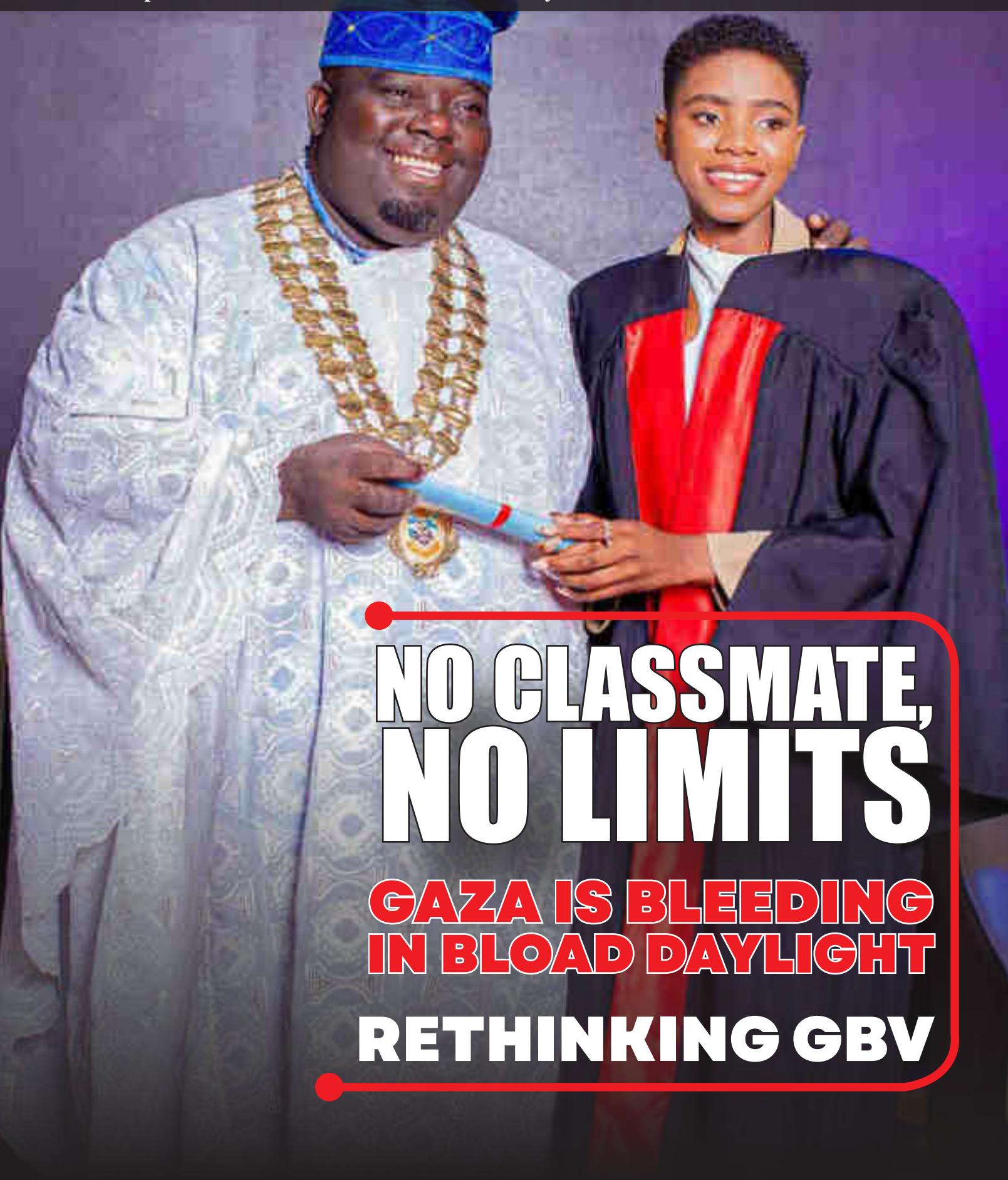


Insight Bulletin FREE

For People Who Want to Know

Ninety-Ninth Edition

Dec. 2025



**NO CLASSMATE,
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**GAZA IS BLEEDING
IN BLOOD DAYLIGHT**

RETHINKING GBV

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Insight Bulletin, is a monthly publication which analyzes and promotes good governance and policies that will further the creation of an absolute free society in Malawi. It is a news leader in opinion and analysis on Malawi's socio-political, religious and economic development.

