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For People Who Want to Know

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SELLING EXPIRED GOODS:

A Silent Threat to Public Health and Economic Growth

REACHING THE UNREACHED: IHAM HEALTH CARE INITIATIVE IN MALAWI

**GAZA'S FRAGILE CEASEFIRE:
REBUILDING AMID POLITICAL CONTROVERSY**

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Contents

Shops Closed, Rights Ignored: Balancing Accountability and Human Dignity	4
Selling Expired Goods: A Silent Threat to Public Health and Economic Growth	6
Gaza's Fragile Ceasefire: Rebuilding Amid Political Controversy	8
Guidance and Cerebrations	10
Reaching the Unreached: IHAM Health Care Initiative in Malawi	12
DPP Appoints Mathanga as National Director of Elections	13
Investments and Spending Ethics During Ramadan	14



8 | The international community must prioritize the rights and well-being of the Palestinian people, rejecting proposals that undermine their sovereignty and working collaboratively toward a just and lasting peace.



12 | These clinics, held once a month over a six-month period, offer general consultations, medications, and prescriptions for both adults and children.

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SHOPS CLOSED, RIGHTS IGNORED: Balancing Accountability and Human Dignity



As we highlight the issue of expired goods and labour violations in this month's cover story, it is imperative to reflect on the actions of two key players in this battle: the Ministry of Labour and the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS). Their recent measures to crack down on non-compliant businesses-closing shops and companies that violate labour laws, stock expired goods, or fail to meet hygiene standards-are indeed steps in the right direction. However, these actions, while commendable, warrant deeper scrutiny.

The closures send a strong message that the government prioritizes the welfare of its citizens over unscrupulous profit motives. Unsafe

working conditions and expired goods are not mere inconveniences; they are threats to public health, employee dignity, and the overall economic trust that drives market stability. In that sense, the Ministry of Labour and MBS have ignited a much-needed conversation about accountability in Malawi's business sector.

However, not all efforts have been without controversy. Minister of Labour Vitumbiko Mumba, while spearheading commendable initiatives, has faced criticism for his abrasive approach. Incidents such as dragging a woman at Central Poultry Factories in Lilongwe-deemed harassment by some observers-highlight a troubling contradiction. While fighting for workers' rights, the minister has been accused of violating the very principles of respect and human dignity that his office should uphold. While urgency is important in enforcing labour laws, a calmer, more inclusive approach that seeks to hear both sides of the story would ensure justice is served without overstepping human rights boundaries.

But is closure alone sufficient? For long-term change, punitive measures like fines and mandatory corrective actions are essential. When a shop or company is shut down, the immediate impact is a deterrent. However, this approach can also disrupt livelihoods and local economies without addressing the root causes. Heavy penalties, combined with robust inspection frameworks and ongoing monitoring, could prove more sustainable in ensuring compliance.

Moreover, we must ask ourselves whether these enforcement measures are reactive rather than preventive. Why are expired goods and unsafe working conditions becoming such a prevalent issue? Could it be that supply chain inefficiencies, lack of enforcement, and inadequate business training contribute to this problem? The government must look beyond closures to systemic solutions. Investing in training programs for businesses, enhancing supply chain transparency, and providing incentives for ethical practices can go a long way in addressing these issues at their core.

Equally critical is the role of consumers in this fight. Educating Malawians on their rights as buyers and workers can empower them to hold businesses accountable. Advocacy groups and the media must amplify these efforts, ensuring that citizens are vigilant and proactive in reporting irregularities.

While the Ministry of Labour and MBS deserve recognition for taking bold steps, this is only the beginning. Malawi needs a culture of compliance built on trust, accountability, and the shared goal of a prosperous future. Closures may grab headlines, but real progress lies in fostering a business environment that values quality, ethics, and the well-being of its people.

Let us not settle for short-term fixes. Instead, let us demand sustainable solutions and humane leadership that align with the vision of a healthier, safer, and more ethical Malawi.



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MBS shuts down Sana Wholesale in Mzuzu due to hygiene concerns

SELLING EXPIRED GOODS: A Silent Threat to Public Health and Economic Growth

By Osman Bwanali

Across Malawi, many unsuspecting consumers are grappling with the growing menace of expired goods sold in shops. From staple foods to personal care items, expired products frequently find their way onto shelves, posing serious health, economic, and societal risks.

