

# Insight Bulletin

For People Who Want to Know

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## Government Encourages Wheat Production as a Viable Cash Crop



*Chakwera on a Visit to Mpale farm in Madisi*

**By Lovemore Katanda**

**G**overnment says wheat production has huge potential for boosting the export base and significantly increasing Malawi's economic growth.

In January this year, Agriculture Technology Clearing (ATC) of the Ministry of Agriculture approved the release

of four varieties of wheat namely: CIM1152, CIM1227, CIM2026, and CIM2036 after on-farm testing trials in the country, as per the recently released report by agriculture experts.

Speaking during the official launch of this year's Affordable Inputs Program (AIP) on 20th October, 2023 in Kasungu district, President Lazarus Chakwera disclosed

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# ISRAEL-GAZA CONFLICT

By Osman Bwanali

**T**he conflict in Gaza is complex and has multiple dimensions, including political, territorial, and religious aspects. While religion plays a role in the conflict, it is not solely a religious war. The conflict primarily revolves around the Israeli-Palestinian dispute over land and national aspirations. Religion, particularly the Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian-Muslim religious identities, influences the motivations and narratives of the parties involved.

However, it is important to note that not all Israelis or Palestinians view the conflict through a religious lens, and there are political and social factors at play as well.

This conflict is complex and deeply entrenched, and there is no single solution that can bring an end to the violence and suffering. However, there are several actions that can be taken to reduce tensions and move towards a peaceful resolution. Firstly, diplomatic efforts should be made to bring the parties to the negotiating table to discuss the underlying issues and work towards a peaceful resolution. Secondly, a ceasefire should be established to halt the violence and create a conducive environment for negotiations. Also, humanitarian aid should be provided to the people of Gaza, who have suffered from the conflict and the blockade, to alleviate their suffering and improve their living conditions. Thirdly,

underlying issues, such as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and the blockade, should be addressed in a comprehensive manner to create a sustainable solution. Finally, the international community should play a more active role in resolving the conflict, including through mediation and providing political and financial support.

The future of the conflict in Gaza is uncertain now because it depends on various factors, including the actions and decisions of the parties involved, international diplomacy, and changes in regional dynamics. Efforts towards a peaceful resolution, such as negotiations and ceasefires, have been made in the past, but a long-term solution has not been achieved yet. It is difficult to predict when or how the conflict will end, as it is a deeply entrenched and complex issue with deep-rooted grievances on both sides. Ultimately, a lasting resolution would require political will, compromise, and a comprehensive approach addressing the underlying causes of the conflict.

Again, Middle East countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iran, Lebanon, and Qatar can play a crucial role in the peace process in Gaza. As neighbouring countries, they have a vested interest in stability and security in the region. Their involvement can bring regional perspectives, support, and diplomatic pressure to facilitate negotiations and encourage a peaceful resolution. It is important for Middle East countries to act collectively and

in coordination with international efforts, such as those led by the United Nations, to maximise the chances of a successful and sustainable peace process in Gaza.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complex and long-standing issue, and achieving lasting peace in the region is challenging. While a ceasefire may temporarily halt the violence, it does not guarantee a long-term solution or lasting peace.

The path to peace in Gaza and between Israelis and Palestinians involves addressing various political, social, and economic factors. It requires negotiations, dialogue, and compromise from both sides, as well as the involvement of the international community. The resolution of the conflict involves addressing issues such as borders, settlements, the status of Jerusalem, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and security concerns.

Efforts have been made in the past to reach a peaceful resolution, such as the Oslo Accords in the 1990s. However, these efforts have faced numerous challenges and setbacks. Achieving peace will require sustained commitment, trust-building measures, and a willingness to find common ground.

The attainment of peace for Palestinians following the Gaza war ultimately hinges on the actions and decisions of all parties involved, in conjunction with the broader geopolitical agreement.





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## Government Encourages Wheat Production as a Viable Cash Crop

that his administration has already secured markets for wheat, adding that government has gone further engaging several heads of state across the world on the supply of Malawi wheat to the their respective countries and that discussions are at an advanced stage.

