



INTIMIDATION & HARRASSMENT OF JOURNALISTS

Petra condemns in the strongest possible terms the harassment and intimidation of journalists by the Tonse regime.

This is the second time that **Gregory Gondwe's** liberty is being threatened over dubious military equipment procurement. This is a flagrant violation of the fundamental right of freedom of expression as enshrined under S.35 of the Republican Constitution.

The Malawian people find it most baffling that the "Tonse" regime in its wisdom finds it acceptable that it should continue to indulge itself in procurement deals with or through a man whom President Chakwera openly condemned in 2022 following an ACB's report of alleged fraudulent involvement of certain senior government and security officials. The country applauded the President for the decisive actions he took to suspend the suspects. Cases that arose from those arrests are still in court.

And that 2 years later the administration should contract the same person or his affiliates not only smacks of the highest degree of hypocrisy on the part of the administration but is also untamed impunity.

However, if the story is not true, why doesn't government simply bring out a rebuttal with clear facts? Silence in the face of a serious allegation means only one thing, that is consent.

Petra therefore calls upon President Chakwera to openly assure the nation of the safety of the journalists that broached the story and that the regime will not further embroil itself directly or indirectly into business dealings with Zuneth Sattar, a man whom any sane and patriotic leader ought under any circumstances to distance himself from. The Malawian people are suffering in unimaginable proportions as a result of fraudulent business deals both present and past regimes have surreptitiously entered into purely for selfish ends.

President Chakwera shall therefore be held personally accountable should the said journalists' safety be compromised in any manner whatsoever.

Dated this 2nd day of February 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Demister Chimombo".

Demister Chimombo
(Communications Director)