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President Lazarus Chakwera
Office of the President and Cabinet
Capital Hill Circle
Private Bag 301
Capital City, Lilongwe 3
Malawi

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Dear His Excellency,

**I am writing to you to express my concern about the safety and security of journalist Gregory Gondwe following the publication of his report in January 2024, detailing the Malawi Defence Force (MDF) and their alleged dealings with a businessman who is under investigation for corruption**. The report details allegations of multi-million-dollar payments to the companies owned by the businessman for the procurement of military equipment. This report contradicts the announcement by government to cancel all contracts with companies associated with the businessman.

On 31 January, Gregory Gondwe was informed by «top ranking officials» that the MDF intended to arrest him for «endangering state security» and detain him incommunicado unless he revealed his sources for the report. I am deeply concerned that as a result, Gregory Gondwe has now gone into hiding, in fear of his life, safety and security, simply for doing his job as a journalist. I am aware that this is not the first time Gregory Gondwe has been targeted in connection with his work as a journalist. In April 2022, he was detained by the police and questioned, with the police again demanding that he reveal his sources.

Malawi has international human rights obligations to uphold human rights and press freedom and to create an enabling environment for free and independent journalism including by respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling the rights to freedom of opinion and expression as guaranteed under article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Malawi is a state party.

**In light of the above, I urge you to:**

**Ensure a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigation into the reports of threats against Gregory Gondwe, and to bring those suspected to be responsible to justice in fair trials.**

**Publicly condemn the harassment, intimidation, threats, and attacks against Gregory Gondwe and other journalists.**

**Take effective measures to ensure that all journalists in the country can safely carry out their work without any fear of retaliation.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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