

## Highlights

- One new COVID-19 case, no new recoveries, and no new deaths have been recorded in the past 24 hours.
- A cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases recorded to date is 72, with 3 deaths and 27 recoveries.
- 155 people transporting essential goods and services have entered the country in the past 24 hours
- Eleven (11) laboratories have the capacity to test COVID-19 and 2095 tests have been conducted to date

## Background

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted of several cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. Later the disease was named Coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) and the virus was named Sars-Cov2. World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

On 20 March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a national disaster in Malawi, and on 2 April 2020, Malawi registered the first cases of COVID-19. On 6 May 2020, the President of the Republic of Malawi appointed a Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 that is co-chaired by Dr. John Phuka from the College of Medicine and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, and Development.

## Global situation

As of 19 May 2020, 4 731 458 (112 637 new) COVID-19 cases have been reported globally, including 316 169 (4 322 new) deaths. Out of these cases, 63 521 (2 358 new) cases and 1 796 (48 new) deaths are in Africa. **Table 1** below shows the number of reported cases and deaths in the countries that share boundaries with Malawi.

**Table 1:** Number of cases and deaths of COVID-19 in countries that share a boundary with Malawi

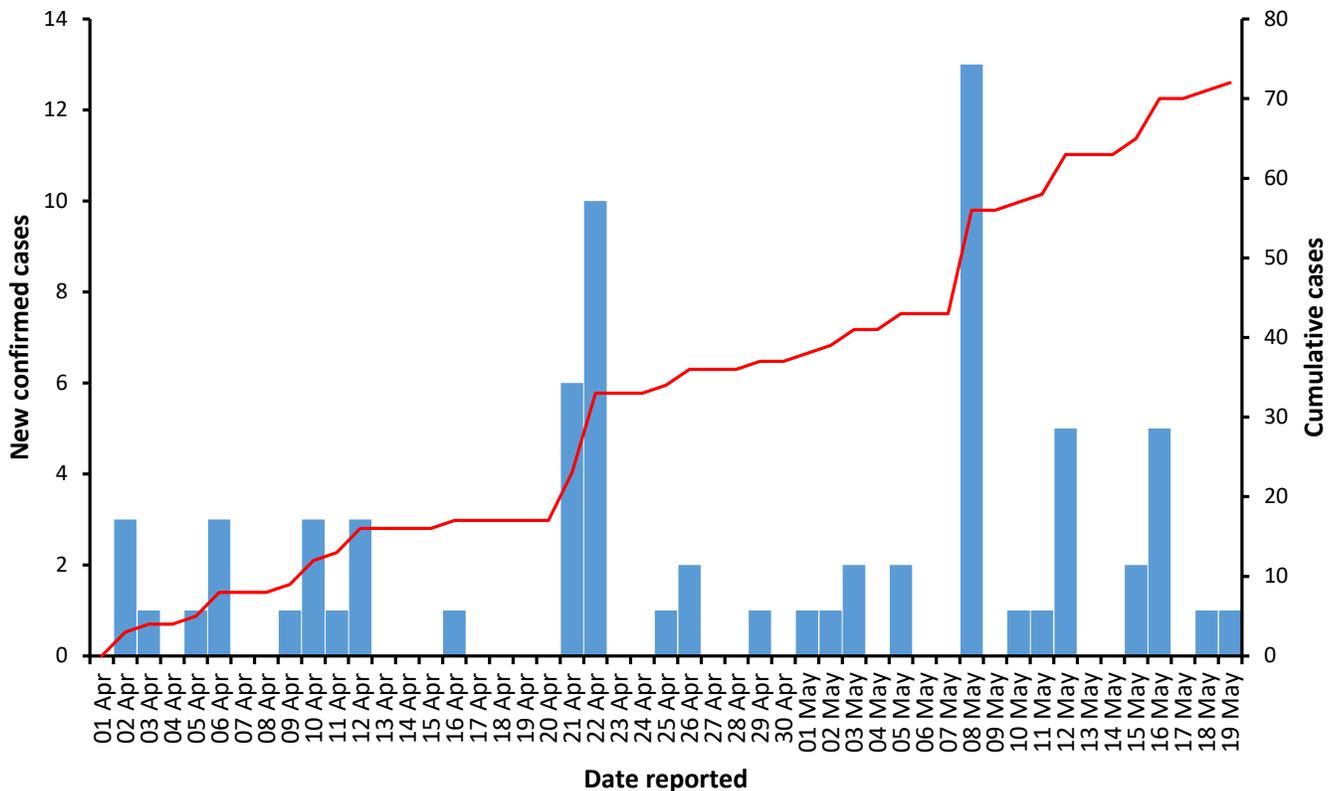
Country	Cumulative cases	New cases	Cumulative deaths	New deaths	Days since last reported case
Mozambique	145	8	0	0	0
Zambia	761	8	7	0	0
Tanzania	509	0	21	0	11



