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Insight Bulletin

For People Who Want to Know

EIGHTY-EIGHTH EDITION

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**PROMISES IN PERIL:
THE QUESTION
CHAKWERA AVOIDED**

**JUSTICE FOR GAZA:
ICC'S HISTORIC MOVE
AGAINST ISRAELI WAR CRIMES**

**MAA 2024:
CELEBRATING TALENT
AND UNITY IN MALAWI**

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A GOVERNMENT ON THE BRINK OF ACCOUNTABILITY



As Malawi inches closer to the September 2025 general elections, the nation faces a cascade of unresolved crises that paint a troubling picture of governance. The hunger crisis, corruption, fuel scarcity, and politically motivated violence are glaring examples of leadership shortcomings.

When President Lazarus Chakwera assumed office, there was hope for transparency, accountability, and solutions. Instead, as elections near, Malawians are asking: Has this government delivered on its promises, or has it left unfulfilled rhetoric in its wake?

Hunger: A Silent Crisis

The president's failure to address the "three meals a day" promise in Parliament highlights a deeper problem. Hunger is a harsh reality for millions. Reports of families resorting to eating chitedze illustrate the severity of the crisis. Leadership's silence on this issue only deepens the public's frustration. What are the administration's priorities if addressing hunger is not among them? How does this failure align with promises made during the 2020 campaign?

Corruption: The Unrelenting Shadow

Corruption continues to erode public trust. Despite pledges to fight graft, high-profile cases have stalled, and the perception of government complicity in schemes has deepened disillusionment. Public funds meant for development vanish into thin air while citizens bear the brunt of economic hardships. Without decisive action, corruption risks becoming this administration's defining legacy, further distancing it from the electorate.

Fuel Scarcity: A Nation at a Standstill

For five months, relentless fuel shortages have crippled transportation, businesses, and daily life. Citizens endure long queues at filling stations, while neighboring countries have stabilized supplies. This prolonged scarcity reflects

systemic inefficiencies and a lack of foresight—issues the government has failed to address. How will this affect public perception as voters head to the polls next year?

Political Violence: A Growing Threat
As the unofficial campaign season begins, politically motivated violence has become alarmingly prevalent. Reports of party youth engaging in violent acts in Lilongwe, Blantyre, and other regions are disturbing. Where is the nation heading? Are we on the path to peaceful elections, or will Malawi face a perilous descent similar to the political instability of neighbouring Mozambique? The inability to curb this violence raises concerns about the government's capacity to ensure free, fair, and peaceful elections in 2025.

WHAT LIES AHEAD IN 2025?

As elections approach, this administration's track record will face intense scrutiny. With its term nearing an end, unresolved crises raise questions about its capacity to govern. Can this government convince voters it deserves another term? Or will Malawians demand change?

2025 is not just an election year; it is a referendum on leadership, accountability, and governance. The administration's final months will determine its legacy. Will it act decisively to resolve these crises, or leave a legacy of unfulfilled promises and lost trust? Time is running out, and history is watching.



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 **PROUDLY MALAWIAN**



President Lazarus Chakwera responding to members of parliament during the December 2024 presidential question time.

PROMISES IN PERIL: THE QUESTION CHAKWERA AVOIDED

By Fareedah Muheya

A critical question posed in Parliament to President Lazarus Chakwera has stirred a national debate, with many questioning the administration's priorities and commitment to its campaign promises.

On Wednesday, December 18, Machinga East MP Esther Jobala asked the president to clarify whether his campaign promise of "three meals a day for all" remains a priority or if it was mere political rhetoric. Jobala cited reports of severe hunger across the country, where some Malawians have resorted to eating Chitedze to survive.

However, due to time constraints, President Chakwera was unable to address this question during his scheduled appearance in Parliament, a session he attended in accordance with Sections 89 (3) and (4) of the Constitution and Parliamentary Standing Order 70A. Leader of the House Richard Chimwendo Banda announced that the president would

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Prepared by **Abdullah Bamusi**
Nankumba

The International Criminal Court (ICC) recently issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif. These historic warrants accuse Israeli leaders of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including starvation, murder, and persecution during the Gaza conflict. The global response has been polarizing, highlighting the complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the power struggles influencing accountability.

