



THE LILONGWE CIVIC SPACE PACT, 2024

Fostering Inclusive &
Accountable Governance

DECEMBER 16, 2024

LILONGWE, MALAWI

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Whereas, the Malawi Government, Civil Society, and the United Nations in Malawi, **recognize the essential role of civic space in sustaining Malawi's constitutional democracy;**

Whereas, the **protection and promotion of civic space** are indispensable for ensuring the full participation of the judiciary, executive, parliament, civil society, media, business, and the legal profession in Malawi's democratic processes;

Whereas, the Malawi Judiciary, Youth and Society (YAS), and the African Judges and Jurists Forum, **convened the Malawi Civic Space Dialogue** on 23 and 24 August 2024 at the Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe, bringing together key stakeholders to confront pressing challenges and adopt actionable strategies for defending and advancing civic space in Malawi;

Now, therefore, it is firmly resolved and committed that the following resolutions, known as "**The Lilongwe Civic Space Pact,**" are adopted by all stakeholders:

(1). Regular Sectoral Dialogues

Stakeholders commit to holding regular, structured dialogues that address sector-specific challenges affecting civic space. These dialogues shall be aligned with the constitutional mandates of the Judiciary, Executive, Parliament, Media, Legal Profession, and Civil Society to **develop robust and sustainable solutions** for safeguarding civic space.

(2). Multi-Stakeholder Evaluations

All stakeholders **commit to conducting regular, multi-stakeholder evaluations** to monitor the state of civic space, **anticipate emerging challenges, and implement corrective actions** for maintaining an inclusive and vibrant civic environment.

(3). Awareness and Education on Civic Space Rights

We **pledge to intensify public awareness and education campaigns** to promote civic space rights, human rights, and responsibilities. This effort shall include targeted messaging to **combat disinformation, misinformation, and foster ethical digital practices.**

(4). Research and Advocacy

Stakeholders **resolve to conduct ongoing research and advocacy, including legislative audits and alignment with international standards.** Priority shall be given to addressing challenges posed by new technologies, including artificial intelligence that may impact civic space.

(5). Protection of Institutional Independence

We **commit to safeguarding the independence of institutions** entrusted with promoting and protecting civic space. Any threats to their autonomy shall be **immediately confronted, and appropriate measures shall be deployed.**

(6). Improved Funding for Critical Governance Institutions



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(11). Access to Justice for Vulnerable Groups

We **resolve to prioritize access to justice for marginalized and vulnerable groups**, ensuring that all Malawians, regardless of their status, can fully exercise their rights within an open and inclusive civic space.

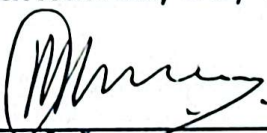
(12). Establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Working Group on Civic Space

We **commit to establishing and operationalizing a dedicated Multi-Stakeholder Civic Space Protection Working Group** to safeguard civic space during elections, ensuring the **protection of democratic participation and accountability** throughout the electoral process.

The Lilongwe Civic Space Pact affirms the unwavering commitment of all stakeholders to **collaborate in defending and enhancing civic space**. This Pact shall serve as a **collective** roadmap and tool towards preserving the democratic values that uphold Malawi's constitutional democracy. **Continuous engagement, transparency, and proactive actions** shall be paramount in achieving these shared objectives.

Signed this day, December 16, 2024 at Lilongwe, Malawi, by:

Hon. Rizine Mzikamanda, SC, Chief Justice of the Republic of Malawi

Signature:  _____

Rt Hon. Catherine Gotani Hara, The Speaker of Malawi National Assembly

Signature:  _____

Hon. Titus Songiso Mvalo, Minister of Justice, The Republic of Malawi

Signature:  _____


Ms. Chikondi Chijozi, Chairperson, Malawi Human Rights Commission

Signature:  _____

Ms. Innocentia Ottober, Chairperson, NGO Regulatory Authority

Signature:  _____

Mr. Benedicto Kondowe, Chairperson, National Advocacy Platform (On behalf of CSOs)

Signature:  _____

Signed In the presence of:

Her Excellency, Ms. Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, United Nations Resident Coordinator to Malawi

Mr. Martin Okumu-Masiga, Secretary General, Africa Judges and Jurists Forum (AJJF)