**Table 3:** Summary of COVID-19 cases reported countrywide as of 19 May 2020

Reporting District	Confirmed Cases		Deaths		Recoveries		Transmission Classification*			Days since last reported case
	New	Cumulative	New	Cumulative	New	Cumulative	Imported	Local	Under investigation	
Lilongwe	1	29	0	2	0	15	7	21	1	0
Blantyre	0	17	0	1	0	9	7	10	0	3
Thyolo	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	5
Mzuzu	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	14
Nkhata Bay	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	3
Zomba	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Chikwawa	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	35
Nkhotakota	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	33
Karonga	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	21
Mangochi	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8
Mulanje	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6
Ntcheu	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3</b>	

\*Imported means that infection has been acquired from outside the country; Local transmission means that the source of infection is within the country; Under investigation means that the source of infection has not been determined

**Figure 2:** New and cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases in Malawi by date reported as of 19 May 2020

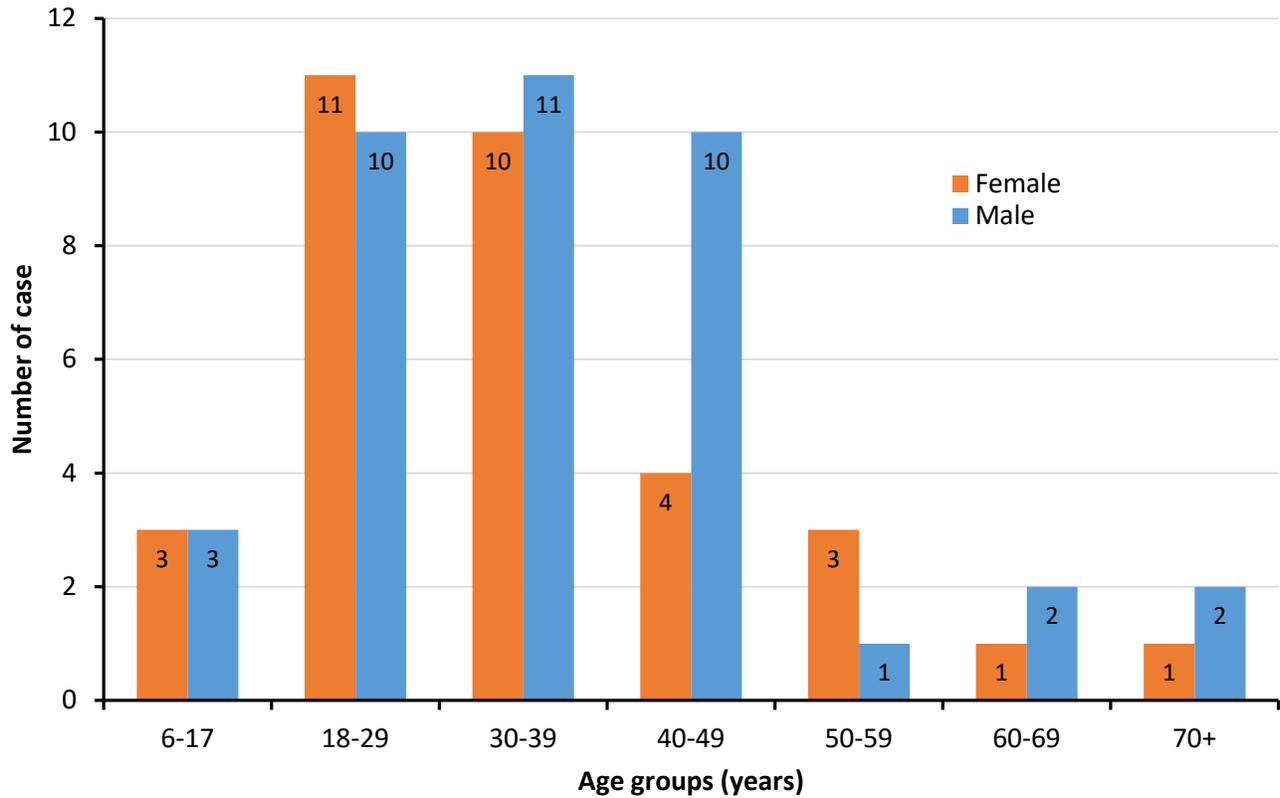


Figure 3: Age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases in Malawi as of 19 May 2020