THE ICC'S ACCUSATIONS

The ICC's charges against Netanyahu and Gallant are unprecedented, marking the first time that Israeli leaders have been accused by an international court for their role in a conflict that has seen escalating atrocities. The charges allege that Israeli forces deliberately targeted civilians, imposed collective punishment through mass starvation, and perpetuated systemic persecution of Palestinians during their military operations in Gaza. Israel has vehemently rejected these accusations, branding them as politically motivated and unfounded, with their government emphasizing Israel's right to self-defence.

These legal actions coincide with a devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Thousands of Palestinian civilians have been killed, while critical infrastructure has been obliterated, leaving millions facing severe shortages of food, water, medical supplies, and shelter. Despite these dire conditions, the global reaction to the ICC's action has been divided, reflecting varied political alliances and interests.



Global Solidarity: Palestinians and their supporters unite in powerful protests across Gaza, Lebanon, and beyond, calling for justice and an end to the ongoing conflict with Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in a pivotal moment of decision-making.

JUSTICE FOR GAZA: ICC'S HISTORIC MOVE AGAINST ISRAELI WAR CRIMES

DIVIDED INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Israeli officials have harshly criticized the ICC's decision. Netanyahu called it a "black day in the history of nations," accusing the court of taking an unfair stance against democratic nations. Gallant echoed similar sentiments, describing the ICC as illegitimate. The United States, Israel's closest ally, has expressed its disapproval of the warrants. President Joe Biden criticized the decision, arguing that it "undermines Israel's right to defend itself" against Hamas.

The European Union (EU), while professing commitment to human rights, continues its significant financial support to Israel, notably through programs such as Horizon

Europe, which critics argue may indirectly support Israel's military infrastructure. In contrast, nations like Ireland and South Africa have taken a stronger stance, condemning Israel's actions as genocide and calling for further investigation by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS

These arrest warrants represent a significant geopolitical challenge for Israel. Netanyahu and Gallant now face restrictions on traveling to ICC member states, complicating their international diplomatic engagements. This could increase Israel's isolation on the global stage, further straining alliances with countries that are members of the court.

However, the consequences of the ICC's actions are unlikely to stop there. With Israel's military operations intensifying in Gaza, the warrants may provoke more violent retaliation from Israel, worsening the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. On the other hand, if Israel's powerful allies, particularly the U.S., undermine the authority of the ICC, the warrants may fail to achieve their intended legal outcomes, leaving Palestinians without meaningful justice.

Renowned commentator Noam Chomsky captured the moral complexity of the situation, stating:

"The Palestinians were offered two options: to accept life in an Israeli open prison... or resist and risk living in a maximum-security prison,

subjected to collective punishment."

This sentiment encapsulates the harsh realities Palestinians face in their struggle for freedom and dignity.

Similarly, Israeli author Amos Oz noted, "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a tragedy; it is a clash between right and right," emphasizing the deep-rooted, multifaceted nature of the conflict.

MIDDLE EASTERN AND MUSLIM WORLD REACTIONS

The decision by the ICC has been welcomed by the Middle East and the broader Muslim world as a long-overdue step toward justice. Hamas officials hailed the arrest warrants as a victory for Palestinian lives lost, while the Palestinian Authority

urged ICC member states to act swiftly and enforce the warrants. The sentiment is that these actions are an acknowledgment of the grave injustices Palestinians have endured under Israeli occupation.

Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, commented, "The blood of the Palestinian people is sacred, and their rights are sacred. The world must act to protect them from the atrocities they are enduring."

This historic moment has sparked renewed hope among Muslim communities, with many viewing the ICC's decision as a sign of solidarity, although the political complexities surrounding the case underscore the continuing challenge of achieving justice for Palestine.

THE PATH FORWARD

While the ICC's decision marks progress in terms of international legal accountability, it is just the beginning of a much larger, protracted struggle for justice. The ICC's actions must be followed by concrete steps to end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, provide real accountability for war crimes, and foster meaningful dialogue between Israel and Palestine. The international community must move beyond symbolic gestures to create a just and lasting peace in the region.

