

MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



PRESS STATEMENT ON THE WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

The Malawi Human Rights Commission (the Commission) joins the rest of the World in commemorating World's Children's Day which falls on the 20th of November every year. The day is set to promote International Togetherness and Awareness of Child Rights to Enhance Children's Welfare And Safeguarding. The significance of 20th November is founded in the Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1959 and the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) in 1989 with both taking place on 20th November. This year's celebrations run under the theme ***"For every Child, Every Right"***.

In line with the theme, the Commission reflects on the efforts all duty-bearers are undertaking in nurturing and safeguarding the well-being of the marginalized children. These are children who face additional challenges on their journey to a brighter future and they include street-connected children, children in alternative care settings, refugee children, children with disabilities and abandoned children and those in broken and separated marriages. The daily experiences of these children in the current economic turmoil are devastating as most interventions and programming have no regards to them as a priority.

The Commission therefore, calls upon:

1. Government through the Ministry of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare to quickly put-up measures to remove children from the streets and ensure their continued stay with parents and guardians. This is achievable if the Government takes steps to address the push and pull factors of children into the streets by among other things capacitating the families to manage in providing necessary care to the children.
2. Government through the Ministry of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice to speedily finalize the Child Care Protection and Justice Act (Foster Homes Regulations) that aims at

protecting children in the alternative care setting against all forms of abuse including illegal adoptions.

3. Government and other stakeholders to continuously provide psychosocial support, education, healthcare, and protection to the refugee children at Dzaleka Refugee camp
4. The Ministry of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education to ensure that the inclusion of children with disabilities is supported in all service provision centers and with adequate assistive devices and qualified personnel.
5. The Judiciary to speedily address challenges claimants face in accessing justice on child maintenance matters to ensure that children in divorced and separated marriages are accorded the right care to the betterment of their survival and development.
6. The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) to tighten measures against the exposure of children to inappropriate content in all media platforms including social media to prevent online child exploitation.
7. The Ministry of Homeland Security through its departments of the Police and Immigration to stiffen checking of all travelers in order to protect children from both local and international acts of child trafficking

The Commission reaffirms its commitment to promoting and protecting children's rights by prioritizing the needs of marginalized children, to ensure a brighter and more equitable future for all. May our collective efforts pave the way for a future where the rights of every child are not just acknowledged but fiercely protected, ensuring a world that empowers, educates, and cherishes its youngest members.



Chikondi Chijozi

Chairperson

22nd November 2023