

# Insight Bulletin

For People Who Want to Know

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## PRIVATE SECTOR DELIGHTED WITH COUNTRY'S IMPROVED ENERGY PRODUCTION



By Lovemore Katanda

**T**he Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) has implored government to continue making strides in improving the energy sector.

*Chithyola - More products  
will be exported*

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# TRADITIONAL LEADERS:

## LEADING FROM THE FRONT IN COMBATING EARLY MARRIAGES

By: *Osman Bwanali*

**E**arly marriages and pregnancies are common among schoolgirls in Malawi.

According to the report by UNICEF, about 46 percent of girls are married before the age of 18, and 9 percent before the age of 15. Usually in countries like Malawi the main drivers of child marriage are poverty, cultural and religious traditions, and peer pressure.

The report done by UNICEF further says child marriages in Malawi are often associated with limited education and employment opportunities and is seen as a way of protecting girls from out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Adolescents are sometimes exposed to sexual activities at initiation ceremonies, association with peers and social media usage, which usually lead to sex with peers and early marriages. Sometimes, traditional leaders are also seen as catalysts for harmful social norms that escalate child marriages. But is there anything traditional leaders can do to prevent early marriages and protect children?

It is an indisputable fact that

traditional leaders can play an important role in promoting child protection and preventing early marriages and pregnancies among girls.

Firstly, traditional leaders can use their influence and authority to raise awareness among community members about the harms of early marriages and pregnancies. Traditional leaders have the powerful voice that is heard once communication is made to its community. As such they can organize community meetings, workshops, and other events to discuss these issues and educate parents and caregivers about the negative consequences of these practices.

Secondly, traditional leaders can work with local authorities to enforce laws that prohibit early marriage and protect children from harm. They can encourage parents and community members to report cases of child abuse or neglect and work with law enforcement to investigate and prosecute offenders.

Thirdly, traditional leaders can provide support and guidance to families and girls who are at risk

of early marriage or pregnancy. They can help family's access education and healthcare services and provide counselling and other support to girls who may be struggling with the pressures of early marriage or pregnancy.

Last but not least, traditional leaders can help empower girls to speak up for their rights and advocate for themselves. They can encourage girls to stay in school and pursue their dreams and provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Overall, traditional leaders can play an important role in protecting children from harm and promoting their well-being. By raising awareness, enforcing laws, providing support, and empowering girls, they can help prevent early marriages and pregnancies and create a safer, healthier community for all.

This can be done when the leaders have the community's interest at heart and want to have a very developmental community.



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&lt;&lt;FROM PAGE 1

## Private sector delighted with country's improved energy production

Speaking at the official opening of this year's International Trade Fair at Chichiri Trade Fair Grounds in Blantyre presided over by the Malawi leader President Lazarus Chakwera, MCCI president Lekani Katandula said the private sector is equally delighted with government's effort to end power blackouts in the country adding that improved energy is a key to industrialization and in boosting the country's economy.

"We are happy to see Kapichira back to its full capacity, and we hope this will help drive our economy forward," he said.

Katandula further challenged local manufacturers to produce competitive and quality products fit for export and support the development of industrialization.

He disclosed that Malawi was ranked 125<sup>th</sup> in 2010 among the world's industrialized countries; hence the need to produce competitive and quality goods.

Echoing the sentiments was the Minister of Trade and Industry, Simplex Chithyola Banda, who commended the newly constructed state-of-the-

art laboratory facility of Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS), saying the facility will enable certification of products for local manufacturers, thereby increasing the country's export base.

Banda therefore revealed that in June this year, Malawian traders will have an opportunity to showcase their agriculture produce, such as beans, soy beans, and pigeon peas, among other products, in China at a China Export Trade Fair.

In his remarks, President Lazarus Chakwera urged trade agencies such as MBS to cut off bureaucracy in vetting processes when issuing trade documents and certification for local investors.

The Malawi leader further implored the private sector to be proactive in order to produce competitive and high-quality goods to be able to compete on the international market.

"Business is about competition. You must compete in order to win," he said.