The coming months will be crucial in determining whether the ICC's bold move can lead to tangible change or if political interests will continue to frustrate meaningful progress. The eyes of the world are on Gaza, and the ICC's decision has raised the stakes for both justice and peace in one of the most enduring and tragic conflicts in modern history.

OUR READER'S – "1446 RAMADAN SPECIAL"

Ramadan 1446: What's Your Plan?

As Ramadan approaches, my heart swells with excitement for this blessed month. It's my favourite time of the year—a chance to reflect, reconnect, and renew my faith.

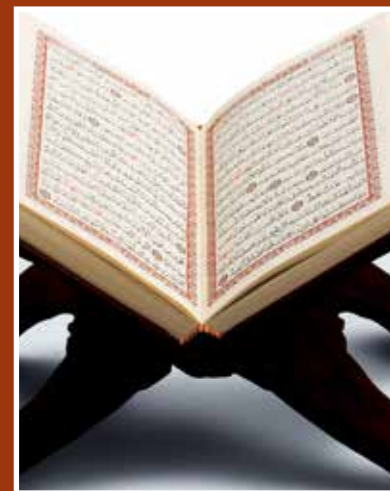
Last year's Ramadan was especially poignant for me. While fasting in peace, I couldn't help but think of my fellow Muslims in Palestine, Sudan, and Congo, enduring unimaginable hardships. Yet, despite our differences, Ramadan united us—a global network of over a billion hearts, fasting and worshipping together.

This year, I'm embracing a more intentional journey. I plan to create a Ramadan journal to track my habits, spiritual growth, and areas for improvement, not just during Ramadan but beyond. My goal is to complete the Qur'an and reflect deeply on how I can bring myself closer to the ideals of Islam.

Ramadan offers hope and renewal, and I'm ready to immerse myself in its blessings once again.



- SHAMIRA CHIMBALANGA,
Frankfurt-Germany.



Qur'anic Verse of the Month

"And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous – those who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and pardon the people – and Allah loves the doers of good."

(Surah Aal-e-Imran 3:133-134)



Hadith of the Month

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Whoever fasts one day seeking the pleasure of Allah, if that is the last day of his life, he will enter Paradise."

(Ahmad, 5/391)

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Promises in Peril: The Question Chakwera Avoided

not be granted additional time to respond to the remaining questions on the order paper.

This decision sparked outrage among opposition Members of Parliament, who argued that the session should have been extended given the urgency of the hunger crisis. Jolobala was particularly critical, accusing the president of showing lack of concern for Malawians' struggles. "This was his chance to address a critical issue affecting millions, and he chose silence," Jolobala remarked.

The Leader of the Opposition also expressed his disappointment, emphasizing that this was the first time the president had skipped a

question during these sessions. "Malawians deserved a response. The government's failure to prioritize such a pressing matter raises serious concerns about its commitment to the people," he said.

WHAT HAPPENED IN PARLIAMENT: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The events in Parliament revealed not just a lapse in addressing the hunger crisis but also a growing disconnect between the administration and the citizens it serves. The question was not just about food—it was a litmus test of the government's priorities, especially as the nation grapples with economic instability, food insecurity,

and public discontent.

The President's decision to leave the question unanswered has left many wondering whether the promise of "three meals a day" was ever realistic or achievable. Analysts argue that the failure to respond could further erode public trust in the government and amplify frustrations over unfulfilled promises.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 2025 GENERAL ELECTIONS

As Malawi heads toward general elections in September 2025, moments like these could have significant political repercussions. The inability to address such a critical question may serve as a rallying point for opposition parties, who are likely to frame the administration as out of touch with the realities on the ground.

For voters, this incident transcends the parliamentary floor. It reflects a broader narrative of unmet expectations, with hunger and poverty symbolizing deeper systemic failures. Whether the government can rebuild trust and realign its priorities in time for the elections remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: the people are watching, and they are hungry—not just for food, but for accountability.



Esther Jolobala shares her perspective after her critical question was left unanswered during the August House session.

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RESTORING VISION, RENEWING LIVES: IHAM's Mission Against Blindness



Beneficiaries at Mangochi District Hospital receive life-changing cataract surgeries facilitated by IHAM.

