents both opportunities and challenges, and the balance between journalistic integrity and external pressures is increasingly precarious.

Journalists often face legal action when investigating sensitive stories, leading to self-censorship and hindering robust reporting.

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) notes that the industry faces challenges in upholding ethics amid threats such as fake news, political interference, and commercial pressures.

Firstly, the rise of fake news, fuelled by social media, poses a significant challenge. Journalists must sift through a sea of information to deliver accurate, reliable news.

Secondly, Malawi's political landscape influences media reporting, with journalists facing pressure to align their narratives with political interests, compromising their independence and objectivity.

Thirdly, in a financially strained industry, media houses are grappling with survival. Advertisers and sponsors wield influence, potentially swaying editorial decisions.

While logistical support to media organizations is commendable, some organizations offer unjustifiable incentives to sway media coverage, compromising objectivity and undermining journalistic integrity.

As a self-regulatory body, MCM's mission is to safeguard journalistic ethics and professionalism while promoting media freedom.

We advocate for self-regulation within the media industry, encouraging adherence to professional journalism principles.

The Council conducts capacity-building sessions with practitioners and engages media managers to desist from any conflicts of interest,

empowering journalists to uphold ethical standards, prevent abuse of power, and maintain public trust.

The Council monitors journalism education quality, collaborating with institutions to enhance curriculum content and emphasize ethical principles.

We believe the media is crucial in providing credible information to facilitate informed decision-making.

The Access to Information Act, operationalised in September 2020, is pivotal for allowing citizens, voters, and taxpayers access to crucial information.

MCM has embarked on an awareness campaign to educate journalists and the public on their rights and responsibilities under this law.

MCM encourages journalists to stand at the frontline of truth-telling.

Balancing ethical imperatives with external pressures is no easy task, but the Council remains committed to fostering a vibrant, responsible media landscape that serves democracy and empowers citizens with accurate information.



The author, a media scholar with over 20 years of journalism experience in Malawi, currently serves as the Executive Director of the Media Council of Malawi. He writes in his official capacity.

If you have any topical issues regarding the media industry, please share them with us for a chance to be featured in this column. The maximum word limit is 1000 words. Send your submissions to [editor@mediacouncil-mw.org](mailto:editor@mediacouncil-mw.org)



### REVISED MEMBERSHIP AND ACCREDITATION FEE

| ACCREDITATION FEE  |             |             |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Category           | Old Fee     | Current Fee |
| Local Journalist   | MK15,000.00 | MK30,000.00 |
| Student            | MK10,000.00 | MK15,000.00 |
| Foreign Journalist | \$200.00    | \$200.00    |

| MEDIA HOUSE MEMBERSHIP FEE            |              |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Category                              | Old Fee      | Current Fee  |
| National Media House                  | MK200,000.00 | MK500,000.00 |
| Regional Media House                  | MK100,000.00 | MK200,000.00 |
| Community Media House                 | MK50,000.00  | MK100,000.00 |
| Press Clubs & Associations            | MK50,000.00  | MK100,000.00 |
| Online Media                          | MK200,000.00 | MK200,000.00 |
| Affiliated Org & Advertising Agencies | MK200,000.00 | MK200,000.00 |

**PAY TO:** Call us +265 999 558 052

Acc Name: MCM Accreditation

Acc number: 1006984197

Branch: L.L. Gateway

SwiftCode: NBMWNBW

Note: Complete the online application @ [mediacouncil-mw.org](http://mediacouncil-mw.org)



# COUNCIL UPDATES

## MCM LAUNCH ATI HANDBOOK



ATI Handbook for media practitioners launched

BY STEVEN NKHOMA

August 31, 2023, will be a memorable day for media fraternity in Malawi as the Media Council of Malawi (MCM) launched the Access to Information (ATI) handbook for media practitioners in Malawi.

The handbook provides guidelines on how media practitioners should pursue information for investigative journalism and development reporting.

Speaking as guest of honor, Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) Executive Secretary, Habiba Osman, mentioned that the handbook will guide media practitioners on steps to take when faced with hindrances in accessing public information.

She stated, “The launch is an important milestone in the implementation of access to information for investigation laws.”

United States Embassy Public Affairs Officer Namita Biggins emphasized the importance of citizens having access to information for effective expression and the media remaining a reliable conduit of people’s thoughts.

