

Malawi trade union body clashes with Chinese investors

 By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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Barely nine months after Malawi entered into diplomatic ties with China, Chinese investors visiting Malawi because of the ties, clashed with the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) over working conditions of local employees.

In the recent findings based on the study, which wanted to establish the impact of Chinese investment in Malawi, the union said it discovered that Chinese employers pay very little attention to their workers wellbeing.

MCTU project co-ordinator, Wezi Shaba said besides lack of assistance when workers are bereaved, the Chinese employers also deduct their wages when they fail to report for duties because of sickness.

“Many workers in the Chinese companies risk their lives as they handle extremely dangerous machinery without any protective gears like boots, helmets and gloves,” said Shaba.

As if this is not enough, owners of some Chinese companies lock their workers up in factories making them susceptible in the event of fire accidents.

Over 36% of respondents during the study said they do not enjoy benefits from their employers who also pay them poor salaries.

“In these companies workers do not have social security, paid vacation, paid sick leave, no subsidised housing allowance, no severance pay upon termination of service and no paid maternity leave,” said Shaba.

The study, which was commissioned by the African Labour Research Network to see the impact of Chinese investment in Africa, also reported an incident where employers deliberately picked a quarrel with the employers towards pay day so that they do not pay them.

Findings from 10 other countries that are conducting similar studies will be compiled into a book, expected to be released towards the end of this year.

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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