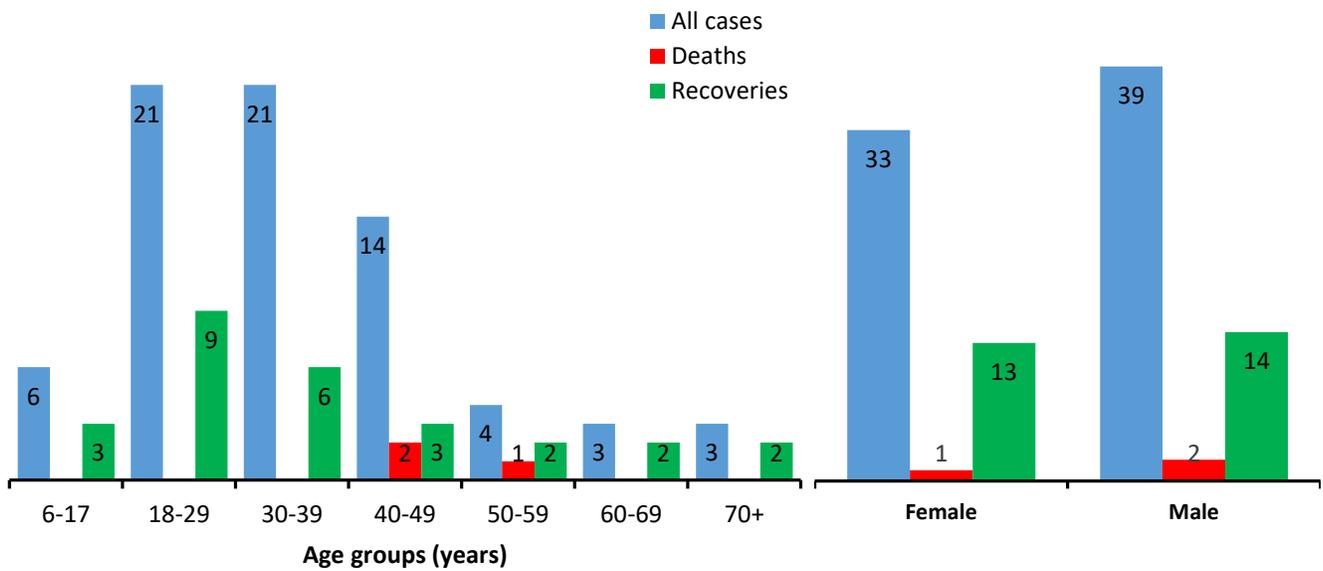


Figure 4: Distribution of COVID-19 cases, deaths and recoveries in Malawi as of 19 May 2020

## Summary of Prevention and Response Activities

### Laboratory testing

Currently, eleven laboratories in the country have the capacity to confirming COVID-19. These are the National Health Reference laboratory (NHRL), College of Medicine (COM) laboratory, Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust (MLW), Mzuzu Central Hospital laboratory, Mzimba south district hospital laboratory, Balaka Dream laboratory, Zomba Central Hospital laboratory, Thyolo district hospital laboratory, Nsanje district hospital laboratory, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital laboratory and Blantyre Dream laboratory. As of 19 May 2020, a total of 2095 samples have been tested, with 72 positive results, 181 pending results and 23 to be re-tested. **Table 4** below shows the breakdown of tests done by each laboratory.

**Table 4:** Laboratory testing for COVID-19 for Malawi, 19 May 2020.

Name of Laboratory	Cumulative samples	In the past 24hrs		Total		Result		
		Samples received	Samples tested	Tested	Pending	Indeterminate	Positive	Negative
NHRL	618	27	0	605	13	0	30	575
COM	641	44	0	586	45	10	16	570
MLW	394	48	18	359	35	11	16	332
Mzuzu	171	6	6	170	1	0	9	161
Mzimba	231	35	0	194	37	2	0	194
Zomba	79	20	19	78	1	0	1	77
Balaka	62	15	15	61	1	0	0	61
Thyolo	31	0	0	31	0	0	0	31
Nsanje	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
QECH	8	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Dream BT	48	48	0	0	48	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2286</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2095</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>2012</b>

