

**MESSAGE FROM H.E. PROF. RUTHIE C. RONO, HIGH COMMISSIONER DURING THE
CELEBRATION OF MASHUJAA DAY IN LILONGWE ON 20TH OCTOBER, 2013 AT BRIDGE VIEW
HOTEL: 16:00HRS**

**Fellow Countrymen,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Opening Remarks

I salute you on this auspicious occasion on the celebration of the Mashujaa/Heroes Day, a day in which we reflect on the sacrifices made by the shujaas who have contributed greatly to our beloved country. As is my first celebration with you since my arrival in February this year, I wish to express my appreciation to the officials of the **Kenyans in Malawi Association** for the invitation extended to me and staff at the High Commission, thereby enabling us to come down to Malawi and be part of this get together and Mashujaa Day celebrations.

As you may be aware, I have not presented my credentials in Malawi, to Her Excellency President Dr. Joyce Banda. Therefore, under diplomatic protocol, I cannot preside over official functions. However, as the Ambassador - designate, I can make contacts with people on the ground like any other Officer of the High Commission. The purpose of my coming here basically was to introduce and present myself to you and assure you that the office in Lusaka is ably handling issues of mutual interest for both countries in Malawi.

Kenyans Diaspora in Malawi

I understand that this was a get together meeting scheduled for the 3rd Sunday of the month, which coincided with our Mashujaa Day. I also wish to acknowledge your efforts to

come together as a diaspora community in order to launch a common vehicle for addressing your various challenges. It is noteworthy that this is a noble cause considering that with the absence of a resident Mission, the Organisation is able to come to address of situations before the Mission steps in. I am aware that you are in the process of ratifying your Constitution as evident in your earlier meeting today, and at the same time pursuing the process of registration to ensure that you have a recognized and fully functional organization. Mine is therefore to encourage you to pursue the process to its logical conclusion and I salute the interim leadership that is offering direction.

You will acknowledge that this year has presented challenges on a scale not witnessed before, losing two members of our community in quick succession, thus exposing how vulnerable we are in the face of adversity. I once again extend my condolences to the community, and members of the family. I congratulate you for the spirit of togetherness exhibited during the difficult moments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mashujaa Day

It is not my intention to give long speeches, on this occasion when we should be sitting back and taking stock of what our heroes have bequeathed us but also what we have achieved as free in our national building. Our heroes collectively ensured that we had freedom to chart our destiny and bequeath our children with an environment to maximize our potentials. We celebrate the heroes of independence notably; the founding fathers of our Nation Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai, Kungu Karumba Ochieng Oneko, and Paul Ngei among others. We also celebrate the leaders of the second liberation; the multiparty era, and the third liberation; the proponents of the new Constitution, our champions in diverse sectors; education, health, business, economic, culture and sports, and in our own small

ways; our parents, and ourselves. It is time to ask in the words of the former President of the United States; John F. Kennedy, i.e. “ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country”.

Fellow Countrymen,

Implementation of the Constitution

Our country is currently implementing the new Constitution, inaugurated in 2013. Several reforms and institutions were put in place that culminated in the General Elections in March, 2013. Since then we have been faced with an even higher task of implementing the massive structures that the new Constitution prescribed including a Presidential institution, County Governments with respective representatives of Governors, Senators and County Representatives in addition to the Parliamentarians. The cost of implementing this structures are enormous. The Government has therefore instituted cost cutting measures, and shelved expenditures that are considered luxurious.

Kenyan Cases at the ICC

We are even faced with a much bigger threat; the International Court of Justice (ICC) cases. I believe you understand very well the cases facing our President and his Deputy. This has been seen as a test to Kenya’s Sovereignty where a sitting Head of State enjoying Constitutional immunity against all legal proceedings at home has to face trial in another country. Kenya has severally expressed her desire to cooperate with the ICC Court, but has also made requests to the Court and the United Nations Security Council for deferral of its cases before the ICC, as well as, for non concurrent appearance before the court by both the President and his Deputy. There are a lot of speculations about our move filled with truth, half truths and misinformation, but our current pursuit at the court, is not to block Justice or possibly rally African States to a protest pullout from the ICC but explain our

situation through our friends, implore that our request and/or side of the story is considered to preempt a constitutional crisis.

Our role as a Mission and as the Head of Mission is to clearly explain and communicate in non-ambiguous terms to our nationals abroad and our friends on the true position of our Government on the matter. The quest has made some progress/impact, and I am aware that this Friday, the Security Council partially granted the request, allowing the President not to attend all sessions of the ICC but be present at the opening and closure and therefore allowing the President to execute his Constitutional mandate. We are therefore happy that our diplomacy has borne fruits and that we can make an impact in influencing continental and global geopolitics but more importantly, express our appreciation for our friends who have been there to support us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Security Situation and Terror Attack on the West-gate Mall

Kenya continues to face security threats from without, owing to the fragile political and security situation in the neighbouring Somalia, and pockets of Al-Qaida linked Al-Shabaab terror group. You are aware of the recent terror attacks on our Country at the Westgate Mall. The attack was not only horrific but has caused untold suffering to our people and the country. The attacks were meant to intimidate us and deviate us from the course of creating a stable Somali neighbor.

Kenya took a deliberate decision to enter Somali with blessings of the international community in pursuit of the Al-Shabaab group and terrorist elements, to stop the activities of the group that were seriously affecting Kenya's tourism and our the economy as well as undermining our territorial integrity. Since the incursion, the country has suffered sporadic

cowardly attacks from sympathizers of the Al-Shabaab meant to disorganize our security and divert the attention of our leadership. Our President has come out firmly making it clear that we shall not be threatened not intimidated into withdrawing our forces from Somalia. Our noble cause as nationals is to rally our support behind the President while at the same time remain vigilant of our security situation wherever we are, locally and abroad. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that terrorism is not unique to any country and can occur anywhere.

We recognize that terrorism is not a single country's threat but a new/emerging global phenomenon that warrants international attention. To effectively fight terrorism, we require support of our friends and the international community, but most importantly, raising the security awareness of our nationals and a call on our patriotism to protect our motherland. Our call will be on our friends and the global community to recognize to come out strongly in a bid to address the challenge as in the world order where technology has fostered globalization as a future trend.

Economy and Development

Today, we look back with pride and acknowledge that whereas we may not have been where we desire to be, we have achieved significant growth in the various economic and development driving sectors such as Agriculture, Education, Health, ICT, Culture, Finance, EAC integration, Infrastructure and Governance. For instance, we have grown from a single college in 1955 to 17 Chartered Universities and 12 Constituent Colleges. More students are being admitted to the universities, and we are able to support online courses/studies.

Fellow Countrymen,

As we reflect on the President's State of Nation address on this day, let us rededicate our efforts toward building a better nation and equipping our children with positive values that will assure the country of an even brighter and competitive status among her global peers.

I also take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Jubilee, a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year (2014). I thank you for your attention and for being here this evening to enjoy our get together as we interact and get to know each other more.

May I now invite you to kindly refill our glasses and join me in raising our glasses as we toast:

- **to the good health of our host, Her Excellency Dr. Joyce Mtila Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi;**
- **to the continued good relations and prosperity of the people of Kenya and Malawi;**
and,
- **to our continued good health, prosperity and relations for the Mission and for all of us gathered here**

Cheers!!!