The Malawi leader emphasized the potential of wheat as a profitable cash crop. In addition to expanding Malawi's export opportunities, increased wheat production will significantly cut the country's wheat imports by fifty percent.

President Chakwera adds that the selected four wheat varieties, certified by agriculture experts, are heat-tolerant and can be grown in all climatic conditions in Malawi.

"Currently, demand for wheat across the world is very high. My administration is about to sign a deal with a certain president in Africa to supply wheat, and I will soon update the nation on the process," said the Malawi leader.

On the Affordable Inputs Program, Chakwera said his administration will incorporate farmers from districts that are not suitable for food production into the social cash transfer program to help them buy their needs.

Speaking earlier in an exclusive interview, Minister of Agriculture Sam Kawale indicated that over 100 billion Kwacha has been allocated for the implementation of this year's AIP and that 1.5 million households will benefit from the program.

Kawale further stressed that one million farmers that have been left out of the AIP will be incorporated under other national programs such as the cash transfer program and the climate smart public works program.

Meanwhile, agriculture expert Ronald Chilumpha has faulted government for its commitment towards the implementation of AIP, saying the program is no longer impactful on subsistence farmers.

"Year in and year out, our farmers are still food insecure. AIP is not bearing

anticipated results," he said.

Chilumpha reasoned that the government, among others, should prioritise subsidising value chain products such as cotton and coffee and also lowering prices of irrigation equipment to facilitate small and medium farmers to have double harvests.

But President Lazarus Chakwera challenged critics that his administration will not abandon AIP, saying both AIP and mega farms will be implemented concurrently and not as substitute of the other.

"Those who are saying my administration must abandon AIP have one thing in common: they are able to buy things on their own. People must understand that AIP is not meant for everyone. AIP is focusing on smallholder farmers with two to four hectares of land, while Agriculture Commercialization (AGCOM) is focusing on middle-class farmers, including cooperatives," explained Chakwera.



*Mpale wheat farm in Dowa district*



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*Palestinians search for casualties a day after Israel's strikes*

# In Gaza, Grieving Continues As Israel Strikes Refugee Camps

**D**ozens of civilians have been killed in renewed attacks on two refugee camps in Gaza, officials and witnesses say.

Israeli fighter jets have struck two refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, killing at least 53 people

and wounding dozens, according to health officials in the besieged enclave.

The attacks on 29 October 2023 came as Israel said it would press on with its offensive against Hamas, despite international appeals for a ceasefire or a humanitarian pause.

Minister of health said Air raids hit the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza overnight, killing at least 40 people and wounding 34 others.

Arafat Abu Mashaia, who lives in the camp, said the air raids flattened several multistorey residential buildings where people forced out of





Israeli strike on houses in Jabalia refugee Camp

# Issues Camps

other parts of Gaza were sheltering.

"It was a true massacre," he said, standing on the wreckage. "All here are peaceful people. I challenge anyone who says there were resistance [fighters] here," said Mashaia.

The camp, a built-up residential area,

is located in the evacuation zone where Israel's military had urged Palestinian civilians to seek refuge as it focused its military offensive on the north.

Another air attack hit a house near a school at the Bureji refugee camp in central Gaza on 29 October 2023, and staff at al-Aqsa Hospital said at least 13 people were killed. The camp is home to an estimated 46,000 people and was struck on 26 October 2023 as well.

Alaloul, working for the Turkish Anadolu Agency, said his sons - Ahmed, 13, and four-year-old Qais - were killed in the bombing, along with his brother.

Alaloul further said that the world seems unwilling to act or help. "This cannot go on we need a step up change"

Gaza's Health Ministry said more than 9,700 Palestinians have been killed in the territory in nearly a month of war, a number that is likely to rise as Israeli troops advance into dense, urban neighbourhoods.

Despite appeals and overseas demonstrations, Israel has continued its bombardment across Gaza, saying

it is targeting Hamas and accusing it of using civilians as human shields. Israeli has been killing and bombing civilians in pretends that Hamas is hiding amongst the civilians.