Despite regulations by the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS), non-compliance remains widespread, highlighting the need for stricter enforcement. Recent efforts by the MBS to crack down on such practices have been welcomed but warrant further reflection on sustainable solutions.

Selling expired goods compromises public health significantly. Consuming

expired food or medication exposes individuals to risks such as food poisoning, allergic reactions, or reduced drug effectiveness, all of which can have fatal consequences. For example, expired baby formula can severely affect infants' nutrition and health, exacerbating vulnerabilities in already struggling households.

The economic implications are

TO PAGE 11>>



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Prepared by **Abdullah Bamusi Nankumba**

The recent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas has ushered in a tentative calm in the Gaza Strip, allowing hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians to return to their homes. However, the landscape they encounter is one of widespread devastation, with entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble. As families sift through the remnants of their lives, the challenges of reconstruction are compounded by political tensions, notably U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial proposal to relocate Gaza's population to neighboring countries.

RETURN TO DEVASTATION

Following the ceasefire, Palestinians have begun the arduous process of returning to their homes in northern Gaza. The Israeli military facilitated this movement by opening checkpoints, allowing residents to traverse the war-torn landscape. Many returned on foot, navigating through debris to reach what remains of their communities. The joy of return is palpable among residents, with one individual expressing, "It's the joy of return. We had thought we wouldn't return, like our ancestors."

Despite the cessation of hostilities, the situation in Gaza remains dire. Critical infrastructure, including roads, water systems, and hospitals, has been severely damaged. The United Nations estimates that under the current blockade conditions, rebuilding could take up to 350 years, with destruction already estimated at \$18.5 billion. The sheer volume of debris, estimated at over 50 million tons, poses significant challenges to reconstruction efforts.



Palestinians celebrate the announcement of a ceasefire with Israel.

GAZA'S FRAGILE CEASEFIRE: REBUILDING AMID POLITICAL CONTROVERSY

TRUMP'S CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSAL

Amid the humanitarian crisis, President Trump has proposed a plan that involves relocating Gaza's population to neighboring countries such as Egypt and Jordan. He suggested that the United States could "take over" the Gaza Strip and transform it into a new "Riviera," while resettling its residents elsewhere. Trump stated, "The US will take over the Gaza Strip," envisioning a complete reconstruction of the area.

This proposal has been met with widespread condemnation. Arab nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Palestinian



Donald Trump, the newly re-elected president of the USA, whose proposed policies were rejected.

Authority, and the Arab League, have collectively rejected any plans

to move Palestinians out of their territories in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. They argue that such a move could "threaten the region's stability, risk expanding the conflict, and undermine prospects for peace and coexistence among its peoples."

Critics have labeled the proposal as a form of "ethnic cleansing" and a "recipe for chaos." The plan has drawn parallels to past large-scale relocations in neighboring war-torn countries like Syria, raising concerns about the legal, ethical, and humanitarian implications of forcibly displacing an entire population.

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC REACTIONS

The international community has largely denounced Trump's proposal. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi criticized the reimposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran and reaffirmed Iran's denouncement of nuclear weapons, while also condemning the Gaza relocation plan. Turkey's Foreign Minister deemed the proposal unacceptable, and China's government expressed opposition to forced transfers. Domestically, the plan has faced criticism from both Democratic and Republican politicians, who have called it reckless and potentially disastrous.

Saudi Arabia has reiterated that it will not establish ties with Israel

without the creation of a Palestinian state, underscoring the broader regional implications of the proposal. The rejection by neighboring countries like Jordan and Egypt is rooted in concerns about long-term demographic changes and the potential for increased instability.

THE PATH FORWARD

As Palestinians return to the ruins of their homes, the focus must shift to sustainable reconstruction efforts that respect their rights and sovereignty. International aid is crucial, but it must be coupled with political solutions that address the root causes of the conflict. The international community must remain vigilant against proposals that seek to displace populations under the guise of humanitarian aid.

The resilience of the Palestinian people is evident as they begin the process of rebuilding amid adversity. The global community faces a moral imperative to support these efforts, ensuring that reconstruction is guided by principles of justice and respect for human rights. The challenges are immense, but with concerted effort and genuine commitment to peace, a path toward a stable and prosperous Gaza can be forged.

In conclusion, the ceasefire in Gaza offers a glimmer of hope, but it is fraught with challenges. The international community must prioritize the rights and well-being of the Palestinian people, rejecting proposals that undermine their sovereignty and working collaboratively toward a just and lasting peace.

