

## **MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**



### **COMMENCEMENT OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE SHOOTING AND DEATH OF BLESSINGS NYONDO**

The Malawi Human Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission") is an independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) established by the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi under Section 129 with the primary function of protecting and investigating violations of the rights accorded by the Constitution or any other law. Section 12 of the Human Rights Commission Act (Chapter 3:08 of the Laws of Malawi) further mandates the Commission to investigate violations of human rights on its own motion or upon complaints received from any person, class of persons or body. Following media reports and the public outcry into the fatal shooting of a Polytechnic student, Blessings Nyondo, by alleged police and security officers on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and his subsequent death on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Commission has commenced investigations into the same.

The public may also wish to note that when reports of the fatal shooting emerged, the Commission decided to conduct a preliminary independent investigation into the matter, considering that there are a number of human rights issues which were at stake, including the right to life. But before the Commission could proceed with its investigations Blessings passed on at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre.

There have been conflicting reports about the identity of the shooter. Some reports indicated that Blessings was shot by a police officer while statements from Malawi Police Service indicate that it was actually a Security Officer working for the Malawi

Broadcasting Corporation that shot Blessings. It is the desire of the Commission that the truth be uncovered as who exactly pulled the trigger and under what circumstances. At the end of the exercise, justice must be served.

The Commission is appealing for full cooperation from all relevant stakeholders and members of the public as it carries out this important assignment. The Commission also welcomes any persons that have information that can assist the Commission in understanding the matter and coming up with an objective conclusion to contact us through the following numbers: 0999 955 971, 0999 570 166 or 0888 361 434.

May the soul of Blessings Nyondo rest in peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Habiba Osman', with a large, stylized initial 'H' and 'O'.

**Habiba Osman**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

12<sup>th</sup> January 2021