Critics say Israel's air raids are often disproportionate, considering the large number of civilians killed.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says hundreds of thousands of displaced people are sheltering in UN-run facilities. Deadly Israeli air raids have repeatedly hit and damaged those shelters.

Hamas said in a statement posted on Telegram that Israel had 'directly' bombed civilian homes, adding that most of the dead were women and children.

Arab leaders have called for an immediate ceasefire. But US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that 'would simply leave Hamas in place, able to regroup and repeat what it did on October 7'.

Blinken said humanitarian pauses could be critical in protecting civilians, getting aid in and getting foreign nationals out 'while still enabling Israel to achieve its objective, the defeat of Hamas'



Child mourning the death of his father



*ULAMA Council officials at the press briefing*

## Ulama Council of Malawi condemns Israeli's Aggression Against Palestinians in Gaza

**T**he Ulama Council of Malawi secretary general Sheikh Muslim Abbas Vinjenje has strongly condemned Israeli's recent air strikes and bombardment against the people of Palestine. Vinjenje said this at a press briefing the Ulama Council of Malawi held on October 21, 2023.

The council's secretary general reiterated that such actions have resulted into deaths of innocent children and women, which is a violation of both Islamic principles and international law.

"We strongly believe in justice,

peace and fundamental rights of all individuals, regardless of their race, religion, or nationality. Palestinians have for years been struggling to access their fertile land, water, and electricity following the occupation of the Israelis," he said.

He described the recent fighting between Israel and Hamas as a significant escalation in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has denied the people of Palestine their right to freedom and self-rule for decades.

The secretary general called upon the aggressors to respect the core

values of justice, peace, and the fundamental rights of all individuals, regardless of their race, religion, or nationality.

"The people of Palestine have been denied access to their basic needs such as fertile land, water, and electricity due to the actions of the Israelis," he explained.

Vinjenje also stated that Israel's actions, including the killing of women and children and land appropriation, are unacceptable under both international law and Islamic principles.

"The creation of the Hamas group



was a response to the discrimination and injustices committed by Israelis against the people in Palestine,” he lamented.

Vinjenje called on human rights organizations and international bodies to intervene and address the abuses happening in Gaza and the West Bank.

Sharing similar concerns is the Malawi Palestine Solidarity Movement which organized a vigil at the Malawi Sun Hotel to raise awareness about the issues in Palestine.

Asabuni Phiri, the National Coordinator for the movement, emphasized that the conflict in Palestine is fundamentally about human rights, not religion. He underlined the need to support the rights of all people regardless of their religious background.

“The vigil has been successful since we have people from different religions, CSOs, and other groups in attendance. As a movement, we are expecting more ideas from the participants on how we can move forward in supporting people of Palestine,” Phiri said.

The vigil included a historical video presentation by Professor Nandini Patel, who has been following the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. Professor Patel provided a historical background on the land disputes and conflicts in Palestine dating back to the UN Resolution in the 1960s.



*Asabuni - we are together with Palestine*

She highlighted the negative impact of Israel's actions on Palestinians, including land theft, illegal settlements and dispossession.

According to international law, Professor Patel pointed out that the construction of the wall was ruled illegal by a significant majority of judges, yet the situation on the ground continues to deny people in Gaza and the West Bank access to vital resources.

“According to international law, which had 15 judges, 14 of the judges said the construction of the wall was illegal and should be demolished. The wall



*Patel - Palestinians deserve freedom like any other human beings*

is denying people from Gaza and West Bank access to fertile land, water, electricity and other basic needs,” said Prof. Patel.

She expressed disappointment with the lack of implementation of resolutions and decisions made by Western superpowers to address the issue, and she stressed the need for solidarity with the people of Palestine.

The vigil was organized to show support and solidarity for the people of Palestine and convey a clear message that they are not alone in their struggle for their rights.



*Some of Vigil participants*

# 250 Houses Ready For Handover To Cyclone Freddy Survivors



*Some of constructed houses in Chiradzulu district*

**By Edward Rex**

**T**he Malawi Red Cross Society expects to have finalized the construction of 250 new houses ready for handover to Cyclone Freddy survivors in the Southern region by November 30 this year.

