



## PRESS STATEMENT

### **"No Political Party Can Silence Citizens' Constitutional Rights"**

#### **For immediate release**

The Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) wishes to address recent statements made by Mr. Mike Chitenje and echoed by other Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) officials, suggesting that they will "not allow" HRDC to organise demonstrations in Malawi.

Let us be clear: no political party, whether DPP or any other, has the authority to stop Malawians or any other organization from exercising their constitutional rights. The right to assemble, demonstrate, and demand accountability is guaranteed by Section 38 of the Constitution of Malawi, not by the goodwill or permission of any political actor.

When Mr. Chitenje stands on a podium and declares that the DPP will block HRDC from mobilising citizens, he is not just misinforming the nation; he is openly challenging the foundations of our democratic order. Such rhetoric is reckless, undemocratic, and deeply concerning for a party seeking the trust of Malawians.

HRDC is not, and will never be, swayed by political intimidation. We are moved by facts, rights, and the voices of Malawians. We have previously faced threats, some far more serious, including from state machinery, and we have never retreated. Our mandate comes from the people and from the Constitution of Malawi. No political declaration will change that.

HRDC does not call for demonstrations based on emotions or political theatrics. We call for demonstrations based on citizens' legitimate demands. If Malawians decide they want to take to the streets to demand accountability, transparency, or justice, HRDC will mobilise and facilitate peaceful demonstrations. No political party will ever dictate when citizens can or cannot exercise their constitutional rights.

We wish to make this point absolutely clear: HRDC is not planning any demonstrations at this moment. This administration has only recently assumed office, and HRDC has given it space to begin governing and to demonstrate its commitment to transparency, accountability, and respect for the rule of law.

When senior party officials, including the state president, repeat statements aimed at silencing human rights defenders, it speaks volumes. It signals discomfort with scrutiny and suggests a governance philosophy rooted in fear of accountability.

HRDC's mandate remains clear: HRDC does not target political parties. HRDC targets injustice, corruption, impunity, and poor governance –wherever they exist. Anyone who feels "offended" by our work should examine their conduct, not attack human rights defenders. Anyone who is against the work of HRDs is an enemy of democracy.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to defend human rights, protect civic space, promote transparency, and uphold democratic accountability. No threat, no rally, and no political speech will stop HRDC from carrying out this constitutional and patriotic mandate.

Signed today, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 by:



Michael Kaiyatsa

**Executive Director**



Kelvin Chirwa

**National Coordinator**