“Access to information is important for the practice of democracy because it promotes transparency and accountability, pillars of good governance.”

Biggins believes, “Access to information is important for the practice of democracy because it promotes transparency and accountability, pillars of good governance.”

According to Biggins, the US Embassy hopes that Malawian journalists will take full advantage of the handbook to enhance their understanding of the ATI law.

Board Chairperson for the Media Council of Malawi, Wisdom Chingwede, highlighted that the effective use of the handbook will encourage media practitioners to go beyond press and official statements kind of sourcing information.

He thanked the US Embassy for its support in producing the simplified Access to Information handbook and for the launch.



Biggins: Expressing concern with lack of funding to MHRC

She expressed concern about the inadequate funding that the MHRC receives from the government and stressed the importance of addressing this issue for the effective implementation of the law.

After the launch of the ATI Handbook, the Media Council of Malawi also oriented journalists on Media Ethics and Information Governance at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe.



US Embassy delegates-Marcus Muhaliwa franked by Public Officer Namitta Biggins and Vice Chair Patricia Kankhwani



# COUNCIL UPDATES

## MCM TRAINS JOURNALISTS ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN BLANTYRE



Cross-section of the reporters being trained.

BY PHILLIP CHINKHOKWE

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) recently organised a comprehensive training session for journalists, focusing on enhancing their proficiency in accessing information.

The training was aimed at increasing awareness and enhancing journalists' skills in understanding Malawi's Access To Information (ATI) laws and the associated regulatory framework.

Twenty-five journalists attended the training at Malawi Sun Hotel in Blantyre.

During the session, MCM executive director Moses Kaufa emphasized the pivotal role of access to information in fostering a transparent society.

He underscored the importance of equipping journalists with the skills to conduct investigative reporting, uncover facts, and hold those in power accountable.

Vitus-Gregory Gondwe, Platform for Investigative Journalism (PIJ) executive director, facilitated the training session.

His presentation covered a spectrum of issues to demonstrate how journalists could harness ATI laws in investigative journalism to ensure authorities are held accountable.



Gondwe: Making his presentation during the training.

Gondwe expressed concern about the apparent lack of interest and seriousness among journalists in reading and understanding ATI regulations and guidelines.

He said: "Our apathy towards navigating the ATI laws of the land has constrained us as journalists from making breakthroughs in exposing

"Our apathy towards navigating the ATI laws of the land has constrained us as journalists from making breakthroughs in exposing misconduct in both public and private sectors."

misconduct in both public and private sectors."

Gondwe urged journalists and media outlets to invest in investigative journalism, emphasising its importance in uncovering wrongdoing and combating corruption.

He also implored the MCM to devise strategies for legal support and defense for investigative journalists, ensuring their safety and that of whistleblowers.

"By establishing mechanisms to safeguard journalists in their pursuit of truth, the council can contribute significantly to fostering a robust and fearless journalistic environment," observed Gondwe.

MCM conducted this training with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

## NEWS IN BRIEF

By STEVEN NKHOMA

### MCM PARTICIPATED IN COMESA MEDIA WORKSHOP

MCM is thrilled to have participated in the Comesa National Capacity Building workshop for Malawi media practitioners, spanning two days (Thursday-Friday) in Lilongwe, Malawi.

30 reporters from different media outlets were sensitized on accurate reportage of Comesa regional integration programmes, aimed at fostering trade among the 21-member states.

### MBC GEARED FOR 2025 ELECTIONS COVERAGE.

MCM took part in the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) draft Elections Coverage Guidelines validation meeting that took place in Lilongwe on Jun 20, 2024.

MBC Director General George Kasakula assured electoral stakeholders present at the meeting of equal coverage to all electoral candidates regardless of their political affiliation.

Also present at the meeting were Malawi Electoral Commission, Misa Malawi, and other CSOs.

### MCM's ED REFLECTED ON MALAWI'S MEDIA 30YRS AFTER MULTIPARTY.

Moses Kaufa was quoted by the Daily Times on May 17, 2024 as having said that while democracy has provided room for media freedom and freedom of expression their is need for more to be done to realize full enjoyment of these rights.

"The journey towards a truly free, vibrant, & democratic media environment in MW remains work in progress..." Kaufa quoted by the Daily Times in the supplement publication courtesy of Catholic Unioversity's reflection on Malawi's 30 years of democracy.



