I am delighted to share the 4th quarter edition for 2023 which has been very eventful leading to the ultimate celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights on 10th December. Significant in this quarter, is the announcement of the "A-status" re-accreditation of the Malawi Human Rights Commission in October by the Global Alliance of National Human Institutions (GANHRI).

The re-accreditation of the Commission is a momentous boost to the 8th Cohort that was recently sworn in November. The 8th Cohort is committed to delivering on its mandate of protecting, promoting, monitoring and investigating human rights violations. More importantly, the Commission has also engaged more partners in implementing the Access to Information Act and has positioned itself in enhancing the Gender Equality Act.

In this edition, we also highlight key milestones like the orientation of the newly sworn in commissioners, progress on the draft strategic plan, 16 Days of Activism campaign, the commemoration of the Human Rights Day and Human Rights Defenders anniversary, among other areas highlighted.

As we wrap up this year, it pleases me to announce that in 2024 the Commission will be strategic in its engagement in preparation for the 2025 elections, implementing its new strategic plan, fast-tracking and monitoring SDGs related to human rights and strengthening key networks and working with marginalized groups.

Finally, let me thank my editorial team, Mathews Shumba and Patricia Kavinya, the directorate teams and our main partners, the UN and Iceland for the technical and financial support rendered to the Commission in 2023.

Wishing you happy holidays, Christmas and a prosperous 2024
The Commission with support from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), conducted a stakeholders consultative meeting on the review of the Gender Equality Act Implementation and Monitoring Plan (2016-2020) with an aim to delve into the strides and challenges made in its implementation.

This gathering enhanced collaborative planning to chart the course for gender equality efforts in Malawi. The reviewed Plan will run from 2024 to 2028.
MEET THE COMMISSION'S CHAIRPERSON

Commissioner Chijozi is a passionate human rights lawyer with 17 years’ experience in human rights work. She has been a human rights activist since 2004 when she joined Centre for Human Rights Education Advice and Assistance (CHREAA) as a paralegal officer. She rose up the ladder in the organisation and became the Deputy Executive Director and Litigation Manager. She is a strong advocate for rights of marginalised groups including women, children, sex workers, LGBTIQ and prisoners. She has been involved in strategic litigation challenging laws that oppress the marginalised groups.

The notable cases that she has been involved in include the laws on rogue and vagabond, laws that target and criminalise sex workers, challenging the policy that prevent Rastafari children from being enrolled and admitted into government schools and protecting children from unlawful and arbitrary arrests and detentions. Commissioner Chijozi holds a Master of Laws (International Human Rights Law) from University of Sussex in the United Kingdom and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. She is currently working for the Southern Africa Litigation Centre (SALC) and she heads the Criminal Justice Program.

Commissioner Chijozi is also a board member of IPAS Malawi, Youth and Society (YAS). In 2006 she was awarded at the first African Young Women Summit for outstanding work in human rights. She is also an active member of the Women Lawyers Association in Malawi. In 2020 she was awarded by the Women Lawyers Association as the best female lawyer in NGO sector. She is a member of the Malawi Law Society and serves as a member of the Public Interest Litigation Committee. She also has published some articles and research work on various human rights issues.
The Commission on 5 December 2023 held a two day orientation session for its 8th Cohort of Commissioners in Lilongwe.

The first phase of the orientation intends to increase the understanding of the commissioners in relation to the functions of the Commission as a Nation Human Rights Institution, its strategic context and planning, and its functioning within its legal framework.

The second phase of the orientation is planned for early next year and will dwell on technical issues of human rights and will be facilitated by United Nations Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI).
The Commission with support from the Embassy of Iceland conducted a public inquiry on transactional Sex for Fish in Matumbi Village, T/A Kanyenda in Nkhotakota. This inquiry was aimed at understanding the multifaceted dimensions of transactional Sex for Fish and to shed light on human rights implications, particularly vulnerabilities faced by those involved in these transactions.
The Commission through the Child Rights Directorate hosted a "Conference on Gender-Based Violence Against Street Connected and Refugees Children in Malawi". The conference which was part of the 16 days of activism commemoration was intended to create an inclusive dialogue with children of different backgrounds and vulnerabilities and foster an environment where no child is left behind.

