

Highlights

- 45 new COVID-19 cases, 22 new recoveries, and four new deaths have been recorded in the past 24 hours
- Cumulatively, the total number of COVID-19 cases in Malawi is 3,709 including 103 deaths and 1,667 recoveries
- 27,390 COVID-19 tests have been conducted to date
- 364 people have entered Malawi through the official points of entry in the past 24 hours

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 12th 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, a Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 was appointed.

Global situation

As of 26 July 2020, 15,785,641 (200,625 new) COVID-19 cases have been reported globally, including 640,016 (4,823 new) deaths. Out of these 696,207 (16,245 new) cases and 11,708 (368 new) deaths are in Africa. **Table 1** below shows the number of reported cases and deaths in the region.

Table 1: Number of cases and deaths of COVID-19 in the region

Country	Cumulative cases	New cases	Cumulative deaths	New deaths	Days since last reported case
South Africa	434,200	12,204	6,655	312	0
Zambia	4,328	475	139	5	0
Mozambique	1,616	26	11	0	0
Zimbabwe	2,434	138	34	2	0
Tanzania	509	0	21	0	79



Local situation

In the past 24 hours, Malawi has registered 45 new COVID-19 cases, 22 new recoveries, and four new deaths. Two of the new deaths occurred in Lilongwe and one each in Mzimba South and Karonga.

All 45 new cases are locally transmitted infections. Five are health care workers (two each from Blantyre and Nkhata Bay, and one from Salima), 12 from Lilongwe, five from Blantyre, eight from Neno, six each from Mzimba North and Salima, two from Nkhata Bay and one from Rumphi.

Cumulatively, Malawi has recorded 3,709 cases including 103 deaths. **Figure 1** is a map of Malawi showing the number of cases in each affected district. Of these cases, 946 are imported infections and 2,763 are locally transmitted. Cumulatively, 1,667 cases have now recovered bringing the total number of active cases to 1,939. The average age of the cases is 36 years, the youngest case is aged 1 month, the oldest is 93 years and 66% are male. **Table 3**, and **Figures 2, 3**, and **4** show detailed distributions of the cases and deaths.

Malawi's borders remain closed except four borders and one airport (KIA) to allow transit of essential goods and services. In the past 24 hours, 364 people have entered Malawi. Active tracing and monitoring of contacts of confirmed COVID-19 are ongoing, currently, a total of 4,851 primary and secondary contacts of COVID-19 cases have been traced.

Recently, Malawi has been receiving returning residents and deportees from other countries, mainly South Africa. Upon entry, they are tested for COVID-19, if positive they put under institutional isolation until safe transfer to their destination district has been arranged. Those tested negative are allowed to proceed to their destination for self-quarantine and follow up by respective district health authorities.

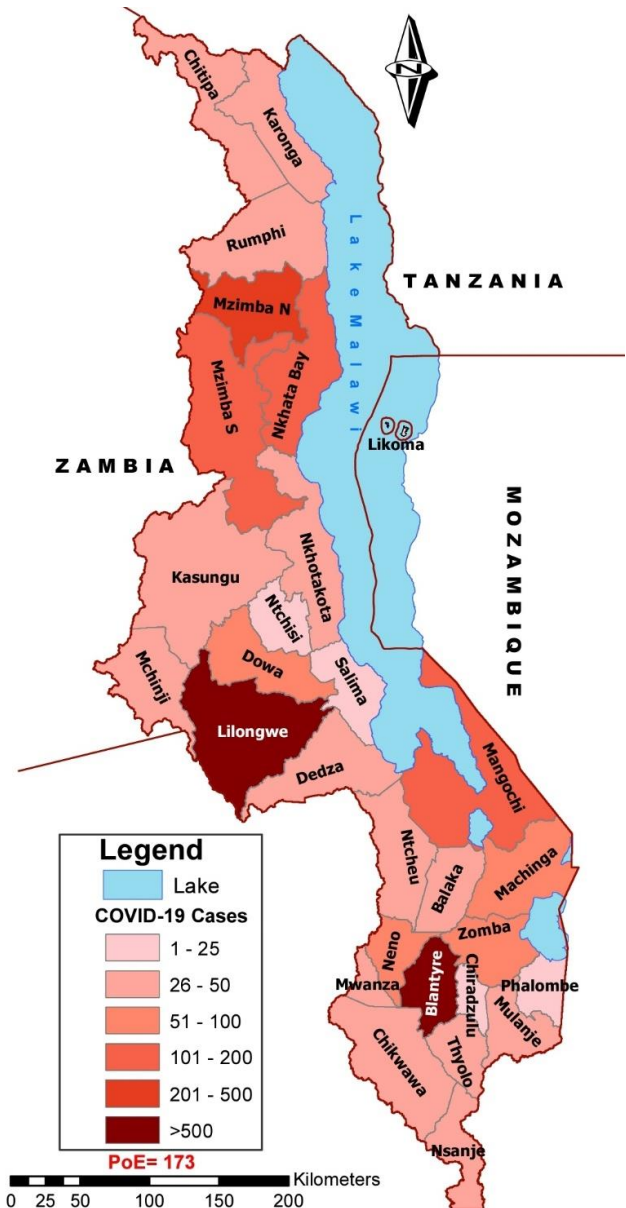


Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing districts with COVID-19 cases