This has been disclosed by Cecilia Banda, who is Acting Head of disaster management at the Malawi Red Cross Society during a media briefing held on 30th October, 2023.

Banda told journalists in Chiradzulu that various stakeholders have been committing themselves to

constructing houses for the cyclone victims who lost their property early this year.

She said some of the houses which will be handed over to the cyclone survivors are those that have been constructed under the initiative championed by Malawi's former presidents Bakili Muluzi and Joyce





*Stakeholders pose with some of the beneficiaries*

Banda in their capacity as goodwill ambassadors.

The districts benefitting from this initiative are Phalombe, Chiradzulu, Blantyre and Zomba. The construction of the houses is at an advanced stage.

“We are building houses through the funding mobilized by the Goodwill Trust,” said Banda.

“We are constructing 52 houses in Phalombe, 30 houses in

Zomba, and in Chiradzulu, we are constructing another 30 houses with funding from PMI and the Press Trust. We are making progress, and we are happy,” she added.

She, however, lamented that the process of relocating people from disaster-prone areas to safe places has been an uphill task.

Banda said most people do not easily accept moving from their

risky permanent homes and to other safer places, but she was quick to applaud the progress made so far in convincing the victims.

Early this year, Cyclone Freddy hit various parts of the Southern region resulting into loss of people’s lives and property as many victims were displaced and temporarily housed in public schools and other public institutions.



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# Mzuzu Youths Get Trained in Vocational Skills

By: Aubrey Thom Vakhani

**L**ack of youth economic empowerment risks youth to engage in criminal activities as they struggle to be self reliant due to high rate of unemployment in the country.

It is against this background that a Mzuzu-based businessman Willard Msosa decided to render financial support towards training of 66 youths of the City of Mzuzu in vocational skills.

Speaking in an interview with Insight Bulletin, Msosa, while reaffirming his continued support, said supporting the youths, who are future leaders of the country, is a collective responsibility by various players through diverse means beneficial to the targeted group.

"The primary objective of this project, apart from complementing government efforts in supporting youths, is to empower the youths with various vocational skills. Most of these youths come from underprivileged backgrounds, and due to their backgrounds, they dropped out of school. They don't have academic qualifications, making it difficult for them to be admitted in the country's technical colleges. I am optimistic that through this program, a number of youths will be reached, become self reliant, and support their families," said Msosa.

"I established a team that worked



*Msosa - I want to see youths doing well in life*

hand in hand with community leaders in identifying the beneficiaries. After the identification process, the beneficiaries were placed at different centers where they got trained according to their field of choice, where I pay the fees charged," he said.

Msosa said there has been progress since the trainees started their training early this year.

"Little by little, there is progress. The youths are learning, and they are able to practice what they learn. The results are painting a good picture of the project and it's on track to move towards achieving the goal. Some trainees in tailoring and fashion design have showcased their works in the summer fashion show in October," he said.

He added that there are 200 other youths who have been identified and are waiting for their turn.

Msosa asked other stakeholders to join forces with him for the social and economic development of the country.

"All stakeholders are welcome with any assistance. Yes, they are imparted with knowledge but it will be meaningless if these youths are left without providing them with start-up equipment such as sewing machines, toolboxes, work suits and other required materials after completing their training," he appealed.

One of the beneficiaries of this initiative Queen Mlenga, 19, from Chibavi Township who is doing tailoring and designing, asked fellow beneficiaries to use the opportunity to realize their dreams in life so as to serve as role models.

"I am grateful to him (Msosa) for coming up with this program. On my own, I would have not managed to raise funds for the training. I am working hard so that once I complete my training; I can start my own business from which I will be supporting myself and other people. I would like to ask my friends who are on this program to dedicate their time and work hard," said Mlenga.

The youths are being trained in motor vehicle mechanics, computer and cell phone repair, dish installation, tailoring and fashion designing, plumbing and electrical installation, among others.





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