

# **MALAWI MONTHLY COVID-19 SITUATION REPORT**

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EDNA CHAMGWERA  
CHRISPINE BOTA  
DEREK LAKUDZALA

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# 1 Introduction

This is the Covid-19 situation update for Malawi as of 14TH December 2020. The report focuses on the situation of the pandemic in the country, travel restrictions applicable, and the effect on the Exchange growth partners.

## 2 COVID-19 Situation in Malawi

### 2.1 Present Covid-19 Figures

As at 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Malawi has recorded 6,066 confirmed cases ,187 deaths and 5,491 recoveries. The total number of active cases stands at 38 As of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Malawi had a tested 78,962 samples.

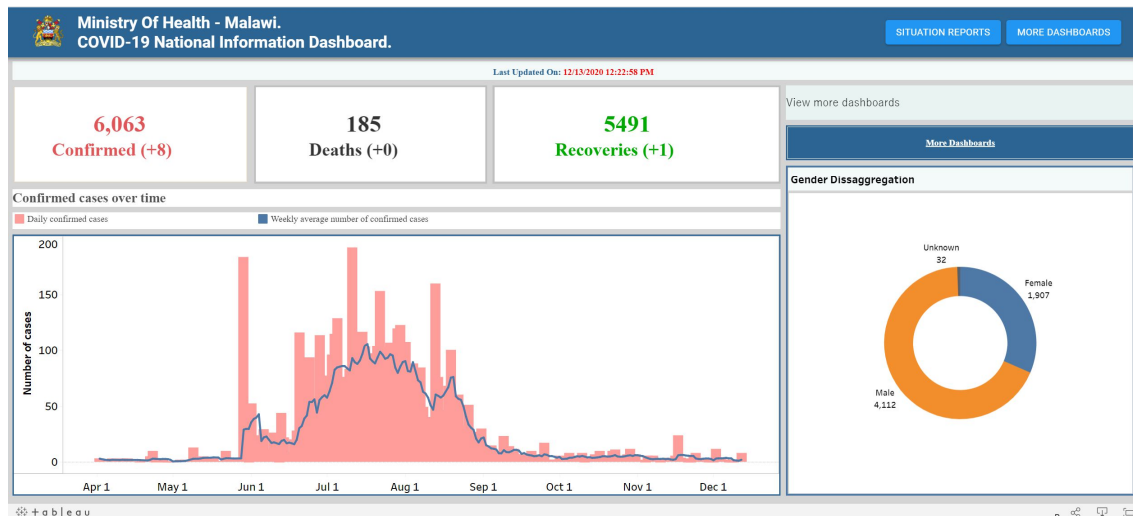


Figure 1: Source <https://covid19.health.gov.mw/>

### 2.2 Current Rules and Restrictive Measures on Businesses

Many companies have started working from their offices. Workers who are able to effectively work from home are still encouraged to do so. The government continues to require people to observe restrict COVID-19 preventive measures in public places. Many offices and banks do not admit people without face masks.

Many hotels and lodges are operating under strict COVID-19 measures as well, including requirements that international guests provide passports and documentation of arrival date, negative COVID-19 testing and sufficient quarantine time for international travelers.