Chakwera further hailed

Electricity Generation Company (EGENCO) engineers for their efforts in bringing back the Kapichira power plant that was swept away by Cyclone Anna last year and their efforts in reducing persistent power blackouts.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Malawi International Trade Fair was held under the theme: *Rebalancing Malawi's Trade Through Industrialization*.

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One of the properties palestines being sold

# IN HAIFA, ISRAEL SELLS PALESTINIAN HOMES AS LUXURY REAL ESTATE

*Only a few signs of Palestinian life remain in Haifa 75 years on from the Nakba, and they are disappearing.*

By: Zena Al Tahhan

**H**aifa, Israel – The city of Haifa sits like a cascading waterfall on the lush green slopes of the Carmel Mountains on the strikingly blue Mediterranean Sea.

Haifa, Israel – The city of Haifa sits like a cascading waterfall on the

lush green slopes of the Carmel Mountains on the strikingly blue Mediterranean Sea.

It is often portrayed by Israeli officials as well as Western and Israeli media as being a hip, modern city and a model of “coexistence” between Israelis and Palestinians.

But beyond the skyscrapers and rows of cement buildings in Haifa,

a small number of pre-1948 Palestinian sandstone homes tell a different story.

Haifa came under the control of Zionist militias in April 1948, three weeks before Israel signed its declaration of independence on May 14, hours before the end of the British Mandate in Palestine at midnight on May 15. The latter date is commemorated annually



by Palestinians as the Nakba, or “catastrophe”, marking the violent ethnic cleansing of their country.

By then, Zionist forces had expelled more than 95 percent of Haifa’s residents. Out of an original 75,000 Palestinians in the city, only 3,000 to 4,000 remained. The rest became refugees, mainly in neighboring Lebanon and Syria, and they are barred from returning to this day.

During the Nakba and the decades that followed, Zionist and Israeli forces flattened the majority of Palestinian neighborhoods and buildings in Haifa.

Almost the entire historic centre of the town was destroyed. Today, it is a modern square of Israeli governmental and commercial buildings and a large parking lot.

For example, a 29-storey building housing government offices was constructed in 1999 on the ruins of Seraya City Hall, which was built in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and demolished in 1949.

“They built governmental buildings on the ruins of the Arab-Palestinian buildings – the buildings that were demolished and erased during the Nakba,” said Orwa Sweitat, a Haifa-based urban planner and activist who works to prevent further demolitions.

“Today, there is no trace of this big crime,” he said.

According to Haifa-based historian Johnny Mansour, “Only 20 percent of Haifa’s original homes remain.”

Ownership of the Palestinian buildings that survived the Nakba

was transferred to the state under the Israeli Absentees’ Property Law.

This was not unique to Haifa. All Palestinian properties whose owners became refugees, including those who were internally displaced, were taken over by the state.

“In historic cities such as Haifa, Jaffa and Akka, some 70,000 historic buildings were confiscated immediately after 1948,” Sweitat said.

Of those buildings taken in 1948, only 4,800 remain as of 23 May 2023, he said.

“These are all in the hands of the state. The rest was either demolished or sold to private real estate companies,” he explained. “In Jaffa, only some 1,200 buildings remain, 600 in Haifa, 600 in Akka and some 350 in Nazareth.”

Israelis now live in some of the Palestinian buildings in Haifa while others have been turned into Israeli art galleries and hipster bars. Some house Palestinians.

Since 2000, the Israeli government has been selling the remaining Palestinian buildings to public and private real estate companies, which will either demolish them and build modern residential or commercial projects in their place or renovate and sell them as luxury real estate directed towards the Israeli market.

“They are transforming the ruins of the Nakba into economic jewels for the benefit of the Israeli market,” said Sweitat, explaining that the “process of gentrification aims to

attract middle- and high-class Jews and push out Palestinian Arabs.”

“Both Israeli laws and city planning worked together to seize the property and lands of Palestinian refugees and to erase, destroy, deform and privatize the Arab-Palestinian identity and characteristics of Haifa,” he said.

Nowhere is the story of the dispossession and erasure more evident than in Wadi Salib, a formerly thriving Palestinian neighbourhood where it is as though time has stood still since the Nakba.

