

Mutharika defends withdrawal of advertising

 By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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Barely a day after the death of Malawi's media magnate Dr Aleke Banda, President Bingu wa Mutharika has defended his government's actions to withdraw advertising in the three newspapers published by Dr Banda's National Publications Limited (NPL).

"It must be mentioned that while freedoms and rights are protected and guaranteed, the government is not compelled by the Constitution to advertise in all media outlets," said Mutharika through his spokesperson Albert Mungomo.

He proposed such a scenario would be to deny the economic realities of the day, saying it is neither practical nor prudent to advocate for such a situation.

A month before his death, as NPL executive chairman, Dr. Banda issued a statement demanding an explanation as to why government was stopping advertising in NPL newspapers and barring their reporters from accessing public information.

"NPL was surprised to note that these cost-cutting measures were not applied across the board to all national newspapers," wrote Dr. Banda in the statement.

He said while the NPL remains in the dark as to the cause of government's draconian actions against the agency, they were still bound to stick to their position and mandate in promoting freedom of the press.

Mutharika described the withdrawal of state advertising in the NPL publications as "the decision of government to streamline its outreach strategy." "No law is transgressed where choice becomes the guiding principal of economic participation in any free economy as ours seeks to be," he said.

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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