### Clinical case management

- 40 active cases are being managed as outpatients and are under self-isolation
- 2 cases are institutionalized
- Cumulatively 27 cases have now recovered and 3 have died
- 7 of the active cases are health care workers from Blantyre

### Enforcement and security

- Police and MDF deployed to provide border security patrols
- Road traffic police enforcing new seating capacity for public transportation
- Control of crowds in public and private service outlets (e.g. banks)
- Joint patrols on Lake Malawi (MDF and Immigration)
- Roadblocks mounted in strategic points across the country



### Point of entry

- Monitoring personnel transporting essential goods and services
- All borders closed except 3 for essential personnel travel (e.g. petroleum services and other goods).
- Extra laboratory staff deployed to Mwanza to support sample collection for citizens repatriated from other countries

### Logistics

- Deliveries to districts of supplies from UNICEF is done
- Deliveries to districts of supplies from Chinese donation in progress – besides the districts, this also accommodates Army, Prison, and Police

### Risk communication and community engagement

- The national team deployed to northern region to strengthen district teams in community engagement and management of cases
- Continued airing of COVID-19 public service announcements on community and national radio stations.
- Daily press briefings on the evolving outbreak situation
- Daily updates through **ZODIAK radio**
- Set up interactive COVID-19 messages on **Airtel \*929#**
- Production and printing of fact sheets, posters, leaflets, and roll-up banners.
- Push messages on Airtel and TNM in both English and Chichewa.
- Community awareness meetings in progress
- Develop messaging for public service announcements to suit the current measures on lockdown.
- Mobile van units for the distribution of information, education and communication materials in Lilongwe, Blantyre, and Mangochi

### Coordination

In order to facilitate coordination and maintain focused efforts towards combating COVID-19 we hold routine and ad-hoc meetings:

- Presidential Task Force on COVID-9 was established and they meet regularly
- Weekly health cluster meetings
- Weekly meetings of technical committees for the various response pillars
- Daily surveillance technical committee meetings
- Daily emergency operation center meetings
- Implementation of the national response plan
- The orientation of district public health emergency management committees in all districts

## Case definitions

### 1. Suspect Case

- a. A patient with acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease, e.g. cough, shortness of breath), AND a history of travel to or residence in a location reporting community transmission of COVID-19 disease during the 14 days prior to symptom onset.
- b. A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case in the last 14 days prior to symptom onset;

OR

- c. A patient with severe acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease, e.g. cough, shortness of breath; AND requiring hospitalization) AND in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that fully explains the clinical presentation



## 2. Probable Case

- a. A suspect case for whom testing for COVID-19 is inconclusive. Inconclusive being the result of the test reported by the laboratory

OR

- b. A suspect case for whom testing could not be performed for any reason.

## 3. Confirmed Case

- a. A person with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs, and symptoms.

## 4. Definition of contact

- a. A primary contact is a person who experienced any one of the following exposures during the 2 days before and the 14 days after the onset of symptoms of a probable or confirmed case:
  - i. Face-to-face contact with a probable or confirmed case within 1 meter and for more than 15 minutes;
  - ii. Direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case;
  - iii. Direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment

Note: for confirmed asymptomatic cases, the period of contact is measured as the 2 days before through the 14 days after the date on which the sample was taken which led to confirmation.

- b. A secondary contact is a person who was in contact with the primary contact or any contact which does not meet the definition of the primary contact.

## 5. COVID-19 death

COVID-19 death is defined for surveillance purposes as a death resulting from a clinically compatible illness in a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case unless there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be related to COVID disease (e.g. trauma). There should be no period of complete recovery between illness and death.

## Classification of transmission patterns

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**No cases:** Countries/territories/areas with no confirmed cases

**Sporadic cases:** Countries/territories/areas with one or more cases, imported or locally detected

**Clusters of cases:** Countries/territories/areas experiencing cases, clustered in time, geographic location and/or by common exposures

**Community transmission:** Countries/area/territories experiencing larger outbreaks of local transmission defined through an assessment of factors including, but not limited to:

1. Large numbers of cases not linkable to transmission chains
2. Large numbers of cases from sentinel lab surveillance
3. Multiple unrelated clusters in several areas of the country/territory/area

## Conclusion

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The Ministry of Health and partners continue in its efforts to ensure the citizens are protected from the Coronavirus outbreak and that the country is able to detect and respond to any cases that may arise.

- Daily update dashboards can be accessed from <http://covid19.health.gov.mw/>
- Toll-free call line with Chipatala Cha Pa Foni (number: **54747**).

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