PREPARING FOR RAMADAN: A MOTHER'S JOURNEY

Last year, Ramadan arrived amid the joys and exhaustion of new motherhood. While I longed to embrace its spiritual journey, fasting felt impossible while breastfeeding. Guilt weighed on me as I struggled to participate.

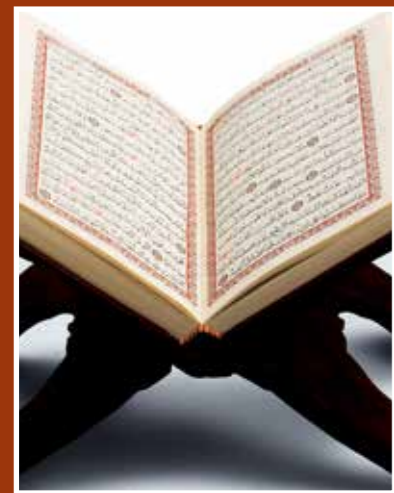
This year, I approach Ramadan with renewed purpose. My son, now one, is full of energy, and though motherhood remains demanding, I feel stronger and eager to reconnect with my faith.

Since December, I've been fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, gradually preparing my body and mind. It has been both challenging and rewarding, deepening my gratitude and patience. I am revisiting the Quran, engaging in charity, and creating special moments to introduce my son to Ramadan's beauty.

Ramadan is about self-reflection, growth, and strengthening our connection with God. With preparation and intention, I am ready to balance motherhood while embracing this blessed journey with hope and determination.



- SHAMEEMAH JAUMA,
Durban, South Africa



Qur'anic Verse of the Month

"Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve [lunar] months in the register of Allah from the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the correct religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them..."

Surah At-Tawbah (9:36)



Hadith of the Month

Narrated by Abu Huraira (RA), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"When the month of Sha'ban is halfway through, do not fast until Ramadan begins." (Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi)

<<FROM PAGE 6

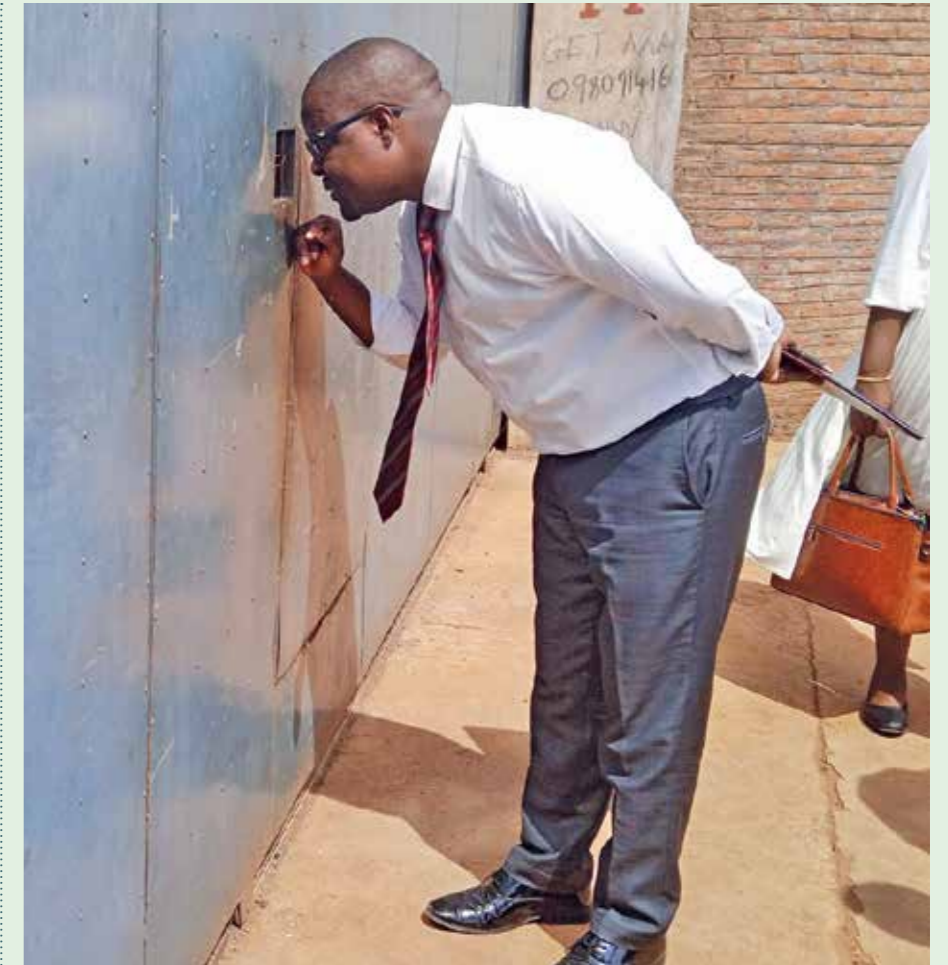
Selling Expired Goods: A Silent Threat To Public Health and Economic Growth