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All editorial correspondence in form of articles and letters should be addressed to the editor. All published articles bear the author's names. Unsigned contributions represent views of the editorial staff. Letters must include writers' full names and addresses and may be edited for clarity.

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Editor's Note

As we close the final chapter of 2025, the *Insight Bulletin Magazine* reflects on a year marked by significant national shifts, meaningful conversations, and continued growth within our readership community. This year, your feedback, comments, and consistent engagement have played a central role in shaping the direction and quality of our publication. We are grateful for the trust you continue to place in us.

Throughout 2025, Malawi experienced a series of defining events. The campaign trail and election period brought intense public interest, culminating in outcomes that reshaped the political landscape, including notable transitions such as the change of leadership in Parliament. Alongside politics, we closely followed developments in corruption cases, governance issues, and the broader implications these have on national accountability.

Our coverage extended to health, social, and economic matters that form part of everyday Malawian life. We highlighted key commemorative moments such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October and World AIDS Day on 1st December, underscoring the ongoing importance of public health awareness.

In this December Edition, as we summarise the year's milestones, we turn our attention to the new leadership at the Blantyre City Council, examining what this means for the city's development agenda. We also explore compelling business stories and social-economic discussions that round off a transformative year.

Thank you for staying informed with **Insight Bulletin - For People Who Want to Know.**

- Managing Editor

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 **PROUDLY
MALAWIAN**



Blantyre Mayor Isaac Jomo Osman pictured in his mayoral office

NO CLASSMATE, NO LIMITS

By **Tameemah AbdulMajeed Mdoka**

Isaac Jomo Osman's journey to becoming Mayor of Blantyre City is one of the most unlikely and compelling political stories in recent Malawian history. Born in Mangochi to a poor family, Jomo's childhood was defined by economic struggle rather than opportunity. At a tender age, driven by survival rather than ambition, he travelled alone to Blantyre with hopes of finding piecework to support himself. Instead, life pushed him onto the streets - where he became a familiar face, a bus caller, and eventually one of the most fearless and influential gang leaders the city had ever seen.

For years, he lived among the very struggles that now shape his

political agenda: poverty, exclusion, unemployment, broken social systems, and the desperation that forces young people into illegal or informal survival networks. Yet even during those years, Jomo slowly built relationships with traders, vendors, taxi operators, youth, and community elders. Over time, his street identity evolved into something more intentional. His philanthropic efforts - supporting funerals, helping the sick, offering financial support to struggling families, and advocating for abandoned youth - earned him a place in the hearts of many.

It is this reputation, built long before he entered formal politics, that resulted in his election as Councillor for Bangwe-Ntopwa Ward - not once, but twice. And now, in November

2025, he has risen further, securing the mayoral seat after defeating Eric Mofolo and Joseph Makwinja with 15 votes to their 11 and 4 respectively.

Jomo often jokes that he is "ndilibe classmate," a phrase that means he had little schooling and no formal academic achievements. While critics use this as a point of attack, many of his supporters view it as proof that leadership can rise from lived experience rather than certificates. For them, Jomo represents possibility: a living reminder that no background, however harsh, determines one's limits.

Beyond politics, Jomo is the founder of Mtopwa Stars Women's Football Club - the first Malawian team to compete in the COSAFA Women's

TO PAGE 10>>





Flooded tents shelter displaced Palestinians after heavy rains

GAZA IS BLEEDING IN BROAD DAYLIGHT: HOW MANY CRIES MUST THE WORLD IGNORE?

Prepared by **Abdullah Bamusi Nankumba**

A CRISIS THE WORLD HAS NORMALISED

Across international newsrooms, political platforms, and diplomatic corridors, the crisis in Gaza has taken on a disturbing familiarity. What should shock humanity has instead become a recurring bulletin - another bombardment, another neighbourhood flattened, another child wrapped in white cloth. The world has learned to scroll past suffering.

Yet for Palestinians, this is not another episode in a long news cycle. It is daily life. It is the sound of drones replacing the sound of birds. It is the fear of sleeping because nightfall often invites the deadliest strikes. And when bombs fall silent for a moment, calamity still

finds them in other forms - storms, disease, hunger, untreated wounds, and the exhaustion of surviving each day with nothing but resilience.

Gaza is bleeding in broad daylight, and the world is watching.

WHEN WAR IS NOT THE ONLY ENEMY

While Israeli bombardments remain the most visible agent of destruction, they are not the only threat. Gaza's population now confronts multiple calamities at once, each one compounding the next. Storm Brydon, which recently tore through the Strip, was a natural disaster - yet in Gaza, even nature becomes political.

Makeshift shelters built from tarpaulins and metal sheets stood no chance against the storm. Families displaced by airstrikes found themselves exposed to harsh winds

and rain, with children shivering in cold corners because winter clothing and blankets are scarce luxuries. Flooded tents, soaked mattresses, and contaminated water sources created yet another layer of vulnerability.

A local aid worker summed up this grim reality:

"When the storm came, it did not destroy houses - because the bombs had already done that."

HUNGER AS A WEAPON OF CIRCUMSTANCE

In Gaza, hunger is not an abstract statistic. It is a child crying until their voice weakens. It is a mother mixing flour with water to create something that resembles food. It is families boiling leaves because there is nothing else to eat.

With aid convoys frequently

blocked, delayed, or restricted, the Strip's food supply has become dangerously inconsistent. Relief organisations repeatedly warn of acute malnutrition among infants and toddlers - warnings that materialise in heartbreaking reports of children dying not from bullets or blasts, but from starvation.

A doctor working with minimal resources inside Gaza remarked,

"We no longer lose children because we couldn't treat them. We lose them because there is nothing left to treat them with."

The crisis is not simply humanitarian - it is moral.

LIFE UNDER BLOCKADE: A GROUND-LEVEL PERSPECTIVE

Behind the headlines lies a deeper humanitarian collapse. Hospitals - what remains of them - struggle to power incubators, perform surgeries, or even clean wounds. Fuel shortages have crippled water treatment plants, leaving thousands without access to clean drinking water. Schools have turned into shelters, and shelters have turned into mass graveyards when targeted.

Families displaced multiple times describe living in constant fear. Many carry bags packed with essentials - documents, a few clothes, and a small piece of home - in case they must flee again at a moment's notice. Others have no home left to return to and nowhere else to run.

For them, survival is not hope. It is habit.

STORM BRYDON: A REMINDER OF VULNERABILITY



Families are forced to cross waterlogged areas using makeshift carts, capturing the daily hardship and humanitarian crisis facing civilians in Gaza.

When Storm Brydon descended on Gaza, it exposed how vulnerable the Strip has become after years of political blockade and destruction. The storm uprooted tents, swept away makeshift possessions, and worsened already fragile sanitation conditions. For the displaced, the storm was a second disaster layered on top of the first.

Children who survived airstrikes found themselves braving harsh weather without proper shelter. Pregnant women slept in cold flood-soaked tents. The elderly struggled with respiratory infections because basic medicine is unavailable.

Storm Brydon did not cause the crisis - it magnified it.

A CALL TO CONSCIENCE

The suffering in Gaza is not inevitable. It is not a natural phenomenon. It is not an unfortunate coincidence of events. It is the direct result of prolonged conflict, political paralysis, and global hesitation.

This December, as the world reflects on another year ending, Insight Bulletin calls upon its readers to look beyond passive consumption of tragedy. Advocacy must translate

into support. Condemnation must translate into real pressure on global leaders. Humanity must move beyond silence.

Because Gaza is not asking the world for miracles - only for justice, dignity, and the right to live.

And this time, the question is not whether Palestinians will survive another storm, another conflict, or another shortage.

The real question is whether the world will finally act before Gaza's last cry fades into a silence we will one day regret.

Abdullah Bamusi Nankumba is a journalist and international relations enthusiast with a focus on global politics, diplomacy, and storytelling. He authors *Focus on Palestine* for The *Insight Bulletin* and created *Transform Malawi*, a television series on urban development. His work has appeared in the German National Archive and at SOAS, University of London. The views expressed in this column are his own.

NO CLASSMATE, NO LIMITS

Championship. The club has become a symbol of hope and a platform for young women to pursue education, football, and personal growth.

Since assuming office, Mayor Jomo has maintained the same fearless, hands-on approach that defined his rise. Shortly after being elected, he invited street-connected children to his office - a symbolic and emotional moment that mirrored his own past. He encouraged them to consider small businesses rather than life on the streets and later donated K1.5 million toward their welfare.

His leadership style continues to disrupt expectations. Videos circulating online this week show Jomo walking through Limbe and Blantyre town centres, confronting shop owners - particularly Chinese



Blantyre Mayor Isaac Jomo Osman in Limbe streets where his journey began, personally leading cleanup efforts in a hands-on approach that has quickly become his signature leadership style

and Indian business operators - about poor waste management. In several clips, he is seen escorting them to their own dumpsters, demanding accountability and reminding them of their duty to keep the city clean. Many citizens celebrate the boldness, calling it long overdue

action to restore Blantyre's pride. Others remain skeptical, questioning whether energy and activism alone can sustain institutional change.

Interestingly, his example appears to be inspiring others. In Lilongwe, the Mayor has also taken to the streets, echoing Jomo's direct approach to municipal enforcement.

From a street survivor to gang leader, from philanthropist to twice-elected councillor, and now from the margins to the mayor's chair - Isaac Jomo Osman stands as a symbol of both controversy and possibility. As he assumes his role, the question now is not where he came from, but whether he can transform the city that once shaped - and nearly swallowed - him.

For now, Blantyre watches with curiosity, caution, and hope.

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Mzuzu University, where some former CEOs were controversially reassigned as lecturers. (insert) Major General Chikunkha Soko, one of several senior officers challenging government redeployments through the courts.



From Reform Rhetoric to Institutional Disruption: A Test of the New DPP

By Tagamchira Meeklem Chiperesa

When the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) returned to government, expectations were high. In his post-election address, President Arthur Peter Mutharika delivered a confident promise: "The mighty DPP is back... we wanted change; we expect change. I promise you real change - zinthu zisinha." That declaration positioned the administration as one determined to govern differently.

However, months into the new term, a series of abrupt redeployments across the security sector, civil service, and state corporations has raised doubts about whether this promised transformation reflects genuine reform or a familiar pattern of political interference.

Senior Malawi Defence Force (MDF) officers, including Major Generals Chikunkha Soko and Francis Kakhuta Banda, have been reassigned to state enterprises as "directors of security." Police commissioners faced similar transfers into civilian roles, only for the process to be stalled by a court injunction. CEOs of water boards, energy institutions, and other parastatals were instructed to leave their offices and take up lecturing roles at public universities. In many cases,

acting executives have taken over their previous positions, effectively doubling costs and disrupting continuity. District Commissioners have also been reshuffled without clear justification.

Government maintains that the changes are part of public sector reform. However, the extent and speed of the deployments have prompted a critical question: why is the Executive driving decisions that legally fall under independent boards, commissions, and governing councils?

Universities determine academic staffing through their councils and senates. Parastatals are governed by boards responsible for recruitment, oversight, and discipline. The military and police operate under strict command structures meant to safeguard professionalism. Executive overreach in these spheres risks weakening these established frameworks.

Governance and labour experts have publicly cautioned against the approach. Labour analyst Benedicto Kondowe told Nation Publications Limited that sudden redeployments threaten operational stability and weaken institutional authority. Education policy expert Dr. Steve Sharra told Zodiak Broadcasting Station that appointing executives as lecturers risks diluting academic standards, noting that

"lecturing is not a dumping ground." Civil society governance specialist Martha Kwataine described the moves as "institutional overreach," warning that Executive-driven redeployments undermine checks and balances essential in any democratic system.

These observations reflect growing fears that the redeployments may serve political rather than administrative interests.

When Mutharika promised change, many believed the party had learned from its past and would operate with restraint and institutional respect. Yet the emerging pattern suggests otherwise. Abrupt movements, limited transparency, and legal contestations threaten to revive past anxieties about the politicisation of public institutions.

If the DPP intends to demonstrate that it has matured, reform must be reflected in conduct - not merely rhetoric. Respecting the independence of public institutions is central to democratic governance and credible public service management.

Until decisions align with legal frameworks and accountability principles, the gap between promise and practice will continue to define public perception of the so-called "new DPP."

RETHINKING GBV: CYBERBULLYING, SILENCE, AND THE INVISIBLE VICTIMS

By Osman Bwanali & Abdullah Bamusi Nankumba

As Malawi concludes this year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, attention has largely focused on the continued victimisation of women and girls - particularly through cyberbullying. While this concern remains valid and urgent, the campaign has once again exposed a deeper challenge: the national conversation on GBV remains narrowly framed, leaving boys and men who suffer abuse, trauma, and depression largely invisible.

During the campaign period from 25 November to 10 December, authorities recorded a rise in cyberbullying cases, most of them affecting women and girls. Complaints included non-consensual sharing of private information, threatening messages, and public humiliation on social media platforms. The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare described cyberbullying as one of the most under-reported forms of violence, citing fear of stigma, retaliation, and limited awareness of legal protections.

Police confirmed receiving several reports during the campaign but admitted that the true number of cases is likely far higher. Investigating online abuse remains difficult due to anonymous offenders and limited technical capacity. The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) reiterated that the Electronic Transactions and Cyber Security Act criminalises online harassment, urging citizens to report abuse and familiarise themselves with the law.

Civil society organisations complemented these efforts through workshops and community sensitisation programmes, particularly targeting youth and school-going children. However, stakeholders

noted that coordination gaps, weak reporting mechanisms, and limited victim support services continue to undermine effective responses.

While data shows that women and girls remain disproportionately affected - often by former partners or known individuals - the singular focus on female victims has unintentionally created another form of silence. For more than a decade, GBV messaging has shaped a public perception that violence only "counts" when the victim is a woman. As a result, boys and men experiencing abuse are rarely acknowledged.

Cases of young boys being sexually



Primary school learners in Ntchisi District carry a banner condemning cyberbullying during activities marking the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, highlighting the growing concern over online abuse among young people.

abused are frequently dismissed or treated lightly. Unlike girl-child survivors, boys are often told to "man up," leaving their trauma unaddressed. This silence has consequences. Unhealed trauma can manifest later as aggression, substance abuse, mental illness, or the repetition of violence.

Married men also face emotional, psychological, financial, and sometimes physical abuse, yet reporting remains socially risky. Many

fear ridicule, disbelief, or institutional neglect. The stereotype that men must always be strong has contributed to rising cases of untreated depression, broken families, and, in extreme cases, suicide.

Experts argue that expanding the GBV narrative does not undermine advocacy for women and girls - it strengthens it. Violence is not a gendered experience; it is a human one. A system that protects one group while ignoring another remains incomplete.

As the 16 Days of Activism end, stakeholders are urging a shift from a one-directional narrative to an inclusive framework - one that protects

women without erasing men, amplifies girls' voices without silencing boys, and recognises mental health as a critical GBV issue.

Cyberbullying, like all forms of abuse, does not end with campaigns. Addressing it requires sustained education, enforcement, and a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths. Real progress will only come when every victim - regardless of gender - is seen, heard, and supported.

Chihana Urges Unity and Accountability as Malawi Marks 2025 International Human Rights Day

By Shaffie A. Mtambo

The Waterboard Ground in Nkhata Bay came alive on Wednesday as Malawi's Second Vice President, Enock Kanzingeni Chihana, led national commemorations for the 2025 International Human Rights Day. He delivered a firm call for unity, accountability and the daily respect for human dignity as the nation reflected on its human rights journey.

Speaking on behalf of President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, Chihana said this year's theme, "Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials," serves as a reminder that human rights are not abstract ideals but the foundation of dignified living for every Malawian. He noted that the commemoration aligns with the 77th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a landmark document forged after World War II to guarantee equality and dignity for all.

As the world approaches the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals deadline and the United Nations marks 80 years, Chihana stressed the need for Malawi to honestly assess its progress and confront remaining gaps. He reaffirmed the country's commitment to key global treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Chihana pointed to national legislation - including the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, the Gender Equality Act and the Disability Act - as the backbone of Malawi's protection framework.



Second Vice President Right Honourable Enock Kanzingeni Chihana addresses the nation during the 2025 International Human Rights Day commemorations at Water Board Ground in Nkhata Bay.

He applauded constitutional bodies such as the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), the Office of the Ombudsman and the Legal Aid Bureau for safeguarding rights enshrined in the Constitution. He further commended the MHRC for maintaining its A-status accreditation under the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, describing it as a testament to its independence and professionalism.

The event also marked the conclusion

one is left behind. He outlined six national priorities: strengthening health systems, widening access to justice, protecting children from exploitation, promoting inclusion for persons with disabilities, advancing economic and social rights and intensifying efforts to end gender-based violence. Transparency and accountability, he said, are essential to ensure public resources benefit intended communities.

Chihana reaffirmed government's commitment to funding the MHRC, safeguarding its independence and strengthening collaboration with the Ombudsman and the Legal Aid Bureau. He also thanked development partners - including UNDP, Iceland and Norway - for their support to human rights initiatives.

He concluded by reminding Malawians that defending human rights is a collective responsibility that begins in homes, schools, workplaces and communities, and praised civil society, faith leaders, media and traditional authorities for advancing justice and dignity across the nation.

ZAKAT AS A BLUEPRINT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

By Abdullah Bamusi Nankumba

In Islamic finance, justice and social balance are not theoretical ideas - they are actionable obligations rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Zakat, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, functions as a structured economic system designed to support the vulnerable and prevent wealth concentration. Allah commands, "Establish prayer and give zakat..." (Qur'an 2:110), signalling that spiritual devotion and financial responsibility are inseparable.

Historically, Zakat played a central role in stabilising societies. During the era of the Sahabah, leaders such as Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) ensured that wealth flowed from those with surplus to those struggling with basic needs. The aim was clear: no Muslim should sleep hungry while others live in comfort. This redistribution created dignity, opportunity, and unity.

ZAKAT AS AN EQUALISING FORCE

The Malawian economic landscape mirrors many developing contexts - urban poverty, rural underdevelopment, youth unemployment, and families trapped in informal debts. Rising living costs in Blantyre, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Islam offers a practical

antidote through Zakat.

Surah At-Tawbah (9:60) identifies eight categories eligible for Zakat, mainly the poor, the needy, and those whose livelihoods have collapsed. This framework is not merely charitable; it establishes long-term economic empowerment. When applied effectively, Zakat helps small traders expand capital, supports farmers with tools, funds school fees for vulnerable children, and stabilises households facing financial distress.

Prophetic Guidance in Economic Responsibility

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasised that charity does not reduce wealth: "Wealth is not diminished by giving in charity." (Sahih Muslim). Islamic scholars teach that Zakat encourages circulation of money and prevents stagnation. Imam Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah both stressed that hoarded wealth weakens societies, whereas distributed wealth strengthens them.

Thus, Zakat is not a seasonal act - it is a continuous financial engine for community welfare.

Applying Takaful in the Malawian Context

Malawian Muslims can operationalise

Takaful through practical, transparent initiatives:

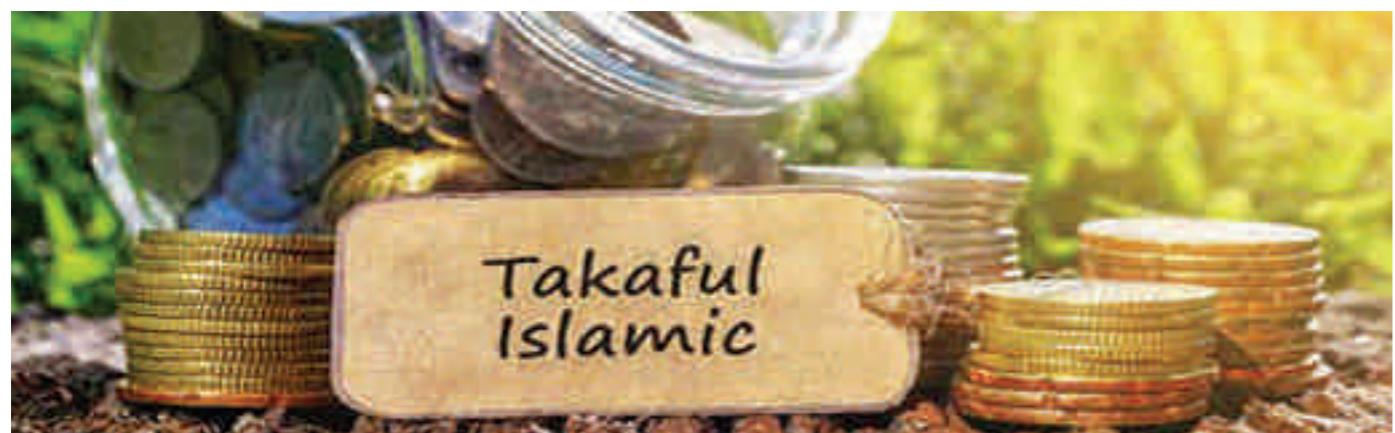
1. Support for small businesses - market vendors, farmers, and youth entrepreneurs.
2. Educational assistance - school fees for orphans and vulnerable learners.
3. Women empowerment - funding income-generating projects for widows.
4. Debt relief - helping families trapped in informal lending systems.
5. Strengthening institutions - madrassahs, clinics, and community welfare programs.

Local Masjid committees and Zakat boards can ensure accountability, proper assessment of needs, and fair distribution.

A Path Toward Reducing Inequality

Islam rejects economic systems that widen inequality. Zakat ensures wealth does not circulate only among the elite but flows to uplift entire communities. When Malawian Muslims embrace this Takaful model sincerely and consistently, they honour a divine blueprint for shared prosperity.

Through Zakat, we close the gap, preserve dignity, and strengthen the Ummah - one community at a time.



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