The stone homes stand as silent survivors, looking out onto the Mediterranean Sea about 1km (0.6 miles) away.

Most of the neighborhood was demolished. In 1949, Israel settled Jews from North African countries in the remaining Palestinian homes and buildings. They lived there for 10 years before protests broke out against difficult living conditions and racism, and the community was resettled elsewhere.

Since then, most of the Palestinian buildings have been sealed off with concrete blocks or covered with metal sheets.

In the past two decades, all that remains of Wadi Salib was sold by the Israeli government to private and public real estate companies.

“They conduct very big bids that only large companies can enter into and Palestinians can’t afford,” Sweitat said. “Ten years ago, for example, 11 historic buildings were sold for \$1m. Today, they want to sell the 11 buildings for \$20m.”

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## In haifa, israel sells palestinian homes as luxury real estate

### 'HOW DID THIS HAPPEN TO US?'

Abed Abdi is an 81-year-old Palestinian man who was expelled from Wadi Salib and Palestine as a whole along with his mother and his four siblings in 1948.

His father managed to remain in Haifa, and after three years in refugee camps across Lebanon and Syria, Abdi, his mother and three of his siblings became one of the few Palestinians allowed to return to their city for family unification.

Abdi's eldest sister, Lutfiyeh, however, was not able to return and remained at the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria until her death three years ago.

"We tasted dispossession and estrangement in Lebanon and in Syria," Abdi, a visual artist, told Al Jazeera from his studio in Haifa. "Our family was separated like many Palestinian families from Haifa at the time."

From 1947 to 1949, Zionist forces expelled at least 75 percent of the Palestinian population, destroyed 530 Palestinian villages, ethnically cleansed major cities and killed about 15,000 Palestinians in a series of mass atrocities, including dozens of massacres.

At present, Palestinian refugees represent the longest unresolved refugee problem in the world. About six million registered refugees live in at least 58 camps located throughout Palestine and

neighboring countries.

The first refugee camp Abdi and his family arrived at was the Mieh Mieh camp in Lebanon, Abdi said as he was surrounded by dozens of his paintings, many depicting the Nakba and Arab neighborhoods in Haifa based on his childhood memories.

"I remember that the separators between the families were made out of sackcloth. When I touch and smell this fabric now, it takes me back to my childhood, and this memory has stayed with me all my life," said Abdi, who has incorporated sackcloth into his art pieces.

"I also remember how my mother would make shoes for us out of

leather bags," he said.

The several thousand Palestinians who remained in Haifa after the Nakba, including Abdi's father, were rounded up and forced to live in the Wadi Nisnas neighborhood. They were not allowed to reclaim their properties in other parts of the city, which came under Israeli military rule and constant curfew.

Abdi's father moved into his aunt's house in Wadi Nisnas, a couple of kilometers away from their destroyed home in Wadi Salib. He shared the four-bedroom house with a displaced Palestinian family, also from Haifa.

When the rest of the Abdi family returned in 1951, the six of them lived in one bedroom for 10 years before managing to move out.

Despite the passing of more than seven decades, Abdi said the loss and displacement of the Nakba are still too much to bear.

"I used to return to Wadi Salib a lot," Abdi said. "The area is not far from me. I would remember my childhood and my tragedy."

"When I see it, I always get a feeling of not only sorrow, but the recurring question of 'how? How did this happen to us? These empty and destroyed buildings, where are their owners? How is it that we were expelled?'

***"They conduct very big bids that only large companies can enter into and Palestinians can't afford," Sweitat said. "Ten years ago, for example, 11 historic buildings were sold for \$1m. Today, they want to sell the 11 buildings for \$20m."***





Eid prayers at Chirimba primary ground

# Malawians urged to embrace spirit of unity and perseverance

By: Kassim Kajosolo

**P**eople in the country have been challenged to stop exploiting one another but rather embrace the spirit of consciousness and perseverance by helping one another in times of need.

Malawi's former Vice President, Dr. Cassim Chilumpha, and the National Chairperson of the Muslim Supreme Council of Malawi, Sheikh Yasin Katungwe, said every person shall enjoy the life given by Allah if love and help are propagated in the world.