equally concerning. The circulation of expired products undermines consumer confidence, leading to decreased sales and stunted market growth. Furthermore, businesses adhering to quality standards face unfair competition, as those ignoring regulations benefit from lower operational costs.

The repercussions extend beyond health and economics. Stocking expired goods reveals systemic failures in supply chain management, corporate accountability, and environmental responsibility. Improperly disposed expired products can pollute ecosystems, further highlighting the lack of ethical business practices.

Minister of Labour Vitumbiko Mumba's initiative to shut down shops violating labour laws and MBS standards is a timely intervention. Such actions underscore government's commitment to public health and safety over unscrupulous profit motives. The MBS's role in enforcing compliance aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all.

However, crackdowns alone are insufficient. Sustainable reforms are needed to address the root causes. Regular and surprise inspections must become a norm to enforce



Minister of Labour, Vitumbiko Mumba, at one of the premises where he was denied entry for an inspection in Lilongwe

compliance. Innovative technologies like blockchain could improve traceability within supply chains. Educating the public to identify and report expired goods is equally critical. Empowered consumers can demand accountability and protect themselves from harm.

Hefty fines and mandatory corrective actions, such as inventory overhauls and staff retraining, should supplement shop closures. Critics may argue that such measures disrupt

local economies, but the benefits—safer communities, robust markets, and restored trust—far outweigh the temporary inconveniences.

This fight is not just about following regulations; it's about safeguarding Malawi's health and economic future. Every Malawian has a role to play. Consumers must remain vigilant, and entrepreneurs must embrace ethical practices. Let the message be clear: compromising quality for profit has no place in a prosperous Malawi.



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REACHING THE UNREACHED: IHAM Health Care Initiative in Malawi



Doctors from Doctors Without Borders conduct general surgeries in Balaka District, providing critical medical care to the community

By Hajira Halilu

Administration and
Communications Officer, IHAM

Since 2024, the Islamic Health Association of Malawi (IHAM) has been conducting outreach clinics in Balaka, Malawi, providing free and quality healthcare services to underserved communities. With approximately 84% of Malawians residing in rural areas, IHAM's initiative aims to bridge the healthcare gap in these remote locations.

One such community is Malemia Village, under Group Village Headman Chisinga, Traditional Authority Phimbi, located approximately 40 kilometers from the town of Balaka. The village has a population of around 16,762, with a potential catchment population

exceeding 50,000, including neighboring villages.

The village is surrounded by Rivirivi River, which flows into the Shire River. During the rainy season, the river becomes a significant barrier, swelling dangerously and posing a grave risk to villagers attempting to cross it. Recently, two community members, including a minor, drowned while trying to cross, while another individual was attacked by a crocodile.

IHAM's outreach clinics, funded by Doctors Worldwide (DWW) UK in collaboration with the Balaka District Health Office (DHO), have been instrumental in providing healthcare services to the community. These clinics, held once a month over a six-month period, offer general consultations, medications, and

prescriptions for both adults and children.

Malawi's healthcare sector faces significant challenges, particularly in rural areas where access to medical services is limited. IHAM's initiative seeks to alleviate this burden by providing primary healthcare services, strengthening technical support programs, and ensuring the availability of essential pharmaceuticals.

The community of Chisinga urgently requires a permanent health facility to address the dire challenges they face in accessing medical care. IHAM is calling on partners and well-wishers to support the establishment of a well-equipped health center within the community, with a special focus on maternal and child healthcare.

Currently, the nearest healthcare facility requires crossing the Rivirivi River, which is impassable during the rainy season. The alternative route, stretching approximately 8 kilometers, exceeds the recommended distance set by the Malawi Government Ministry of Health, underscoring the urgent need for a local health facility.

The community remains at great risk and requires immediate support to bridge this healthcare gap. With collective effort, we can make a difference and ensure that essential medical services reach those who need them most.

