



PRESS RELEASE

Lilongwe, Malawi – 13th October, 2025

MCM EMBARKS ON A STRATEGIC PLAN TO END POLITICAL CAPTURE OF MEDIA, CALLS FOR NATIONAL SUPPORT TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) expresses its grave concern over the systemic and escalating pattern of political control, abuse, and manipulation of media institutions by successive ruling parties. This practice, most notably exemplified by the partisan conduct of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), directly undermines the constitutional principles of media freedom, erodes public trust, and hinders Malawi's democratic progress.

For far too long, the national broadcaster has been constrained to serve as the voice of the government of the day, instead of fulfilling its rightful role as an independent public service broadcaster accountable to the people of Malawi. This capture results in biased news coverage, the exclusion of dissenting voices, and the spread of partisan propaganda, denying Malawians their fundamental right to access fair, balanced, and objective information. It is further noted that journalists who challenge the official narrative often face intimidation, threats, or politically motivated legal challenges.

This situation is untenable. A media landscape held hostage by political interests cannot fulfill its role as a watchdog for accountability, a platform for public debate, and a pillar of good governance.

In response to this critical challenge, the Media Council of Malawi is embarking on a comprehensive strategic plan designed to dismantle the architecture of political control over the media. This ambitious initiative is built on a multi-stakeholder approach focusing on:

1. **Legal and Regulatory Reform:** Advocating for amendments to the Communications Act to guarantee the editorial, financial, and administrative independence of the MBC through a merit-based, parliamentary-led board appointment process.
2. **Institutional Strengthening:** Rolling out nationwide capacity-building programs to enhance the ethical and professional standards of journalists and media managers.
3. **Public Awareness and Engagement:** Empowering citizens to demand impartiality and accountability from their public broadcaster.

4. **Constructive Dialogue:** Creating platforms for ongoing dialogue between political leaders, media practitioners, and civil society to foster a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

The Media Council of Malawi believes that the cyclical capture of our national broadcaster is a dagger to the heart of our democracy. With each election cycle, we witness the same abuses, regardless of which party is in power. This strategy represents our firm commitment to bringing these practices to an end. We are moving beyond mere condemnation by outlining a concrete and actionable plan for lasting change. However, achieving this vision requires collective effort, and we cannot do it alone. The MCM makes a solemn and urgent call to all stakeholders to join this vital national cause:

- **To His Excellency the State President and the Government of Malawi:** We urge you to demonstrate a genuine commitment to democratic principles by championing the legal reforms that will set the MBC free from executive control.
- **To the Parliament of Malawi:** We call on you to act in the interest of the people you represent by swiftly debating and passing the necessary legislative amendments to ensure a truly independent public broadcaster and regulator.
- **To All Political Parties:** We implore you to rise above partisan interests and publicly commit to refraining from interfering with media operations, both now and when you are in government.
- **To Journalists and Media Houses:** We encourage you to stand in solidarity, uphold the highest standards of your profession, and resist all forms of intimidation, censorship, and political control.
- **To our Partners in Civil Society and the International Community:** Your support, both technical and financial, is crucial to the success of this plan. We invite you to a formidable coalition for media freedom in Malawi.
- **To the People of Malawi:** The media belongs to you. We call on you to add your voice to this campaign, demand accountability, and reclaim your right to a media that informs, educates, and empowers all.

The future of Malawi's democracy depends on a free and independent press. The time for decisive action is now. We invite all stakeholders with practical suggestions, technical and financial support to the success of this initiative, to contact the **Executive Director** through ed@mediacouncil-mw.org.

The Media Council of Malawi (MCM) remains an independent, non-profit, and non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting media freedom, accountability, and professionalism in Malawi.

Signed:



Dr. Jolly Maxwell Ntaba
BOARD CHAIRPERSON



Moses Kaufa
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR