

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST THREATENED AND HARASSED

Journalist Gregory Gondwe has gone into hiding following his investigative report on the Malawi Defense Force's dealings with a businessman who is under investigation for corruption. Following the publication of his report on January 29, Gregory Gondwe was alerted by "top government officials" that the Malawi Defense Force intended to arrest him for "endangering state security and detain him incommunicado unless he revealed his sources for the report. The Malawi authorities must guarantee and ensure the safety and security of Gregory Gondwe and other journalists in the country and respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of everyone including the right to freedom of expression and press freedom.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 11.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

President Lazarus Chakwera

Office of the President and Cabinet,
Capital Hill Circle,
Private Bag 301,
Capital City, Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Email: parliament@parliament.gov.mw

Embassy of Malawi in the United States Her Excellency Justice Esme Jynet Chombo

2408 Massachusetts Avenue,
NW, Washington DC 20008
Email: malawidc@aol.com
Salutation: Dear Justice Esme Jynet Chombo

Your Excellency, or Dear Justice Esme Jynet Chombo,

I am writing to you to express my concern about the safety and security of journalist **Gregory Gondwe** following the publication of his report in January 2024, detailing the Malawi Defense Force (MDF) and their alleged dealings with a businessman who is under investigation for corruption. The report details allegations of multi-million-dollar payments to the companies owned by the businessman for the procurement of military equipment. This report contradicts the announcement by government to cancel all contracts with companies associated with the businessman.

On January 31, Gregory Gondwe was informed by "top ranking officials" that the MDF intended to arrest him for "endangering state security" and detain him incommunicado unless he revealed his sources for the report. I am concerned that as a result, Gregory Gondwe has now gone into hiding, in fear of his life, safety and security, simply for doing his job as a journalist. In April 2022, he was detained by the police and questioned, with the police again demanding that he reveal his sources.

I urge you to ensure a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, transparent, and effective investigation into the threats against Gregory Gondwe, and to bring those responsible to justice in fair trials. I also urge you to publicly condemn the harassment, intimidation, threats, and attacks against Gregory Gondwe and other journalists. Finally, I call on you to take effective measures to ensure that all journalists in the country can safely carry out their work without any fear of retaliation.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On January 29, 2024, the investigative report by **Gregory Gondwe** was published in the Platform for Investigative Journalism documenting alleged payments to businesses own by an individual who is under investigation for corruption; contrary to the government's commitment to cancel all contracts with companies linked to the named individual.

Malawi has a history of curtailing the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. The right to freedom of expression has increasingly been threatened since 2022 with a rise in cases of unlawful surveillance by police, including interception of people's private conversations which resulted in arbitrary arrests, prosecutions, and convictions. On May 1, 2022, **Chidawawa Mainje** was arrested and charged with cyber harassment under section 86 of the Electronic Transactions and Cyber Security Act of 2016 in connection with the accusation that he had insulted President Chakwera in a WhatsApp conversation.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: April 10, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Gregory Gondwe (he, him, his)