



Mutharika: The rich benefitting

Fertilizer subsidy program fails to benefit the poor, Mutharika admits

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President Bingu Mutharika has admitted that the fertilizer subsidy programme has not been able to out rightly achieve its intended mission, because it has been hijacked by the rich and most powerful people at the expense of the intended poor people.

While announcing on Tuesday that effective this year, the 50 kg bag of fertilizer will be reduced from the current K900 to K800, Mutharika noted that rich and powerful people have hijacked the programme to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor in the rural areas, who struggling to access the commodity.

"I introduced this programme to enable the poor in the villages to access the fertilizer in order to boost food security. But sadly, it is the rich who are benefiting a great deal. And at the end of the day, they are selling maize to the same poor at exorbitant prices,|" said Mutharika.

"There is no fairness in the distribution of the coupons. Do you want me to come and personally distribute them,|" queried Mutharika.

He disclosed that this year, his government would introduce punitive measures that would ensure that the coupons for subsidized fertilizer reach the poor in the rural areas.

"I will not sit idle and watch as the rich continue to marginalize the poor as it has been the case during the previous regimes. I will fight for the poor through and through," said Mutharika.

During the last growing season, cabinet ministers were selling the coupons. And former Minister of Defense, Bob Khamisa lost his cabinet portfolio due to the same.

The fertilizer subsidy programme has been highly detested by the opposition, mainly Malawi Congress Party (MCP) saying it is discriminatory. But the Malawi leader has stood his ground maintaining that it has been a huge success since its inception.