By Hajira Halilu

**Administration and
Communications Officer, IHAM**

In line with Malawi's goal to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2027, the Islamic Health Association of Malawi (IHAM), supported by Barakah Charity, recently held an Eye Surgical Camp in Mangochi—a district with a high prevalence of cataracts. This life-changing initiative is part of IHAM's commitment to addressing avoidable blindness, which disproportionately affects rural communities across the country.

Among the many beneficiaries of the camp was Mubaraka, a village headman who lost his sight and livelihood due to cataracts. Mubaraka's life took a devastating turn when he experienced sudden blindness, which rendered him unable to run his computer game shop or support his family. His family,

reliant on subsistence farming, faced immense hardships until he sought help.

Desperate for a solution, Mubaraka and his wife travelled over 120 kilometres to Mangochi District Hospital, where IHAM was conducting surgeries. After undergoing successful operations on both eyes, his sight was fully restored. "Alhamdulillah! I can see again with both eyes. This is wonderful news for me and my community," he said, radiating joy and gratitude.

Cataracts, a leading cause of blindness globally, remain a major health issue in Malawi, particularly in districts like Mangochi. Byson Kapatamoyo, Head of the Eye Department at Mangochi District Hospital, emphasized the significance of such interventions. "We treat around 100 cataract patients monthly. Restoring sight not only transforms individual lives but also revitalizes entire communities by enabling breadwinners to contribute

again," he explained.

IHAM's Executive Director, Hajj Daitoni, underscored the broader impact of these initiatives. "Most of the patients we serve are breadwinners whose livelihoods depend on farming and fishing. Losing their sight often means losing their ability to support their families. Restoring vision ensures their families' survival and restores dignity," he said.

The initiative also has spiritual implications, especially for Mangochi, home to Malawi's largest Muslim population. By restoring vision, IHAM empowers patients to fully practice their faith, including reciting the Quran and participating in prayers. This demonstrates IHAM's holistic approach to care, addressing both physical and spiritual well-being.

Looking ahead, IHAM plans to transition from temporary camps to sustainable, permanent eye care facilities in Mangochi and other districts. "This strategic shift will ensure communities have consistent access to essential eye care services, reducing dependence on intermittent camps," Daitoni announced.

This marks IHAM's third eye surgical camp this year, following successful efforts in Chitipa and earlier camps in Mangochi. With Malawi's cataract surgical rate significantly below recommended levels, these camps are bridging critical gaps in care, transforming lives, and fostering hope. Mubaraka's story is a shining example of the profound impact of such initiatives.

MUSLIM ARTS AWARDS 2024: CELEBRATING TALENT AND UNITY IN MALAWI

By Bashir Amini

The third edition of the Muslim Arts Awards (MAA), held on December 20, 2024, at Amaryllis Hotel in Blantyre, marked a night of glamour, talent, and recognition. The event, widely regarded as the most organized and glamorous awards ceremony in Malawi, celebrated the rich creative contributions of Malawi's Muslim community, bringing together dignitaries, artists, and patrons to honour excellence in various artistic fields.

Broadcast live on Zodiak Broadcasting Station TV, Zodiak Online, and TV Islam, the awards recognized outstanding contributions in nasheeds, poetry, drama, media, and more. The night was filled with vibrant performances from some of the most respected names in Malawi's Muslim entertainment scene. Local nasheed legend Ishmael Katawala's performance left the audience in awe, and Aqeel Masinja's soulful voice resonated deeply with attendees. The evening also featured Yusuf Bamusi's poetic brilliance and comedy acts by Poison and Chipojola, making it a memorable celebration of culture, art, and faith.

A special highlight was the presentation of three Special Recognition Awards to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to both the Muslim community and Malawi as a whole. The Islamic Zakaat Fund, Kanjedza Muslim Sisters, and football legend Yassin Osman were



Award recipients and event organizers capture a memorable moment in a group photo at the Muslim Arts Awards.

honoured for their dedicated service and impactful work.