# MCM IN PICTURES



1- MCM and ACORA sign an MoU, marking the beginning of a collaboration to promote media standards in Malawi.

2- Delegates at the EGA pose for a group photo.

3- MCM launched the ATI handbook at Lilongwe Hotel, an event graced by MHRC Executive Secretary Habiba Osman and delegates from the US Embassy in Lilongwe, who co-financed the book together with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

4- Leisure time, featuring Chair and Trustee Arthur Chipenda (Director of Information at the Ministry of Information serving as Ex officio).

5- ED Mose Kaufa giving speech during the ombudsperson training in Lilongwe

6- group photo of media ombudspersons refresher training in Blantyre

7 & 8- MCM and MCK pose for a photo



## BENCH MARKING VISIT-MCM



Moses Kaufa (r): We are here to draw lessons.

### BY MCK REPORTER

In February 2023, the Media Council of Malawi embarked on an educational visit to Media Council of Kenya (MCK) to understand the media regulatory landscape in Kenya and borrow the best practices to support Malawi's media sector.

MCK CEO David Omwoyo says media regulation bodies play a critical role in society, hence the need to ensure conducive environment that will open the media space.

Omwoyo urged Media Council of Malawi officials to rally stakeholders towards creating laws that will strengthen the Council's mandate.

While acknowledging the efforts made by the Media Council of Malawi in expanding media space in Malawi, Omwoyo advised the team to pick lessons from the visit as they navigate dynamics around media landscape in their country.

"We enjoy a vibrant media in

Kenya, as you will witness in your visit to various regulatory institutions and media houses.

The Media Council of Kenya has always been in the forefront in safeguarding media freedom, while fulfilling its constitutional mandate.

I encourage you to pick lessons from your engagement with these strategic stakeholders who support the regulators work", Omwoyo said.

Media Complaints Commission Chairperson William Oketch said that the visit was critical for both institutions since each can mutually benefit from sharing mediation experiences

"The destiny of African media is intertwined. The challenges and prospects of success cut across, hence the need for partnerships and experience sharing with colleagues from MCM.

Ubuntu connects us all and is a rallying call for governments to

"We share similar objectives and we are here to draw lessons that will help us to improve the legal and policy framework of our institution in Malawi."

protect media practice", he said.

Media Council of Malawi Executive Director Moses Kaufa commended the Media Council of Kenya and other key strategic institutions for the warm reception accorded to the team and pledged to incorporate the learnings in the Malawi media regulation review process.

"We share similar objectives and we are here to draw lessons that will help us to improve the legal and policy framework of our institution in Malawi.

This will in effect go a long way in helping us improve the Council's operational capacity", said Kaufa.

The three-day visit culminated in a visit to various media houses where representatives from the various media houses lauded the cordial relationship between the Council and media sector in Kenya, while recognizing the critical place of the Media Council of Kenya as a regulator.



# COMMUNITY CORNER

*In this column we engage with fellow media enthusiasts, professionals, and stakeholders to share insights, opinions, and ideas on media-related topics, participate in discussions, and connect with like-minded individuals passionate about media development in Malawi.*

## LEGISLATED MEDIA SELF-REGULATION GAINS MOMENTUM IN MALAWI

BY MOSES KAUFU

Media self-regulation has been a cornerstone of responsible journalism, maintaining ethical standards and safeguarding public interests through the Media Council of Malawi (MCM).

Since the 1990s, Malawian media have preferred voluntary self-regulation over statutory regulation, championed by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA).

While voluntary self-regulation has fostered media accountability, the question remains: "Have we adequately regulated ourselves?"

This has been a point of discussion among media stakeholders for 30 years, during which the MCM has repeatedly faced dissolution and revival.

As we consider better self-regulation models, we navigate an era marked by rapid technological advancements and an expanding media landscape, making responsible journalism and upholding professional standards increasingly challenging.

Founded in 1996, the MCM was registered in 2008 under the Trustees Incorporation Act (CAP.5.03) as an independent body for all electronic, print, and online media in Malawi to facilitate self-regulation.

In 2019, the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA-Malawi) commissioned Dr. Francis Chikunkhuzeni to assess Malawi's

self-regulatory situation and recommend the best model to transform the media landscape.

The need to revisit the self-regulatory model stemmed from changes in the media landscape both locally and globally, and the recurring dissolution of the Council.

The report, synthesizing insights, experiences, and best practices, recommended adopting a Co-Regulation Operational Model involving media professionals and the public.

