

## PRESS STATEMENT



### **UPDATE ON THE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY THE MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION INTO THE ALLEGED SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES AT MBC BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, MR. AUBREY SUMBULETA**

Pursuant to its mandate under the Constitution, Human Rights Commission Act and the Gender Equality Act, the Malawi Human Rights Commission, has been conducting an investigation into alleged sexual harassment of female employees at MBC by the then Director General, Mr. Aubrey Sumbuleta.

The investigation was largely motivated by petition from the Women's Wing of the Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) to investigate the alleged sexual harassment of female employees at MBC and other parastatal bodies. This petition came after a publication on the Facebook page by one Catherine Kunje who narrated how she and other female employees at MBC had suffered sexual harassment at the hands of Mr. Sumbuleta.

The Commission has been investigating this matter since October, 2020 by way of preliminary inquiries and quasi-judicial hearing. At the moment, the Commission is only remaining with few witnesses to hear from. The delay in finalizing hearing from these witnesses has been as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected even the virtual attendance of some parties to the investigation. As a result of this, the Commission has had to postpone two scheduled hearings to allow for full adherence to all prescribed COVID-19 directives from the medical personnel for the affected parties.

The Commission takes cognizance of the need to expedite the disposal of this matter considering the huge public interest it has generated. At the same

time the Commission is bound to ensure that all due processes are adhered in its handling of this matter. To this end, the Commission wishes to inform the general public that it will conclude this matter and inform the general public of its findings as soon as it finalizes hearing the aforementioned witnesses.

**Dated this 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021**

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

**Ms. Habiba Osman**