

## Inside Tembo's ignored speech

Written by Kingsley Jassi  
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Malawi Congress Party (MCP) leader John Tembo, in a written speech he distributed to fellow legislators in Parliament on Monday, took a swipe at President Joyce Banda and her ministers, accusing them of draining public resources through their frequent travels.



Tembo also described JB's government as "lacking a sense of direction" as "no one seems to know what to do and how to do it.

He trashed the current exchange regime, saying currency floatation is not viable in this economy.

"Our President is hardly in the office. The (ministers) are also scarcely seen in the offices because they have to accompany the President. I wonder if our leadership has the time to attend to issues that come to their offices for direction," reads the speech which Tembo did not read in the House, saying he had no time after his preamble which largely touched on the improved relations between the government and the opposition.

He was making an official response, as MCP head and leader of opposition, to the State of the

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Nation Address by President Banda when opening the 44th Session of Parliament last Friday.

In the speech, Tembo said the salary cuts of the President and vice president are a mockery since they are "criss-crossing the country almost every day" under the pretext of seeing people and distributing relief aid while drawing "huge allowances".

On the exchange rate, Tembo said while it was inevitable to devalue the currency, he did not agree with the manner and management of the devaluation and its subsequent floatation.

"Free floatation of the currency is not viable for Malawi," reads the speech.

He said when the kwacha was devalued; the government only addressed the demand side of the equation while the supply side has not seen the same attention.

"The demand side has only managed to cut down on the appetite for forex but that alone does not generate forex. Therefore, it is equally imperative to address the supply side so that the country is able to produce for the export market to generate the much needed forex," says the speech.

In his spoken speech, Tembo accused the government of mismanaging the Farm Inputs Subsidy programme which, he said, is being used as a political tool despite its huge resource envelope.