



CARITAS COMMISSION

Karonga Diocese

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Malawi

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For Immediate Release

Karonga Justice and Peace Office's Press Release on the Statements Made By Paramount Chief Kyungu of Karonga and the Former Minister of Mines, Honorable John Bande MP.

The Justice and Peace Office which is the governance arm of Karonga Diocese would like to make its comments on the discourse carried in the media regarding mining related activities taking place in Karonga and Chitipa. Paramount Chief Kyungu was quoted as saying that Paladin Africa would not be allowed to mine in new areas it has been exploring unless a Memorandum of Understanding is signed between Paladin and the community so that Paladin is held accountable for their activities. In a response to what the Paramount Kyungu said, Honourable John Bande, the former Minister of Mines; argued that it is only his ministry, apart from the Office of the President and Cabinet that has mandate over all mining issues in the country and no one else. As such, the statement made by the Paramount Chief Kyungu is not founded. He also indicated that the Ministry is guided by the Mines and Minerals act that is prevailing in the country at the moment.

Our Position and Appeals

The position of the Justice and Peace Office of Karonga Diocese is that the view expressed by the Paramount Chief is a clear reflection of the views of many Malawians living in Karonga and Chitipa Districts and therefore must be respected as the view of the people most affected by the mining activities. Our long history of working with communities in the said areas has convinced us that the affected communities in Karonga feel cheated and let down by both government and Paladin (Africa) as they seem not to have benefited from the commercialization of the mining resources being extracted in the areas they live. It is therefore our appeal to government to revisit the way business is done currently before Paladin can extend its to extractive activities to other parts of Karonga.

We also urge mining companies to emulate internationally recommended best practices in extractive industry such as Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) in which a social

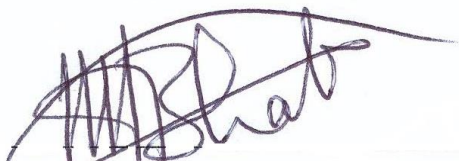
contract is reached with communities before mining activities can start. We also appeal to government to adopt this principle and make part and parcel of the process of awarding prospecting or mining licenses to investors. The principle takes cognizance of the fact the community members have rights, dignity and aspirations which must be considered always.

Also, while we agree that Mines and Minerals Act of 1981 is the prevailing law on mining issues in the country, we make our submission that the said law was made by Malawians, and therefore, Malawians can change it to suit their current developmental vision and aspirations. As such, we call upon government to quickly enact a new law to guide the mining sector in the country. Malawi needs a law which will address challenges in the mining sector and promote the aspiration of all Malawians. It is an open secret that the Mines and Minerals Act of 1981 leaves a lot to be desired as, among many weaknesses, it does not favour the interest of a common Malawian but the investors and a few elite of the society.

We also call upon government to consider the rights of Malawians seriously by, among others, providing the communities affected by mining with adequate and relevant information about what is or will be, happening in their areas and how people would be affected. This will help to manage people's expectations and address the fears that people may have.

Further, we appeal to government to institute grievance handling structures at District level with power and mandate to handle grievances from communities. The District Commissioners, while willing, fail to adequately handle concerns from communities as the Ministry of Mines has not devolved to the District Councils. Meanwhile, the District Commissioners continue to receive numerous complaints from communities which are mostly referred to headquarters with limited chance of action from above.

As the Justice and Peace Arm of the Diocese of Karonga, we share the belief of many people in Malawi that the natural resources that Malawi is endowed with can contribute to socio-economic development of Malawian if properly managed and equitably shared.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Mwawi Shaba', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Signed By

Mwawi Shaba

Diocesan Justice and Peace Desk Officer for Karonga Diocese.