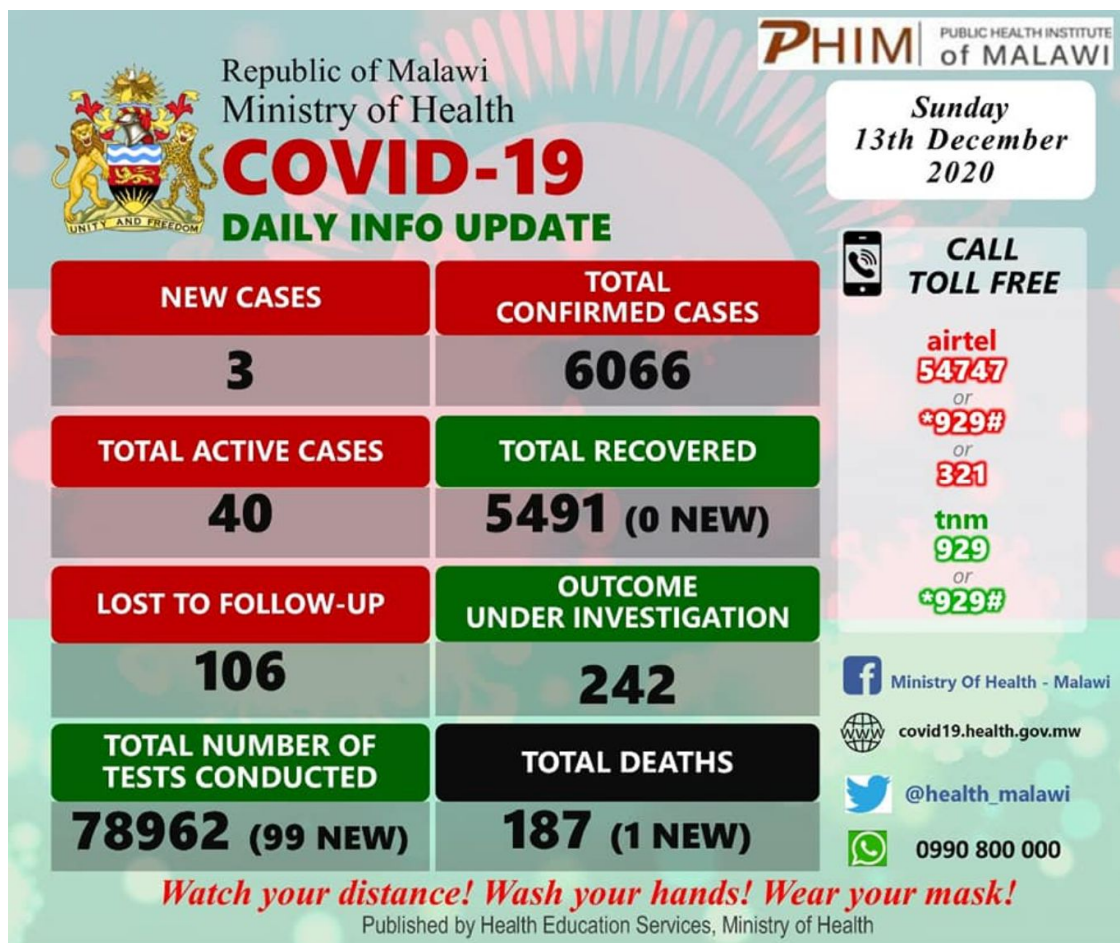


Figure 2: Source - <https://www.facebook.com/malawimoh/>

### 2.3 International and Domestic Travel

On 1 September Malawi re-opened its airspace to a limited number of weekly commercial flights. Entry to Malawi via land borders, continues to be prohibited except for Malawian nationals and foreign nationals with valid residency visas for Malawi.

No animals (domestic pets) are permitted to enter or leave the country at this time.

Visitors who are eligible for entry, need to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 10 days of arrival. For a COVID-19 test certificate to be accepted it must be from a molecular test (Conventional PCR) facility. Arriving passengers who do not provide this proof are required to be tested for COVID-19 on arrival and at their own expense.

Those without valid COVID-19 negative certificate, a sample is taken at the port of entry at a fee of \$100 for foreigners and \$50 for Malawians and returning residents. Passengers may be required to remain at the airport or a testing centre until their COVID-19 test results are known, usually within 24 hours.

Health Officers screen all arriving travelers. All arriving passengers are required to fill health declaration forms.

Public transport continues to operate under the government the restrictions of approximately half capacity.

## 2.4 Quarantine Requirements

As from 11th November 2020, the government of Malawi issued updated instructions for arriving visitors and travelers as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- All travelers coming into Malawi and presenting negative test certificates for COVID-19 will no longer be required to self-quarantine but will be required to self-monitor for COVID-19 signs and symptoms of 14 days after arrival. This entails that the traveller can interact with others but be required to strictly observe physical distance, hand hygiene and use of face mask while in public and monitor themselves for any signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Travelers arriving without valid COVID-19 test certificates or showing COVID-19 symptoms will have a COVID-19 sample collected at their own cost and they will be under a quarantine in accordance with national guidelines.
- Travelers presenting negative test certificates for COVID-19 which are not in English are required to have them translated into English, which is the official language of communication in Malawi, failure of which, they will be deemed invalid.

