



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ADHERENCE TO THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT WHEN CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS FOR USE ON VARIOUS MEDIA OUTLETS**

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, (MACRA) wishes to remind all Content Licensees to adhere to the provisions of the Communications Act when conducting interviews for use on the various media outlets. Schedule 2 of the Communications Act (Also known as Code of Conduct for Broadcasters) stipulates how Content Licensees should conduct themselves when carrying out interviews, broadcasting programmes, reading news, or making public announcements.

Section 22 (a) of the Second Schedule stipulates the following:

*A content service provider shall NOT broadcast any material that is indecent or obscene or offensive to the public morals, including abusive or insulting language, or offensive to religious beliefs of any section of the population, or likely to prejudice the safety of the Republic or public order and tranquility.*

It is therefore the obligation of a Content Licensee to remove insulting language in a pre-recorded programme or interview before putting such programme/interview on air for public consumption. When a programme/interview is live, the content service provider is also obliged to refrain from broadcasting insulting language by installing a profanity delay machine or asking their interview guest to withdraw the insulting words. The host is also supposed to apologize to viewers or listeners on behalf of the station for such a mishap. This will show the station's stance on enforcing ethical and professional journalism standards.

Content Licensees are also obliged to ensure that private citizens who do not have the same forum to defend themselves are not attacked by their interviewees. Section 30 of the Second Schedule of the Communications Act stipulates that:

*In presenting a programme in which controversial issues of public importance are discussed, a content licensee shall make reasonable efforts to present differing positions of view in the same programme or in a subsequent programme within a reasonable period and substantially the same time slot.*

Content licensees are therefore required to make efforts to seek the views of people whose characters are being mentioned in a pre-recorded interview before airing it for public consumption. If a programme or interview is live and the guest is making allegations against people, the host of the interview or programme is supposed to inform the guest not to continue with his or her allegations until a comment is sort from the person who is subject to the allegations.

MACRA shall continue to engage communications operators to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of their licence, terms and conditions of the Communications Act and other relevant regulations. MACRA shall also not hesitate to invoke its mandate to impose appropriate regulatory sanctions on any communications operator that breaches the Communications Act (Cap 68:01 of the Laws of Malawi) and the terms and conditions of their operating licences mentioned above.

Dated this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daud Suleman', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Daud Suleman

**DIRECTOR GENERAL**