



PRESS RELEASE

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CONDEMNATION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION DURING THE VOTER REGISTRATION

The National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) Public Trust wishes to express its utmost dismay and utterly condemns the acts of political violence and intimidation that have been registered in the course of Phase 2 of the voter registration exercise especially in Mulanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, Lilongwe and Dowa Districts. The Trust also wishes to condemn in strongest terms the petrol bombing of United Transformation Movement (UTM) office in Lilongwe in the wee hours of today 05 May 2020. These acts are uncalled for and they militate against the very spirit of multi-partyism that we, Malawians, chose to embrace through the 1993 Referendum.

Multiparty democracy is vehemently defended in Malawi's Supreme Laws in Section 40(b) of the Republican Constitution which states that every person shall have the right, "to participate in peaceful political activity intended to influence the composition and policies of the Government." Hence, it is retrogressive for any political party to allow, and even worse, promote political intimidation and violence based on the fact that people belong to different affiliations.

As NICE Trust, we challenge and exhort our leaders from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and United Transformation Movement (UTM) to censure the conduct (words and actions) of their followers and supporters, most of whom are fatally naïve on the consequences of political madness if these acts are not checked. To compound matters, the political rivalry has assumed heavy and unfortunate ethnic tones whereby the country is witnessing

such ugly rhetoric in the public domain. This includes voter registration mobilisation campaigns by political parties in the so-called strongholds of the country's major political parties.

We therefore, call upon the Police to protect people's lives and property, and maintain peace, law and order in accordance to the laws of Malawi without fear or favor. Anybody involved in political or any form of violence should face the arm of the law including those who are using vehicles without number plates in these acts of violence.

We also call upon the leaders of DPP, MCP and UTM to demonstrate leadership in these decisive times inspired by the numerous lessons we have from other countries. Political leaders should therefore stop in masterminding the importation of political thuggery into voter registration zones.

Furthermore, we call upon MEC to exercise mastery of the current electoral processes by ensuring that all political parties respect the law in as far as elections are concerned. The voter registration process should be seen to be free, fair, credible and accessible to all Malawians whatever their political affiliation.

Finally, we strongly appeal to all duty-bearers like the political party leaders, MEC, Malawi Police Service, religious and traditional leaders, and all those that have stake in the elections to ensure that they perform their expected duties without any bias. Political parties come and go and Malawians remain Malawians.



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