This conference was also under the theme "Unite, Invest to prevent gender based violence in Malawi"
Malawi Human Rights Commission, Represented by Director of Civil and Political Rights Directorate, Mr. Peter Chisi and the Executive Secretary, Habiba Osman, took part in this year’s commemoration of International Human Rights Day at Maula and Kachere Prisons.

International Human Rights Day which falls on the 10th of December, commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year’s Commemoration celebrated 75 years of the UDHR under the theme: Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All.

The function was organized by paralegal Advisory Services with financial support from Irish Rule of Law.
The Executive Secretary Habiba Osman participated in this year's Reykjavik 500 Global Women's Conference in Iceland together with Honourable Nancy Tembo Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Halima Daud, Deputy Minister of Health. The theme of the conference was "Power Together for Leadership" and the mission remains to empower more women to attain and retain power.
The Commission participated in the 6th African NHRIs forum in Arusha, Tanzania. This forum provided a platform for African NHRIs, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Members States, Development Partners, CSOs, academic to discuss the human rights based approach to accelerate the rights of women in Africa in relation to the sub-theme of health and reproductive rights; as well as social protection and social security in the context of 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

MHRC as a member of the working group on SDGs through the Disability and Elderly Rights Director, Wycliffe Masoo, presented on Introduction of NANHRI Working Group on 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and also moderated a session to launch the NANHRI-DIHR study on Advancing the Right to Social Security in Africa: State of implementation and Guidance to NHRIs.

The Gender and Women's Rights Directorate is represented by Deputy Director Deborah Tambulasi Banda.
The Commission, through the Disability and Elderly Rights directorate took part in the National Conference on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities in Malawi.

The conference, where the guest of honour was the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Honourable Jean Sendeza, was organized by Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) and was key in opening the conversation on the importance of access to justice for women and girls with disabilities.
The Commission conducted an assessment of compliance to Access to Information Act by Information Holders in Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi and Balaka Districts. The exercise started from 13th November 2023 and ended on 17th November 2023. Under the Access to Information Act (ATIA, 2017) the Commission has the mandate to oversee the implementation of the Act (ATIA S7). Furthermore, the law gives powers to the Commission to advise government and institutions and give directions in connection with the performance of their duties and obligations under this Act.

The purpose for the assessment was to appreciate the progress institutions have made in the implementation of the ATIA. Specifically, the exercise aimed at (i) establishing mechanisms put in place by the institutions in line with the Act in provision of access to information and (ii) identifying the gaps and challenges faced by the institutions in providing access to information.

Some of the institutions that had been monitored included all local government authorities in those 4 districts, Malawi Prison Services, MANEB, National Statistical Office, Department of Geological Survey, UNIMA, YONECO, Machinga ADD, Machinga TTC, Balaka District Hospital, Balaka Police Station, Mangochi Police Station and National Archives.

Preliminary findings indicate that most institutions are not aware of the law hence are not complying with most provisions of the law. The Commission is grateful to the UNDP for providing financial resources for this activity.
The Commission, through the Access to Information Unit, facilitated a three days (6th–8th November 2023) workshop on Access to Information (ATI) in Mangochi for Southern Region Water Board (SRWB).

The workshop was patronized by the chairperson of the ATI and Civil and Political Rights at MHRC, Commissioner Teresa Chirwa-Ndanga and the Chairperson for Parliamentary Committee on Media, Information and Communications who both expressed their gratitude and applauded SRWB for complying with the ATI Act by organizing the workshop for acquainting themselves with the Act and development of an Information Manual.

During the workshop, senior staff for SRWB were oriented on ATI Act and Regulations and developed an ATI Manual to facilitate access of information by the public.
## ATI TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED FOR DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>CATEGORY OF STAFF</th>
<th># PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CMST</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>12 (4w + 8m)</td>
<td>January 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CRWB</td>
<td>Management and staff</td>
<td>128 (36w + 92m)</td>
<td>2022 &amp; 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PMRA</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>8 (3w +5m)</td>
<td>2022 &amp; 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ACB</td>
<td>Management and World Bank Representatives</td>
<td>22 (7w + 15m)</td>
<td>Oct, 2022 and Feb, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>RBM</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>35 (15w +20m)</td>
<td>14th July 2023</td>
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<tr>
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<td>PPDA</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>13 (4w + 9m)</td>
<td>May 2023</td>
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<td>Media Council of Malawi</td>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>25 (7w + 18m)</td>
<td>5th –6th May 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>25 (9w + 16m)</td>
<td>August, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Umodzi Park</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>8 (3w + 5m)</td>
<td>24th August 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Roads Fund Administration</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>8 (2w + 6m)</td>
<td>27–30 August 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>EGENCO</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>7w + 13m</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>CMST</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>9 (2w + 7m)</td>
<td>27–30 August 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ESCOM</td>
<td>Executive Management</td>
<td>6 w + 20 m</td>
<td>26th September 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>MACRA</td>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>3 w + 14 m</td>
<td>27th September 2023</td>
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## Access to Information

### OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td>H/Q Staff</td>
<td>12w + 15m</td>
<td>27th Sept 23</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Roads Fund Administration</td>
<td>Tollgate Staff</td>
<td>11w + 19m</td>
<td>2nd Oct 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Roads Fund Administration</td>
<td>Tollgate Staff</td>
<td>12w + 25m</td>
<td>3rd Oct 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>MERA</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>4w + 9m, 3 MPs</td>
<td>6th Oct 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Greenbelt Authority</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9w + 8m, 4 MPs</td>
<td>12th Oct 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Greenbelt Authority</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9w + 16m</td>
<td>18th Oct 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>MHC</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>11w + 6m, 2 MPs</td>
<td>19th Oct 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>ESCOM</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>1w + 5m, 3 MPs</td>
<td>18-20 Oct 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>MACRA</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>2w + 11m, 1 MP, 1 Parliament official</td>
<td>23-25th Oct 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>1w + 4m</td>
<td>25th Oct 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>staff</td>
<td>1w + 4m</td>
<td>3rd Nov 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOTAL

- **174 women**
- **375 men**
- **16 MPs**
CASE STATISTICS

Cases Investigated : 493

- Civil and Political Rights: 158
- Social, Economic and Cultural Rights: 131
- Gender and Women's Rights: 98
- Child Rights: 63
- Disability: 50

Disability

Civil & Political Rights

Gender & Women's Rights

Child Rights

Social, Economic & Cultural Rights

Disability 10%

Civil & Political Rights 31.6%

Gender & Women's Rights 19.6%

Child Rights 12.6%

Social, Economic & Cultural Rights 26.2%
The Commission, through the Gender and Women Rights Directorate and with support from UNFPA, disseminated its report titled “AN ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING THE IMPACTS OF CYCLONE FREDDY ON PREGNANT AND LACTATING MOTHERS, ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUTH AND ADOLESCENT BOYS AND YOUTH IN THE SOUTHERN REGION OF MALAWI: A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE”

The study which focused on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, was conducted in seven districts in the southern region of Malawi which were hit by Cyclone Freddy. The report dissemination exercise was done in all the seven study districts namely: Blantyre, Nsanje, Chikwawa, Mulanje, Thyolo, Phalombe and Zomba.
Malawi Human Rights Commission with support from UNDP Malawi embarked on a country wide Prison Monitoring exercise. This exercise which is undertaken annually, comes against the background of erratic food supplies in most prisons in the country. Besides having interviews with inmates and staff, the Commission also inspected the prison cells and other facilities.

The main objective for the exercise is to monitor compliance of human rights standards for both inmates and officials in the prison formations.
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS DAY 2023
PICTORIAL FOCUS
MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION COMMEMORATES 75 YEARS OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DAY WITH ITS HEAD OF STATE
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IN THE NEWS

Malawi re-elected into Human Rights Council

Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) has been elected to the Human Rights Council for a term of three years, effective from the 22nd session of the council that began on Monday. The council has 47 member states, and four of those seats are reserved for countries judged to be in need of improvement in their human rights records. Malawi will join Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Maldives on the council in 2023 and 2024. The human rights council, which is a main body of the United Nations, was created by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the main monitoring mechanism for how states uphold their international human rights obligations.

UN grants MHRC A-status

A report titled “Engaging the Private, Public and Internal Sector on Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace” was presented to UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on Monday. The report was prepared by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The report highlighted the need for stronger policies and measures to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, including the creation of a dedicated unit to address sexual harassment complaints. The report also called for the establishment of a comprehensive national action plan to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, to be coordinated by the government and involving stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and other relevant actors.
Social Media Tracker

Facebook

Page overview

Followers: 15,835
October - December 2023

- New followers: 1,644
- Reach: 8,300

Twitter

October - December 2023

- Post impressions: 19.9K (6.3% decrease)
- Followers: 6,658

New followers: 296
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