This report contributed to the Council's resuscitation on December 31, 2019, after three years of dormancy.

Over the past four years, the Council and its members have engaged in assessments and consultations to establish a viable co-regulation model for Malawi's current media landscape.

On January 12, 2024, the Council held its Elective General Assembly in Lilongwe.

The assembly, the Council is a supreme decision-making body, consists of all registered and paid-up member media institutions.

Among other resolutions, the assembly unanimously resolved to legislate the MCM to strengthen its mandate and authority, recognising the need for a solid legal framework to govern media self-regulation.

This shift addresses the challenges

faced by the media industry and ensures a robust framework balancing freedom of expression with ethical responsibility.

One approach gaining momentum globally is legislated media self-regulation.

It is crucial to understand the importance of this shift in Malawi and address industry concerns while developing legislation reflecting the media industry's needs.

Voluntary self-regulation has upheld journalistic ethics and accountability.

However, with the proliferation of media platforms and persistent challenges of misinformation, the industry requires a more robust framework to maintain public trust and protect professional integrity.

The transition to legislated self-regulation is necessary to address the evolving media landscape, where the impact of misinformation, sensationalism, and ethical lapses can be significant.

Legislated self-regulation instils public confidence by demonstrating a commitment to accountability, establishing a legal framework enforcing higher standards, and providing independent and impartial monitoring, adjudication, and enforcement of ethical guidelines.

This legal backing strengthens self-regulation credibility, ensures

adherence to ethical guidelines, responsible reporting, and promotes professionalism.

A legislative framework ensures consistent ethical standards across the media industry, preventing arbitrary decisions and fostering fair competition and responsible reporting.

It also provides a shield against external interference, preserving media outlets' independence and integrity.

Legislation offers an official avenue for resolving grievances between media organisations, individuals, and affected parties, promoting fair and timely resolutions while protecting media freedom and individual rights.

It prioritises public interest, aligning media content with societal norms, respecting cultural sensitivities, and avoiding harm, thereby promoting social cohesion, maintaining peace, and upholding democratic values.

Despite the benefits, industry concerns about legislative self-regulation often revolve around fears of governmental interference and constraints on media freedom.

However, well-crafted legislation can address these concerns by ensuring the Media Council's independence from undue governmental interference or control.

Safeguards must protect the



Council's autonomy in enforcing ethical standards and upholding journalists' rights.

To allay industry fears, the legislative process should involve active participation from media professionals.

Engaging media organisations, journalists, and other

stakeholders in the decision-making process ensures the legislation reflects the media industry's needs and challenges in Malawi.

When developing legislation, it is crucial to establish clear and transparent processes for complaint resolution, investigation, and enforcement

to minimize arbitrary decisions and ensure due process.

Co-regulation through legislated self-regulation maintains minimal government intervention, focusing on facilitating the regulatory body's functioning and protecting media freedom, aligned with international norms and standards.

As a new concept for Malawi's media industry, transparent and inclusive consultation with media stakeholders is essential during the formulation and implementation of the legislated self-regulation framework. Stakeholder input and constructive dialogue are paramount to balancing media freedom with public interest.



The author, a media scholar with over 20 years of journalism experience in Malawi, currently serves as the Executive Director of the Media Council of Malawi. He writes in his official capacity.

If you have any topical issues regarding the media industry, please share them with us for a chance to be featured in this column. The maximum word limit is 1000 words. Send your submissions to [editor@mediacouncil-mw.org](mailto:editor@mediacouncil-mw.org)

## PRESS RELEASE



Date: 29th July, 2024

### GUIDLINES FOR PROFESSIONAL COVERAGE AND HANDLING OF PRESS CONFERENCES

The Media Council of Malawi wishes to remind all media professionals of the importance of conducting press conferences with the utmost professionalism and integrity. As communication platforms that foster dialogue between the media, public figures, and the community, press conferences play a crucial role in ensuring that accurate information is disseminated to the public.

In light of recent events and ongoing commitments to uphold the highest standards of journalism, we urge media personnel to adhere to the following guidelines when covering press conferences:

#### Preparation and Research

Media professionals are urged to familiarize themselves with the subject matter and the speakers involved. This includes understanding the context of the press conference and the key messages intended for communication. A professional atmosphere encourages constructive engagement and helps ensure that accurate information is communicated.