DPP APPOINTS MATHANGA AS NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS



Hon. Jean Namathanga, the newly appointed Director of Elections for the DPP, sets the party's strategic direction for the upcoming elections

By Edward Rex

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has officially appointed former Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) Commissioner, Dr. Jean Mathanga, as the party's National Director of Elections. This appointment follows a five-month period in which Mathanga served in the role in an acting capacity.

DPP spokesperson Shadreck Namalomba confirmed the development, stating that the party is highly impressed with Mathanga's performance during her interim tenure. He emphasized that the party has full confidence in her abilities and believes she will continue to execute her duties effectively as the country gears up for the upcoming tripartite elections.

"We have observed Dr. Jean

Mathanga's dedication and expertise while she was acting in this position. She has demonstrated remarkable competence in overseeing election-related activities within the party, which is why we are entrusting her with this role on a permanent basis," Namalomba stated.

He further highlighted that Mathanga's extensive experience at MEC will be invaluable in ensuring the DPP's strategic positioning ahead of the highly anticipated September 16, 2025, General Elections.

"Dr. Mathanga's experience as a former MEC Commissioner gives her an in-depth understanding of electoral processes. Her contributions during the recent third phase of the voter registration exercise were instrumental in making sure that our party was well represented at various voter registration centers," he said.


Namalomba also praised Mathanga's commitment to ensuring that voter registration activities were properly monitored, adding that her ability to represent the party in key election-related meetings has been exceptional.

"Beyond voter registration, she has played a critical role in advancing the party's interests on election matters. With her expertise, we believe she will be pivotal in securing DPP's victory in the forthcoming general elections," he added.

Political analyst Ernest Thindwa weighed in on the appointment, suggesting that DPP's decision to appoint Mathanga is driven by her vast experience in electoral management.

"DPP clearly wants to leverage Mathanga's expertise to strengthen its election strategies. Having previously served as a Commissioner at MEC, she possesses firsthand knowledge of electoral processes, which the party hopes will work to its advantage," Thindwa explained.

Dr. Jean Mathanga previously served as a Commissioner at MEC until 2021, when she and fellow Commissioner Linda Kunje were removed from their positions after the Secretary to the President and Cabinet rescinded their appointments. Despite this, Mathanga's credentials and experience continue to make her a key player in Malawi's political landscape.



Takaful
Islamic

INVESTMENTS AND SPENDING ETHICS DURING RAMADAN

Ramadan is not just a month of fasting but also a period of self-discipline, charity, and financial reflection. In Malawi, where communities deeply value social cohesion and religious devotion, financial habits during this sacred month should align with Islamic principles, ensuring responsible spending and ethical investments.

Islamic finance prohibits **riba (interest)**, **haram trade (e.g., alcohol, gambling)**, and **exploitative business practices**. During Ramadan, many Malawians seek **Halal investment opportunities**, such as agriculture and farming, where investing in **halal agribusiness** like maize, rice, and poultry farming helps provide food security. Another ethical investment avenue is **Islamic banking**, with Malawi's **FDH Bank Islamic banking window** offering Shariah-compliant financial products that avoid interest-based transactions. Real estate and rentals also offer a halal investment

option, where many Malawians invest in rental properties, ensuring fair pricing and avoiding excessive profiteering, especially for Muslim tenants in major cities residing in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

Ramadan is a month of simplicity. However, in Malawi, the trend of extravagant Iftar feasts at hotels and lavish shopping for Eid contradicts Islamic teachings. The Qur'an reminds us: *"Eat and drink, but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not Al-Musrifun (those who waste)."* (Qur'an 7:31). Instead of overspending on luxurious meals, families can buy local and support small businesses, purchasing from vendors within one's locality or nearest major market, instead of expensive imports, which helps boost the economy. Another way to ensure ethical spending is by reducing food waste. Many Malawian households prepare large iftars but waste leftovers, while excess food can be donated to the needy instead.

Ramadan is also the best time for **Zakat (mandatory charity)** and **Sadaqah (voluntary charity)**. Muslims can pay their alms due to support orphanages, funding madrassas to improve Islamic education, and providing food packs to fasting Muslims in rural areas through local mosques.

Ramadan in Malawi should be a period of **ethical investments, conscious spending, and community welfare**. By prioritizing Halal businesses, avoiding extravagance, and supporting the less fortunate, Malawian Muslims can ensure their financial actions are rewarded in both **Dun'yah (this world)** and **Aakhirah (hereafter)**.

About the Author:

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