



**PRESS STATEMENT FROM INUA ADVOCACY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Malawi Defense Forces deport 8 Ethiopian suspected Traffickers without due process

2nd February 2025

Inua Advocacy strongly condemns the recent deportation of eight Ethiopian nationals suspected of human trafficking by the Malawi Defense Forces (MDF). The individuals in question were arrested during the second MDF raid in Dzaleka on 12th October 2024. Despite our repeated calls for a transparent legal process, the eight individuals have been held at Kamuzu Barracks in Lilongwe for nearly four months without being taken to any court in Malawi. Their deportation yesterday raises serious concerns about due process and human rights violations.

We are particularly alarmed by the following:

1. Unlawful Detention in Military Custody

The continued detention of civilians in a military facility violates Section 42 of the Constitution of Malawi, which guarantees the right to be brought before a court of law within 48 hours of arrest. The extended incarceration of these individuals at Kamuzu Barracks instead of Maula Prison raises serious questions about the legality of their detention.

2. Lack of Judicial Oversight

The fact that these individuals were never brought before a Malawian court to face charges is deeply troubling. If the MDF indeed considered them a security threat, why were they deported without due legal scrutiny? The absence of judicial oversight undermines the credibility of Malawi's legal framework and denies the accused their right to a fair trial.

3. Unaddressed Human Rights Abuses

We remain deeply concerned about reports of human rights violations during the two raids at Dzaleka, including property extortion, theft of money, and the confiscation of personal belongings such as mobile phones and TV screens. These allegations remain uninvestigated despite clear reports implicating alleged MDF officers. The Malawi Human Rights Commission and other relevant authorities must urgently probe these claims and hold those responsible accountable.

4. Alleged Collusion in Human Trafficking Networks

Inua Advocacy has documented multiple allegations that key figures in the Ethiopian trafficking ring, specifically Adino and Brano, have connections within the MDF, particularly with an officer identified as Harold Dzoole. Reports suggest that these individuals have orchestrated the arrests and deportations of rival traffickers to consolidate their control over trafficking operations in Dzaleka refugee Camp. If true,

these claims demand an immediate, independent investigation to prevent further manipulation of Malawi's security forces for criminal activities.

5. Pattern of Unprocedural Deportations

Since 2022, Inua Advocacy has documented at least 19 Ethiopians suspected traffickers being deported without due process. Many of these individuals remain free today because Ethiopian authorities lacked substantive evidence to charge them yet we have overwhelming evidence of their illegal activities. The repetition of such deportations suggests a deliberate effort to bypass the legal system, potentially to serve the interests of certain individuals within the trafficking network.

OUR REQUESTS

In light of these concerns, we call on the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Justice to:

1. Provide a public explanation for why the eight Ethiopians spent nearly four months in Kamuzu Barracks instead of being transferred to Maula Prison, as would be the normal procedure.
2. Clarify why these individuals were never presented before a Malawian court to be formally charged.
3. Launch an independent investigation into allegations that Adino and Brano, with the assistance of Harold Dzoole, are using the MDF to eliminate their rivals in the human trafficking network based in Dzaleka refugee camp.
4. Investigate claims that previous arrests and deportations have been strategically orchestrated by Adino and Brano to monopolize human trafficking operations.
5. Conduct a thorough, independent inquiry into the reported theft of property and the shooting of innocent individuals during the two MDF raids in Dzaleka in 2024.

CONCLUSION

Inua Advocacy remains committed to supporting the Malawi government in upholding human rights and ensuring transparency in refugee affairs. Preserving the integrity of Dzaleka Refugee Camp is crucial, as criminal activities by corrupt individuals tarnish its image and endanger vulnerable asylum seekers. We urge the government to take swift action, protect refugees' rights, and uphold the rule of law in addressing human trafficking cases.

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