

**STATEMENT ON THE COMMEMORATION OF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2025 - A
CALL FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDIA SERVICE TO THE ELECTORATE**

On 3rd May, we join the global community in celebrating World Press Freedom Day, a day that serves as a poignant reminder of the fundamental principles that underpin press freedom and the critical role that the media plays in fostering democracy, accountability, and transparency in society.

As the Media Council of Malawi, we reaffirm our commitment to upholding the ideals of a free press, which is essential for the functioning of a healthy democracy. Freedom of expression is not just a right enshrined in our Constitution; it is a cornerstone of societal progress and an indispensable tool for empowering citizens through information.

The UNESCO Global theme for the 2025 World Press Freedom Day is *"Reporting in the Brave New World: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Press Freedom and the Media"*. The theme highlights the risks and challenges AI poses to the right to information, advocating for AI governance and its responsible development.

However, we join MISA Malawi in celebrating the day under a local theme: *'Media for a well-informed electorate'*, which aligns with the upcoming elections. The theme resonates deeply with the current challenges and opportunities facing media practitioners in Malawi. As we gather to honor the important contributions of journalists, we must also confront the realities that threaten their safety, independence, and ability to report on elections without fear.

Despite advancements, we acknowledge the ongoing challenges that journalists in Malawi face, including harassment, misinformation, and the restrictive, hostile political environments. These issues impede the media's capacity to operate freely and responsibly. It is our collective responsibility—government, civil society, and media organizations—to foster an environment where journalists can carry out their vital work without fear of censorship or retaliation.

On this special day, we would like to highlight a few key actions that we believe are essential to advancing the cause of press freedom in Malawi:

1. **Promotion of Ethical Journalism:** We continue to call on all media practitioners to adhere to the highest ethical standards in their reporting. Accurate, balanced, and fair reporting is crucial for maintaining public trust in the media. Also, remember that MCM recognizes professional media practitioners through **accreditation**, as it separates them from masqueraders, and such identity is recognized by all stakeholders, including security agencies, for their safety.
2. **Protection of Journalists' Rights:** We urge all stakeholders, including government entities, law enforcement agencies, and political parties, to ensure the safety of journalists, safeguarding their rights to report independently, freely, and without intimidation. Any issues with the media should be reported to the Council in time.

3. **Support for Media Literacy:** We advocate for initiatives that promote media literacy among the general public. An informed citizenry is critical for discerning credible information from misinformation, thereby strengthening our democratic foundations.
4. **Collaboration and Dialogue:** We reaffirm our commitment to engaging with various stakeholders to enhance collaboration in addressing the challenges faced by the media. Together, we can create policies that not only protect press freedom but also promote responsible journalism.

As we commemorate World Press Freedom Day, let us celebrate the courage and resilience of journalists in Malawi and around the world. Let us recognize their invaluable contributions to informing citizens and shaping public discourse.

Together, let us pledge to uphold the principles of freedom of expression and support the vital role of the media in ensuring democracy thrives in our nation.

In conclusion, we encourage every citizen to join us in recognizing the importance of press freedom and to stand in solidarity with journalists fighting for the truth.

Signed:



Dr. Jolly Maxwell Ntaba

BOARD CHAIRPERSON



Moses Kaufa

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