#### Focus on Accuracy

Media professionals should strive to report facts accurately and fairly. Avoid sensationalism and ensure that diverse viewpoints are represented, particularly in politically sensitive topics. Remember to attribute statements and information correctly to their sources.

#### Impartiality

Uphold the principles of impartiality and non-bias in your reporting. It is essential to provide balanced coverage that reflects various perspectives without undue influence or favoritism towards the conference organizer. Media professionals are further encouraged to be aware of potential conflicts of interest and abstain from situations that may compromise journalistic integrity.

#### Post-Event Engagement

After the press conference, it is important to continue to engage with the information provided. Follow up on unclear points, seek clarifications, and verify facts with credible sources before publishing reports.

The Council urges all journalists and media houses to uphold these standards as we work together to foster an informed citizenry and a healthy democratic process. By doing so, we contribute to the credibility of the media and the public's trust in journalism.

Signed:

**Dr. Jolly Maxwell Ntaba**

**BOARD CHAIRPERSON**

**Moses Kaufa**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

This is a full-page dedication that talks about MCM programs, workshops, and capacity-building opportunities to empower media professionals, journalism students, and media organizations. The readers will learn about resources, scholarships, and skills development initiatives to enhance media expertise in Malawi.

## WHY ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALIST MATTERS?

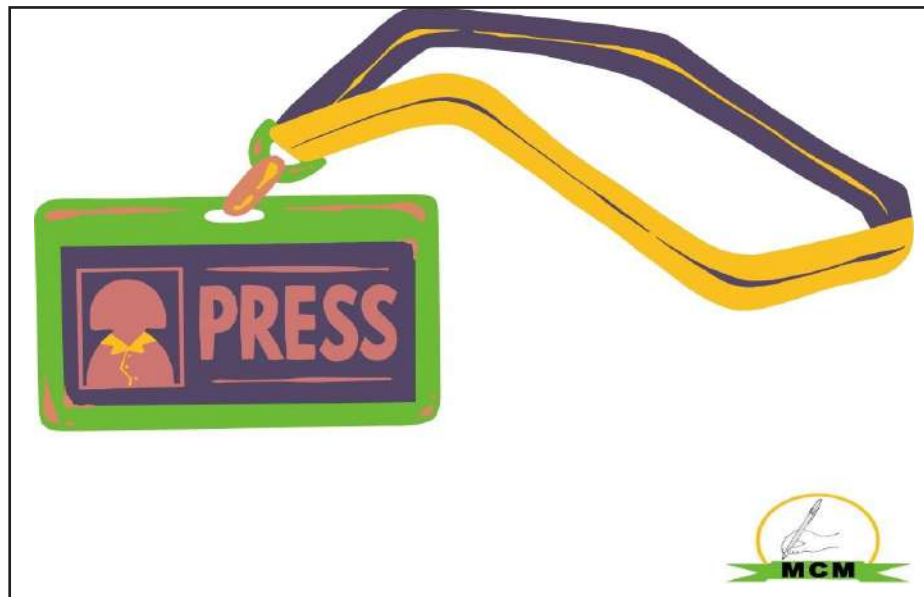
BY STEVEN NKHOMA

Similar to any other profession, the media is obligated to adhere to ethical and professional conduct. In the Malawian context, the Media Council of Malawi (MCM) has intensified its efforts in ensuring this by issuing Press Cards to accredited media practitioners.

Over the past three years, MCM has accredited both local and foreign journalists practicing in the country, totaling over 800 against a backdrop of two thousand journalists contributing their services to either media or humanitarian organizations.

In this publication, we find it prudent to highlight the crucial benefits of journalist accreditation.

Once a media house pays its membership, it becomes eligible



to participate in and vote for Elective General Assembly that usher people into Board of Trustees positions, thereby contributing to shaping the behavior of the media in Malawi.

As per the MCM constitution, a paid media house gains access to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and disciplinary measures in cases involving the media and the public.

It's important to note that MCM does not intervene in complaints involving non-paid members or institutions.

“Accrediting journalists represents a significant stride toward effective self-regulation, instilling confidence and assurance in both the public and the media regarding sustained high professional standards among media practitioners”

This accreditation, in line with MCM's policy, fosters trust and acceptance from communities, public officers, and development partners who serve as both information sources and consumers.

