HRDC STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE ATTACKS AGAINST THE MEDIA

The Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) is horrified by an incident in which some hooligans masquerading as protesters attacked journalists Golden Matonga and Gladys Nthenda during mass demonstrations in Lilongwe on Tuesday. HRDC values the media as indispensable partners in its work to entrench respect of rule of law and human rights. Therefore, we condemn the unwarranted attack on media practitioners and wish them well as they recuperate from the injuries caused by the barbaric assault on free press.

We seize this opportunity to assure all Malawians of our commitment to upholding freedom of the press as enshrined in Section 36 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi. The section states: “The Press shall have the right and publish freely, within Malawi and abroad, and accorded the fullest possible facilities for access to public information.” HRDC would like remind those behind the harassment that Journalists are Human Rights Defenders as well and our work is closely linked and we will not tolerate anyone attacking them in any form be it propaganda and physical attacks.

As such, HRDC calls upon the police to protect journalists in their line of duty and everyone exercising the constitution right to assemble and demonstrate with others peacefully. It is our hope that Police will take all necessary measures to ensure the people who assaulted the two journalists on are brought to book.

HRDC will continue working with journalists and media bodies to promote press freedom, tolerance and professionalism.

Timothy Mtambo - HRDC Chairperson                   Gift Trapence - Vice Chairperson

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