

THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MALAWI



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STATEMENT OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MALAWI (ECM)

A CALL FOR RELENTLESS FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Wednesday, 19th January 2022

As we have done many times before, we the Catholic Bishops in Malawi, once again call for a continued and honest fight against the destructive vice of corruption. All right thinking people can readily agree with Pope Francis when he stated: “Corruption undermines the dignity of the person and shatters all good and beautiful ideals. All of society is called upon to make a concrete commitment to combat the cancer of corruption which, with the illusion of quick and easy profits, in reality impoverishes everyone” (9th December 2019, International Day Against Corruption).

The cancer of corruption, sadly now embedded in Malawi, is largely responsible for keeping this country very poor and under-developed. This, in turn causes untold suffering for the vast majority of ordinary Malawians who have to face crushing poverty on a daily basis. Corruption is a very difficult vice to fight because it has taken deep roots everywhere in our country. And sadly, even many of those tasked to fight and eliminate corruption are too often sucked into it. But occasionally, there are people who risk everything by standing up to corruption. They are shining examples of St. Paul’s exhortation: “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them” (Eph. 5:11). Like most Malawians of goodwill and those who want to end the rampant corruption in our country, we sincerely applaud and support the efforts of the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) and its Director General, Ms. Martha Chizuma for their bravery, professionalism and determination in fighting corruption, especially as they have been doing over the past 6 months.

We appeal to the Head of State, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, the Vice President, Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima and all relevant State institutions and their Heads to ensure the security of the ACB staff; especially the Director General. No one should be pressurized, intimidated or influenced by threats or any other means in the carrying out of their work for the good of the country. We plead, in the interest of building a more just and transparent Malawi that benefits all its citizens, that any of the investigations or cases which the ACB is dealing with are not in any way obstructed or influenced. Let no suspect, however powerful, wealthy or who their connections are, be shielded or protected provided that he or she is given proper recourse to the legal processes of the courts.

Let State institutions which were ultimately established for the good of all Malawians and those entrusted to carry out their objectives for the good of all not become themselves agents of darkness by failing to defend and promote the common good. Too often these institutions and individuals have betrayed the trust of the citizenry and acted in ways which have further embedded systemic corruption and frustrated the fight against it.

Vision: Family of God filled with the Holy Spirit living in Harmony, Peace and Solidarity

All official correspondence to be addressed to the Secretary General

The Judiciary has a key role to play in the fight against corruption. We appeal to the Judiciary to ensure that cases regarding corruption are expedited and that everyone is seen to be treated fairly and similarly before the law. This builds public confidence that the Judiciary too is playing its role in a constructive way in the fight against corruption. Avoid making suspicious judgments and pronouncements which are seen neither to be promoting justice nor fighting against corruption. Loss of public trust in law enforcement agents of the State to combat corruption fuels mob-justice and is a recipe for civil disorder.

We appeal to the donor community to ensure that the ACB has sufficient resources especially considering the unprecedented fight against corruption the Bureau has put up over the last 6 months.

We are calling upon our ECM Justice and Peace Commission and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to initiate a vigorous campaign among the general public to help end the practice of corruption and accepting this destructive cancer as part of life in Malawi.

We call upon all citizens of Malawi to play their part, however insignificant it may seem, in the fight against corruption in our society. One way of doing this is to stop fleecing politicians by endlessly demanding handouts from them during political rallies, funerals, fundraising activities, religious gatherings and many other occasions. On their part, political leaders are encouraged to give to good causes only that which they can ordinarily afford and not suffer the unnecessary pain of giving in ways which are beyond their ordinary financial means.

May St. Joseph, the foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ, watch over all our country and obtain from God hardworking spirit, integrity, patriotism, love and peace for all Malawians and for the whole of humanity.

Most Reverend Thomas Msusa
Right Reverend Martin Mtumbuka
Most Reverend George Tambala

Right Reverend Peter Musikuwa
Right Reverend Montfort Stima
Right Reverend John Ryan
Right Reverend Peter Chifukwa

President and Archbishop of Blantyre
Vice-President and Bishop of Karonga
Archbishop of Lilongwe and
Apostolic Administrator of Zomba
Bishop of Chikwawa
Bishop of Mangochi
Bishop of Mzuzu
Bishop of Dedza

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