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AFRICA/MALAWI - The Catholic Church condemns the recent attacks on the stripping of women off their clothes

Lilongwe (Agenzia Fides) - "The stripping off of women's clothes in Lilongwe and Mzuzu is unbecoming and unacceptable", is what is said in a statement sent to Fides by the Gender and Civic Education Desk in the Catholic Commission for "Justice and Peace" of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi.
Several women and girls wearing trousers and short skirts were attacked and their clothes torn by groups of vendors on January 17 and 18 in Mzuzu to Lilongwe. Police have arrested several people in connection with these attacks. "We have to say 'no' to the abuse suffered by women", said the Vice-President Joyce Banda, who has expressed her solidarity in a demonstration with women protesting against these episodes.
"There can never be any sufficient and necessary reason for anybody to treat women in such inhumane manner" the statement said. "It is disappointing to note thatvendors, who largely depend on women as their customers have opted to vent their animosity and anger on the very same clients".
The document concludes by asking the government and the police to ensure the safety of women, the municipal authorities to increase controls on commercial sites, associations of traders to take responsibility for the "shameful acts" of some of their members. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 21/01/2012)

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