The call was made during the celebration of Eid on April 22, 2023, in Chirimba, Blantyre, where the two leaders observed that at a time when the country is suffering from the effects of cholera outbreak and cyclone Freddy, which have caused deaths of many people, and left thousands destitute, there is a need for concerted efforts to help government support those affected.

"As a Muslim, I know Eid is time for celebration, and we celebrate in a group, not alone, hence my presence here to join my community. And this is the time to reflect on what each of us can do for one another.

We need to be united, be selfless, and think of how we, individually or collectively, can help one another," said Chilumpha.

"We must appreciate that Ramadan is like a class to learn from. Fasting is not just keeping oneself away from food and drinks; it goes deeper. It calls for God's consciousness, which, among other elements, requires one to think of someone else and help other people," he said.

On his part, Sheikh Katungwe reminded fellow Muslims that this year's Ramadan should continue guiding the Muslim community and portraying them as good citizens before Allah and the nation, observing that when one embraces tolerance, he or she cannot have ill feelings towards other people or engage in sinful acts.



Chilumpha (right) arriving at the praying ground

Katungwe, who also chairs the Muslim-Christian Peace Council, took it as an opportunity to advise politicians in the country to stop taking the faith community for a ride, saying this is retrogressive.

He said, "It is saddening to see that more often than not, faith communities in the country are treated as a bridge to help people get into government positions, but when in authority, they are completely forgotten."

He, however, encouraged the Muslim community to be closer to Allah even in times of calamity, saying Allah does not make a mistake.

In a separate interview, Hashim Allie Ndeketa was in agreement with what Sheikh Katungwe said.

He said Muslims should be wise enough in making their own decisions that will help them in their deen and not to be pushed by politicians who have their own personal interests.

"Muslims should come together and find out what they want to achieve as Muslims, not personal interests; it is not a matter of a political party, but what will the Muslim community benefit from those who will get into power in 2025 and beyond," said Ndeketa





*Kachingwe (centre in the front role) pose with participants, organisers and invited guests after the awards ceremony*

# MYS and IIB award 2023 Qur'an Memorization Competition winners

By Aubrey Thom Vakhani

**W**inners of the 2023 Qur'an Competition which was jointly organized by the Muslim Youth Society (MYS) and Mzuzu Islamic Information Bureau (IIB), have been encouraged to continue reading the Qur'an, as it is a prerequisite for any Muslim.

The sentiments were expressed by guest of honor Jack Kachingwe during the ceremony to award the winners, held on May 14, 2023, in Mzuzu.

"It's pleasing that MYS and IIB organized this competition, and by targeting children, one would see that it is not only a motivation to the young ones but to parents as well, since children are the future of Islam. This being one way of promoting Islam, I encourage the winners not to

stop reading the Qur'an just because the competition is over," Kachingwe said.

He added, "It's good that these children are memorizing the Holy Qur'an. And if children properly understand the Qur'an and Hadiths, it is good for personal development, development of Islamic faith, and the nation as a whole."

The competition was inaugurated last year, and this year's session attracted 30 participants (15 male and 15 female) aged between 10 and 16 from 15 Madrassas in Mzuzu.

The first prize winner in each category (for both boys and girls) got a mattress and a cash prize of K40 000. The second and third-place winners went home with K30 000 and K20 000, respectively.

Kachingwe also advised Muslim parents to encourage their children

to acquire both Islamic and secular education, saying both studies are helpful.

"As Muslims, we have to go for both studies. As youths, they also need to properly utilize their youthful days by making sure that they don't engage in bad behaviors that cannot only dent the good image of Islam but also ruin their lives," he said.

"One of the questions every human being will be asked on the Day of Judgment is what one did as a youth. So I asked them to use their youthful period in a rightful manner for their own benefit.

On his part, MYS regional public relations officer for the North, Hassan Rajab Kasamala, said it was delightful that the competition was a success.

"It's not easy to accomplish a goal in times of difficulty, especially



now when we are facing financial challenges. At MYS, we are happy that we had this event this year. Participants and their parents were so happy. Some even shed tears of joy. We thank Allah for this,” Kasamala said, and he extended his gratitude to everyone who contributed towards the competition.

