

## Malawi: MISA condemns harassment of BNL journalist

The Malawi Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Malawi) condemned the beating of Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL) photojournalist Jacob Nankhonya on Saturday, 16 May 2011, at a memorial service for the late former president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. Nankhonya was roughed up while he was trying to take a picture of a fracas that had erupted during the ceremony when family members were beating a man who claimed to be a son of the late president.

 By Gregory Gondwe 16 May 2011



The fracas took place at Kamuzu's mausoleum at the Heroes' acre, city centre, Lilongwe.

Jim Juman Johansson, the man who claims to be son to late Dr. Banda, was manhandled by members of the Kamuzu family as he was being chased away from a prayer ceremony as they disagreed with his claim. Nankhonya was manhandled by a man who reportedly tried to stop Nankhonya from taking pictures at the memorial service and attempted to seize the camera.

"I had finished taking pictures when suddenly a man known as Jim Jumani Johansen, who claims to be the late Kamuzu's son, showed up at the service... It happened that Jumani was passing through the spot I had focused on with the camera," said Nankhonya, during an interview with MISA Malawi. He said he went to the place at the invitation of the Kamuzu family to take pictures at the memorial service.

"It is still not clear why Nankhonya was manhandled but our investigations have revealed [the assailant] is a friend to one of the members of the Kamuzu family," said Anthony Kasunda acting Misa-Malawi chairperson in a statement released to condemn the act.

### Harassment, an ongoing trend

MISA-Malawi said this is not the first time that a photojournalist has been victimised.

"A photojournalist was recently roughed up in Blantyre when taking pictures of pandemonium that ensued between the police and some fun lovers at a music show organised by some local musicians," Kasunda said. Adding that a similar episode also occurred between former president Bakili Muluzi's security detail and a camera man from MBC Television. "MISA Malawi is strongly condemning such barbaric acts which are a violation of media freedom," he said.

Kasunda said taking pictures at public places such as memorial services or entertainment joints is not against the law. "Barring journalists at such events is actually denying citizens their right to information," Kasunda said. MISA Malawi is appealing to law enforcers to protect all citizens, including journalists when

such uncalled for and barbaric acts occur. "We also appeal to leaders of various political parties in the country to instill discipline in their followers," 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 Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on [gregorygondwe@gmail.com](mailto:gregorygondwe@gmail.com). Follow him on Twitter at [@Kalipochi](#).  
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