

MASTON KAIYA  
MALAWI NEWS AGENCY

# First Lady condemns attacks on people with albinism

First Lady Monica Chakwera has condemned ritual attacks against people with albinism in the country, saying it is a violation of their right to life.

The First Lady, who is also Association of Persons with Albinism in Malawi (Apam) patron, made the remarks on Saturday at Mkolimbo ground in Traditional Authority Kwataine in Ntcheu District during an awareness campaign

on killings of people with albinism organised by the association.

Said Chakwera: "It is not true that you can get rich by killing and selling body parts of persons with albinism. It's not true that HIV can be cured by sleeping with a person with albinism. People with albinism are just like anyone else and God created them for a purpose."

She added that people

with albinism should not be living in fear in their communities, urging courts to give stiff punishments to convicted people.

On his part, Apam president Ian Simbota said people with albinism face many challenges due to ritualistic beliefs.

He said: "It's sad that people believe that our bones can make them rich; that we do not die but we

go missing, or that they can be cured if they sleep with a person with albinism."

Speaking earlier, Inkosi Ya Makhosi Gomani V reiterated his commitment to ensure rights of people with albinism are safeguarded in his area.

Since 2014, statistics indicate that the country has recorded over 170 crimes against people with albinism. ■



Chakwera and Simbota during the march

PHOTOGRAPH: LISA KADANGO

# Irrigation farming project to benefit land owners

ESMIE KOMWA  
STAFF WRITER

Minister of Lands Kezzie Msukwa says government is carrying out a customary land registration exercise to ensure that people under the Shire Valley Transformation Programme do not lose ownership of their land.

Speaking when he toured activities under the programme's land component in Chikwawa District on Thursday, the minister said the aim is to ensure that smallholder farmers should benefit from the project.

He said: "Upon registration, the users of customary land parcels will receive their customary estate certificate to protect them as land owners from any conflicts or land grabbing."

"They will also be able to indicate the beneficiaries of their land after they die; hence, it will act as a will and it has no time limit."

Msukwa said the exercise is on a pilot phase under the new land laws, notably the Customary Land Act (2016).

"The lessons that we are drawing from piloting the new land laws are being recorded and will be used to



Msukwa (R) engages a farmer as other officials look on

PHOTOGRAPH: ESMIE KOMWA

inform the review of the process of the land laws," he said.

On his part, land surveyor and geographical information systems (GIS) specialist in the ministry's Land Reform and Implementation Unit, Masida Mbano, said the exercise is in the mapping stage and 70 percent of it is already done.

He said: "The land holders are excited as they are not paying

anything for the exercise and the issuing of certificate will also be free. So far we have mapped land for about 9 700 farmers."

One of the users whose land has been mapped, Alfred Chibzola of Nyamphota Village in the district, hailed the project, saying it will ensure their land is safe while also maximising agricultural production in the country as

farmers will be able to plant crops more than once a year.

Government launched the Shire Valley Transformation Project last year to increase agricultural productivity and commercialisation for targeted households in the Shire Valley.

The project covers 43 370 hectares of land and is worth K222.7 billion. ■

# Youth council for male engagement in GBV fight

ANGELLA PHIRI  
STAFF REPORTER

National Youth Council of Malawi has called on men and boys to be fully involved in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV), including rape and defilement whose cases have recently increased.

The council's chief executive officer Dingsiwayo Jere said this on Thursday in Lilongwe when he addressed the press on its intention of introducing the 'Madolo Ojaka' programme aimed at equipping men and boys with knowledge on how they can protect the girl child.

He said: "Women and girls have been reached by many organisations and programmes. They now know when and where to say no but they are still vulnerable when it comes to rape and defilement. That is why we are now changing the approach, targeting the perpetrators."

"We want men to be empowered on how they can protect the girl child and know the consequences of their actions. We want to see our laws being followed and implemented. But we believe change will come if more men are involved."

In his remarks, Plan International Malawi communications and campaigns manager Rodgers Siula said Madolo Ojaka is a commendable approach and that when both men and women are empowered, they will become responsible citizens.

Of late, there have been increasing reports of rape and defilement in the country, prompting various women's rights groups such as Association for Women in Media and Women Doctors Association, to protest against the trend. ■

# Malawi, Mozambique keen to strengthen border security

PRECIOUS KUMBANI  
STAFF REPORTER

Delegates to the 13th Session of the Malawi/Mozambique Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security have resolved to strengthen border security to curb crime between the two countries.

Minister of Homeland Security Richard Chimwendo Banda said in Blantyre on Friday when he

closed the three-day conference that several resolutions on cross-border security were made during the session.

He said: "We have agreed to open more borders to ensure that uncharted routes are taken care of and there will be joint operations between Malawi and Mozambique to curb crime for our people to be safe."

On his part, Mozambican Minister of National Defence

Jaime Bessa Neto said the two countries peaceful coexistence will mutually benefit their people.

He said: "We also need to check our borders to prevent terrorism as well as trafficking in persons. Some people are being illegally recruited to work in Mozambique."

Neto described the conference as fruitful, saying the resolutions made will help to resolve security issues between the two countries. ■



Chimwendo Banda: We made several resolutions

PHOTOGRAPH: NATION