“We really appreciate their support. It’s an indication that they have confidence in us. I would like to ask them to continue supporting us. We rely on their support. I ask Allah to reward them abundantly in this life and in the hereafter. Let me also thank my colleagues for their efforts as far as this competition is concerned. We do this to seek Allah’s pleasure and nothing else. Madrassah teachers too have to be commended for the role they play in teaching children. I would also like to thank our judges for a job well done,” he said.

He added: “It’s our prayer that this competition should be beyond Mzuzu City. It should reach the entire Northern region.

In his remarks, coordinator for Mzuzu Islamic Information Bureau, Sheikh Francis Iron, described the initiative as a milestone to help Muslim youths memorize the Qur’an.

“We are all aware that, as Muslims, our main source of information is the Qur’an, and encouraging youths to memorize it is something of great value,” Iron said.

He added: “This time around we have seen young contestants ranging from 10 to 16 years old. This clearly indicates that we have the generation that is going to keep Islam, as you are aware that when we educate



*Kachingwe (second from right) presenting a gift to Ibrahim Issa (second from left)*



*Kachingwe (third from right) presenting a gift to Ruth Mussa (second from right)*

young ones, we are educating a future generation.”

Ruth Mussa, 13, from Mzelawayingwe Madrassah, who was in position one in the girls category, said she was happy to win the competition, saying it would motivate her to work extra hard.

“I am happy and grateful to those who organized the competition. I would like to ask my friends to work hard so that they should memorize the Qur’an,” she said.

Other winners in the girls’ category were Hamida Yasin from Kandaha Madrassah and Amina Nadeen

Phiri from Area 1 B Madrassah, who finished second and third, respectively.

Ibrahim Issa of Dhul-Qanain Madrassah, Hassan Abdullah from Kandaha Madrassah, and Shukran Allie of Chibanja Madrassah were in the first, second, and third positions in that order.

The guest of honor, however, called for concerted efforts, saying it would be good if well-wishers joined hands in supporting the Qur’an competition so that it should be an annual event with more awards.

# Government champions “End Suicide” campaign

By: Lovemore Katanda

Following a sharp increase in the country's suicide cases, Kamuzu University of Health Science (KUHES) recently organized a knockout suicide title bout between Hannock Phiri and a South Africa-based Malawian, Dennis Mwale.

Staged at KUHES sports complex on Friday, April 28, 2023, the fight, whose objective was to discourage people from committing suicide, attracted not only boxing fans but also people from different fields.

Speaking before the game, Minister of Sports Uchizi Mkandawire commended the organizers of the event, saying the gesture will help in disseminating the message to love life and discourage committing suicide whatever the situation people may find themselves in.

“Boxing is a crowd puller. I strongly

believe that the message to end suicide cases in Malawi will reach as many people as possible through platforms like this,” he said.

During the night event, Malawi's national super lightweight champion, Hannock Phiri, defended his title in a controversial majority draw.

The bout ended prematurely in the ninth round as Mwale sustained a big cut on the left eye following a blow from Phiri in the eighth round.

After assessment of the injury in the ninth round, the ringside doctor recommended that the fight should not proceed as Mwale's injury was bleeding severely, and the situation forced the referee Mbachichi Nyirenda to stop the fight.

Two judges declared the fight a draw, while one was in favour of Mwale, and the verdict came as a draw.

In his remarks, Phiri said it was hilarious to have defended his Malawi Professional Boxing Control Board (MPBCB) belt despite having trained under limited resources.

Dennis Mwale, whose coach is a South African-based Malawian boxer Isaac Chilemba, faulted his opponent for committing deliberate fouls.

“I was upset by his consistent fouls. That made me lose my game plan,” complained Mwale.

In other supporting bouts, Chikondi Makawa won against Samuel Tsaba, while Byson Gwayani lost to Dr. Congo pugilist Regen Champion on unanimous decision, and the former World Boxing Forum (WBF) member Agness Ntimaukanena defeated Lucy Macho of Tanzania on unanimous points, while Salimu Chazama Academy product Clifford Antafu won against Lyton Kubumeko on points.



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