One recent negative report has been the missing of approximately 106 people who were being tracked. The Ministry of the Health alleged that they had given wrong information about their locations.

## 2.5 Testing/Screening on Departure

Anyone departing Malawi needs to provide proof that a negative COVID-19 test has been taken within 10 days of departure. Mandatory COVID-19 testing also takes place on departure if travelers fail to produce a valid negative test certificate or if the airport staff judge the passenger to display COVID-19 symptoms. This test is at the passengers' own expense.

## 2.6 Public Gatherings

Although the government continues with strong public messaging on the prevention of the COVID-19 19, there is an inevitable relaxation by members of the public in holding public events and observing the measures. Wedding and wedding engagement events are taking place almost unrestricted. People gather in large numbers celebrating without wearing masks or observing the required social distance recommended in the preventive measures.

Slowly public sports such as football and netball have started taking place.

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Source: <sup>1</sup> Public Health Institute of Malawi –<https://malawipublichealth.org/>

## 2.7 Reopening of Schools and colleges

Schools re-opened in phases beginning on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Universities and upper secondary were first to open. As of 14 December 2020, all schools, starting from primary schools, secondary schools to colleges and universities were fully open operating yearly normally. 78%<sup>2</sup> of primary school pupils returned to school. Some institutions including secondary schools and colleges have taken advantage to extend their offering of online distance education beyond the period that they were forced to close.

Those conducting face-to-face lesson still have to observe the strict government instituted measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in their institutions.

## 2.8 Government Initiative to Support Businesses, Workers and People Affected by the Crisis

Malawi launched cash aid for the poor amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The country gives equivalent \$40 monthly payments to about one million people and small businesses affected by the pandemic. Cash transfer programmes through donor organisations such as UNICEF are continuing.

## 2.9 Other measures

Wearing of face masks in all public places is mandatory and people are encouraged to practice hygiene through washing of hands. Also, a social distance of at least 1 meter in all public gatherings including schools, work places, religious gatherings etc. should be observed.

In some public places the strict wearing of masks is slowly easing but not officially sanctioned by the government. In most local marketplaces and some supermarkets life seems to be returning to near normal.

Supermarkets continue to demand that shoppers wash their hands or sanitise their hands before entering their shops. Many still require the wearing of face masks. At the same time there are some workers in the shops and supermarkets who do not wear the masks.

## 3 Impact on Exchange growth partners

We checked with two growth partners of Exchange on what the impact of the current Covid 19 situation has been on their businesses. The short summary is as follows:

### 3.1 Kombeza

Since June 2020 ,Kombeza has recorded a near 50% drop in sales. They attribute this to fall in income of their primary market. Some of their customers have lost their jobs or are living on lower pay, up to 50% of their normal pay. The company has responded by reducing its daily production from between 2500 and 3000 bottles in normal production to between 1100 and

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<sup>2</sup> Source: [https://malawi.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Malawi\\_COVID-19\\_Situation\\_Update\\_4.12.2020\\_0.pdf](https://malawi.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Malawi_COVID-19_Situation_Update_4.12.2020_0.pdf)

1400 bottles per day. At the same time the company is strategizing its expansion into Lilongwe the capital city.

The company has not reduced its staff levels. Instead, they have increased slightly to handle the expansion in the capital city. That cannot be directly attributed to the Covid-19 situation. Kombeza reported that there has not been a big change in the past month. They are operating at the same reduced capacity as there were in the past month.

### 3.2 Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust

With schools opening in the area the Trust has seen some level of activity going up. At the offices staff that had been working from home are beginning to return to the office. However, they are guaranteed at least a 50% of their normal pay.

While waiting for the situation to return to normal, most of the people are working part time, spending approximately 50% of their time at work for 50% of pay. Their level of activity is estimated to be around 50% capacity.

Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust have not reported any major change either.