The competitive categories also celebrated exceptional talent, with Aqeel Masinja winning Best Nasheed Artist for the second consecutive year, Enock Chitemwe being named Best Comedian, and Ishmael Dinala earning Best Poet. Shaheed Abdul-Wahab was recognized as the Best Upcoming Nasheed Artist, while Yaseen Mukayenda took home the Best Video Director Award. Sakina Majawa of Chanco Radio was awarded Best Media Personality in Radio, and Yassin Limu was honoured as Best Media Personality (TV). Gift Sitima was named Best Media Personality (Print), and Amirddin Mvula was awarded Best Media Personality (Online).

Despite the event's success, the organizers called for more support from Muslim-owned businesses. They noted the contradiction in the willingness of some Muslim companies to support non-Islamic ventures, but their hesitation to invest

in initiatives that celebrate Islamic culture. This challenge underscored the need for greater investment in projects that uplift the Muslim community.

Founded in 2022, the Muslim Arts Awards has rapidly become a cornerstone in recognizing and nurturing creativity within Malawi's Muslim community. The success of the past three editions reflects the tireless efforts of its founding team—Tailos Bakili, Nurdeen Cassim, Bashir Amini, Rashid Chilizule, Joseph Kadzakumanja, Araffat Nkata, and Sammy Kachepe, with Justice Jabbar Alide serving as Patron.

As the ceremony drew to a close, the power of the Muslim Arts Awards to unite, inspire, and promote talent within the community was evident. With continued support from individuals, organizations, and businesses, the future of the MAA looks brighter, promising even greater recognition for the immense talent within Malawi's Muslim community.



Takaful
Islamic

Financial Independence and Self-Sufficiency in Islam: Empowering the Community during Ramadan

As Ramadan approaches, it's a perfect time to reflect on the principles of **financial independence and self-sufficiency** in Islam. These concepts not only help individuals avoid financial stress but also enable them to contribute more to their families and communities. Islam encourages responsible financial practices that benefit both the individual and society, and Ramadan serves as a reminder of how to live according to these values.

ACHIEVING FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

In Islam, financial independence is essential for preserving dignity and freedom. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught that individuals should work hard to provide for themselves and their families, avoiding reliance on charity when possible. He said:

"The best of what you eat is that which you earn with your own hands." (Sahih Bukhari)

By achieving financial independence, Muslims can serve their communities better, particularly during Ramadan when the focus is on giving *Zakah* (obligatory charity) and *Sadaqah* (voluntary charity). This financial self-sufficiency enables individuals to contribute more generously and effectively during the holy month.

EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY

When people are financially stable, they can invest in businesses,

support local ventures, and create job opportunities, thus benefiting society as a whole. The concept of **empowering the community** aligns with Islamic finance principles, which encourage ethical investing and wealth circulation for social good.

By focusing on self-sufficiency, Muslims can contribute more to the welfare of their communities, whether through charity or by supporting businesses that promote ethical values. This creates a cycle of empowerment where wealth circulates for the benefit of all.

PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

- 1. Budgeting and Saving:** Ramadan teaches us to live within our means. This discipline can be extended year-round by creating a budget, saving for future expenses, and avoiding unnecessary spending.
- 2. Investing in Skills and Education:** Islam encourages seeking knowledge and improving one's skills, which ultimately leads to better job opportunities and greater earning potential.
- 3. Entrepreneurship:** Starting a business or supporting local enterprises helps create self-sufficiency while empowering the community. The noble Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a merchant, and many of his companions were successful businesspeople.

4. Avoiding Debt: Islam warns against excessive debt. During Ramadan, Muslims are reminded to be cautious in their financial dealings, maintaining stability and avoiding financial strain.

5. Supporting Charitable Ventures: Investing in businesses that support charitable causes or microfinance initiatives helps promote self-sufficiency while benefiting those in need.

CONCLUSION

As we approach Ramadan, let us reflect on how financial independence and self-sufficiency can empower both individuals and communities. By focusing on ethical financial practices, saving, investing in skills, and supporting others, we can strengthen our well-being and contribute to the welfare of those around us. Ramadan offers a unique opportunity to practice moderation, set financial goals, and live according to the principles of Islam. In so doing, we do not only improve our own financial stability but also help empower our communities, ensuring we can contribute to the greater good.

About the Author:

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