Recalling the unfortunate incident in Karonga district when a BBC reporter and Capital Radio Malawi journalist were manhandled by the public on false allegations, such incidents can be avoided through accreditation and identification with a press card.

In its mandate, MCM aims to safeguard the freedom of the media in Malawi, shielding it from legal threats, undue pressure, and interference by urging information holders to engage only with accredited journalists.

According to former MCM chairperson, Wisdom Chingwede, this approach helps the Council weed out individuals who “masquerade as journalists, tarnishing the name of journalism in the country.”

Accrediting journalists represents a significant stride toward effective self-regulation, instilling confidence and assurance in both the public and the media regarding sustained high professional standards among media practitioners.



ACCREDITATION

Download the form.

Attach electronic photo

Fill all required areas

Submit to MCM office

Get employer reference

Wait for 7 working days to get your Press Card

Deposit accreditation fee

Carry your Press Card whenever on duty

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## SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA INNOVATION

Here we will explore features on media innovation, digital storytelling, multimedia journalism, and the evolving media landscape in Malawi and across the global. The use of advanced technology in telling stories.

# JOURNALISMAI ACADEMY FOR SMALL NEWSROOMS



BY MARY MAGANGANI

The JournalismAI has introduced a training program to help small newsrooms leverage the power of artificial intelligence.

According to information posted on its website ([www.journalismai.info](http://www.journalismai.info)), the program seeks to support innovation and capacity building in news organizations to make the potential of AI more accessible and to counter inequalities in the global news

“JournalismAI was launched in 2019 to inform media organizations about the opportunities offered by AI-powered technologies and foster debate about the editorial, ethical, and financial implications of using AI in journalism,” reads the statement in part.

The program combines a series of masterclasses given by experts working at the intersection of journalism and artificial intelligence with opportunities for discussion among participants.

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cohorts across the world and excellent feedback from participants, we are now pleased to announce the launch of a new Academy for Sub-Saharan Africa.

“We will be selecting 20 participants from the region,” read the information posted on the JournalismAI website.

The training will last for 8 weeks and is expected to start in September 2024.

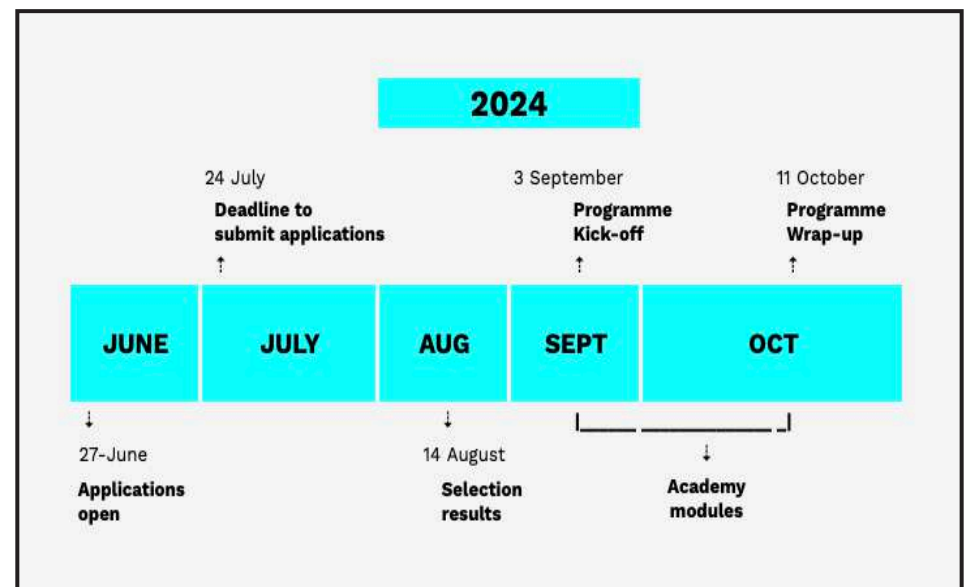
According to information released by the London School of Economics and Political Science, the training targets journalists and media professionals from small news organizations (fewer than 50 employees).

The Academy is made available to the public courtesy of the financial support of the Google News Initiative, which has been powering JournalismAI since 2019.

In addition, participants will be guided through the development of resources that can support their organizations’ AI-adoption journey during and after the program.

JournalismAI claims that the Academy project has been a core program of the JournalismAI initiative since 2021, training over 100 newsroom professionals from across the globe.

“Following the success of the past three years, which included





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