

Malawi: Posthumous media award for Nkolokosa



By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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Jika Nkolokosa who died on 27 December 2010, aged 53, while working as executive director for the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) was posthumously awarded the decorated Life Time Achiever Award for his contributions to Malawi's journalism growth.



Anthony Kasunda, MISA-Malawi acting chairperson

The award is part of the Malawi Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa - MISA-Malawi Awards that are conferred on outstanding media personnel and media institutions every year as part of commemorating World Press Freedom Day. On 7 May 2011, Malawian journalists converged in the country's northern city of Mzuzu where Nation Publications Limited (NPL) was voted the Best Print Media House for 2011, while Zodiak Broadcasting Station emerged the Best Electronic Media.

Survived government banning advertising

"This media house survived even when government had banned advertising; it continued to grow and did not resort to laying off staff because of dwindling cash flow," said Baldwin Chiyamwaka, awards committee chairperson, during citations before announcing that NPL had won the award.

Government banned advertising in all publications of Nation Publications Limited namely, *The Nation*, *Weekend Nation*, *Nation on Sunday* and *Fuko* early last year due to what it deemed critical publications of government policies and conduct.

For the fifth consecutive year, Zodiak Broadcasting Station scooped the award because of its touch with rural masses, the introduction of mobile journalism and its innovative programmes. Five of its journalists were awarded in different categories and these include the CNN African journalist Award winner Theresa Ndanga who won the Electronic Award in Business and Economic Reporting.

Northern region radio reporter Angela Mkandawire won as the 2011 best investigative journalist; Zodiak online editor Gabriel Kamlomo won the Environmental Award, while Pilirani Tambala and Gregory Gondwe received the Best Maternal Health Reporting as well as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Awards, respectively.

BNL scoops 10 print awards

Despite not scooping the Print Media House of the Year, Blantyre Newspapers Limited (NPL) swept up 10 out of 17 print media awards. The Best Media Journalist for 2011 in Malawi also came from BNL - Thom Khanje the company's business editor. His winning story dealt with tobacco smuggling syndicates in Zambia which exposed big companies and individuals involved in the racket.

Before the start of the gala dinner where the guest of honour was principal secretary in the ministry of information and civic education, James Kalilangwe, MISA-Malawi acting chairperson Anthony Kasunda pleaded with government to relook its intension to enact repressive media laws.

"It is of great concern is the amendment of Section 46 of the Penal Code which empowers the minister of information to ban publications deemed as not in the public interest," he said.

Tackling media freedom

United States embassy public affairs officer Benjamin Canavan, who was also present at the ceremony, said it is disappointing that the laws of the country are either on the fence to help journalists where enactment of the Access to Information Bill is still in limbo, while on the other hand repressive media laws like the amendment of Section 46 of the Penal Code are coming into force.

He then complimented the Malawi media for "responding with vigour" on their protest against Section 46. "United you stand and divided you will fall," said Cannavan in an effort to encourage the Malawi media in fighting oppression.

Kalilangwe said the media must have a positive approach in its coverage of issues in Malawi as he reiterated government's concern with online media. "We believe that media freedom must come with responsibilities. You are a Malawian first and a journalist second," he said.

ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

Gregory Gondwe is a Malawian journalist who started writing in 1993. He is also a media consultant assisting several international journalists pursuing assignments in Malawi. He holds a Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on gregorygondwe@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter at @Kalipochi.

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