

Fired Malawian radio journo gets death threats

 By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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Joseph Mwale, the radio journalist fired for allegedly publicising a recorded [audio interview](#) with Peter Mutharika, Malawi's foreign affairs and international cooperation minister and brother to President Bingu wa Mutharika, is said to be receiving death threats.

Mwale, also a sub-editor at the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ), was last month dismissed over a leaked recording of a conversation where Peter Mutharika was captured discussing his ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidature in the 2014 presidential elections. And now with the threats, the Malawi Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Malawi) has condemned such acts, which it has said, it has been dismayed with.

Death threats through text messages

MISA-Malawi chairperson, Anthony Kasunda said Mwale complained to the body that he has been receiving death threats through text messages.

One text message that Mwale has shown reads: "...how dare you shame our next president? You thought you were a hero? We will make you a villain because you will soon die. Mind you, we monitor you and we control everything. We threatened them and they sacked you. Now they are quite. This is operation 2011. You will soon go to HHI." [Henry Henderson Institute (HHI) is a cemetery in Blantyre].

MISA-Malawi condemns such behaviour

MISA-Malawi says it deems such threats directed at Mwale, as barbaric, retrogressive and unwarranted in an open and transparent democracy.

"We also deem such acts as deliberate attempts at instilling fear to curtail meaningful dialogue and debate on pertinent issues that affect our country," said Kasunda in a statement issued on Wednesday 28 September 2011.

"We therefore strongly condemn such acts and call upon the authorities to thoroughly investigate the matter," he said.

Kasunda said that MISA-Malawi have applauded Mwale for having taken up the matter with the police, who have since promised to investigate the threats.

"MISA Malawi is, however, calling on the authorities and the police to openly denounce such barbaric acts and for the law

enforcers to protect journalists and indeed members of the public who are constantly receiving threats from unknown persons," he said.

The media body has also observed that both Peter Mutharika and former cabinet minister Charles Mchacha, also heard in the recording, have chosen not to comment on the clip, which went public in August.

The clip

In the audio clip, Mutharika analyses the loyalty of some top DPP leaders, bringing in the question of trust in the run-up to the 2014 presidential elections.

In the clip, apart from talking to Mwale, Mutharika wondered whether MIJ was DPP loyalist and what he should tell the reporter about his endorsement as DPP presidential candidate in 2014. Mutharika then discusses potential presidential candidates from other parties who he believed had started campaigning for the 2014 presidential race.

Kasunda said MISA-Malawi is encouraging journalists in the country, including members of the public, to report to police whenever their lives seem to be in danger.

"We further advise journalists to be on the alert whenever they are executing their duties," Kasunda cautioned media practitioners.

MISA-Malawi also appealed to the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) heavyweights to strongly condemn these threats, which are likely to tarnish the image of the party and top party officials and to take meaningful steps at ensuring sanity and democratic mentality amongst party loyalists.

ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

Gregory Gondwe is a Malawian journalist who started writing in 1993. He is also a media consultant assisting several international journalists pursuing assignments in Malawi. He holds a Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on gregorygondwe@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter at @Kalipochi.

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