Table 2: Summary statistics for COVID-19 outbreak in Malawi to date

Parameter	Statistic
Cumulative confirmed cases	3,709
Number of active cases	1,939
Number of cases with a positive result in the past 24 hours	45
Cumulative deaths	103
Cumulative recoveries	1,667
Suspected cases	27,665
Cumulative specimen received by the lab	27,665
Cumulative specimen tested	27,390
Specimen tested by the lab in the past 24 hours	243
Cumulative contacts listed and follow up	4,851
PoEs* entries in the last 24 hours	364
High-risk travellers on follow up at district level**	2,464
Cumulative travellers completed 14 days follow up at a district	4,116

* Point of entry **The number of high-risk travellers on follow up as district level is under-reported (few districts reported)

Table 3: Summary of COVID-19 cases reported countrywide as of 27 July 2020, 06:00

Reporting District	Confirmed Cases		Deaths		Recoveries		Transmission Classification*		Days since last reported case
	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	Imported	Local	
Blantyre	7	1,102	0	46	6	346	133	969	0
Lilongwe	12	754	2	20	0	354	91	663	0
Mzimba North	6	471	0	10	8	203	11	460	0
Nkhata Bay	4	133	0	2	0	72	31	102	0
Mangochi	0	124	0	0	0	81	95	29	1
Mzimba South	0	105	1	2	0	22	29	76	2
Zomba	0	96	0	4	1	24	29	67	1
Neno	8	63	0	0	0	10	2	61	0
Dowa	0	58	0	1	2	14	25	33	4
Machinga	0	57	0	0	0	26	50	7	1
Karonga	0	50	1	3	0	13	12	38	1
Mchinji	0	49	0	5	0	16	5	44	2
Thyolo	0	48	0	1	0	40	26	22	2
Chitipa	0	46	0	2	0	38	4	42	3
Kasungu	0	40	0	1	0	9	14	26	1
Balaka	0	38	0	1	1	25	34	4	3
Ntcheu	0	38	0	0	0	24	27	11	1
Nsanje	0	34	0	1	0	19	23	11	2
Nkhotakota	0	34	0	0	2	27	29	5	2
Salima	7	32	0	0	0	21	20	12	0
Mulanje	0	31	0	1	0	17	9	22	2
Dedza	0	30	0	0	2	24	23	7	7
Rumphi	1	27	0	2	0	13	7	20	0
Chikwawa	0	26	0	0	0	23	22	4	6
Mwanza	0	20	0	1	0	13	7	13	2
Chiradzulu	0	17	0	0	0	14	12	5	2
Phalombe	0	9	0	0	0	6	3	6	7
Likoma	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Ntchisi	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Mwanza PoE	0	173	0	0	0	173	173	0	0
Total	45	3,709	4	103	22	1,667	946	2,763	

*Imported means that infection has been acquired from outside the country; Local transmission means that the source of infection is within the country; PoE, Point of Entry;

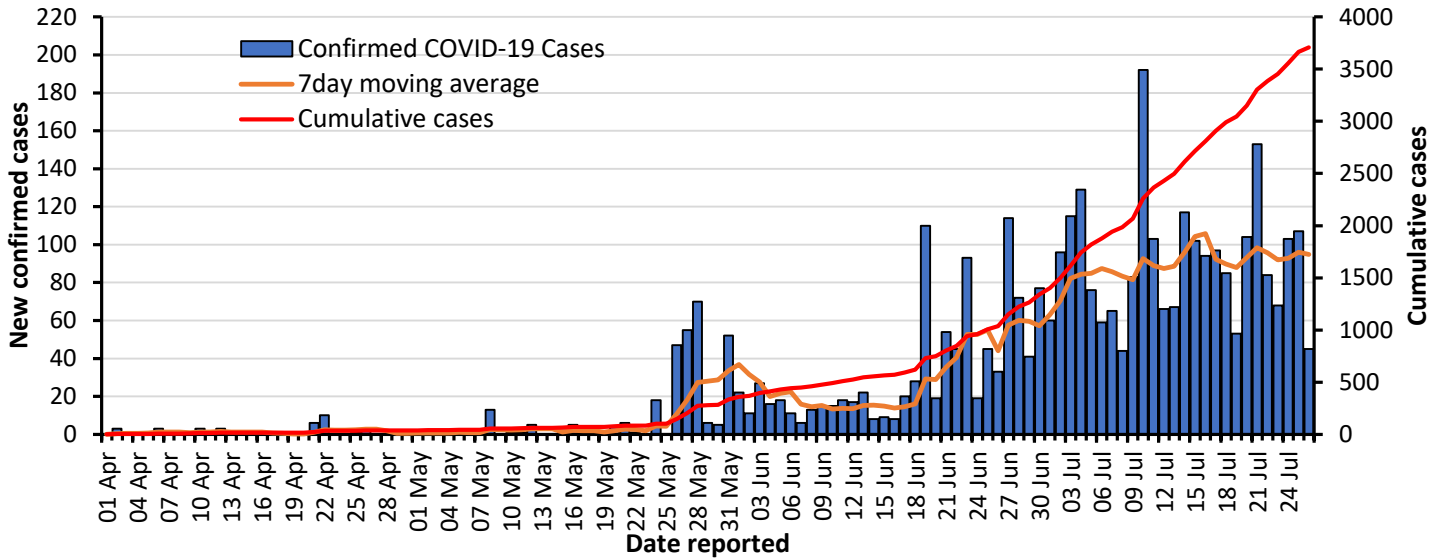


Figure 2: Epidemic curve of COVID-19 in Malawi of 27 July 2020, 06:00

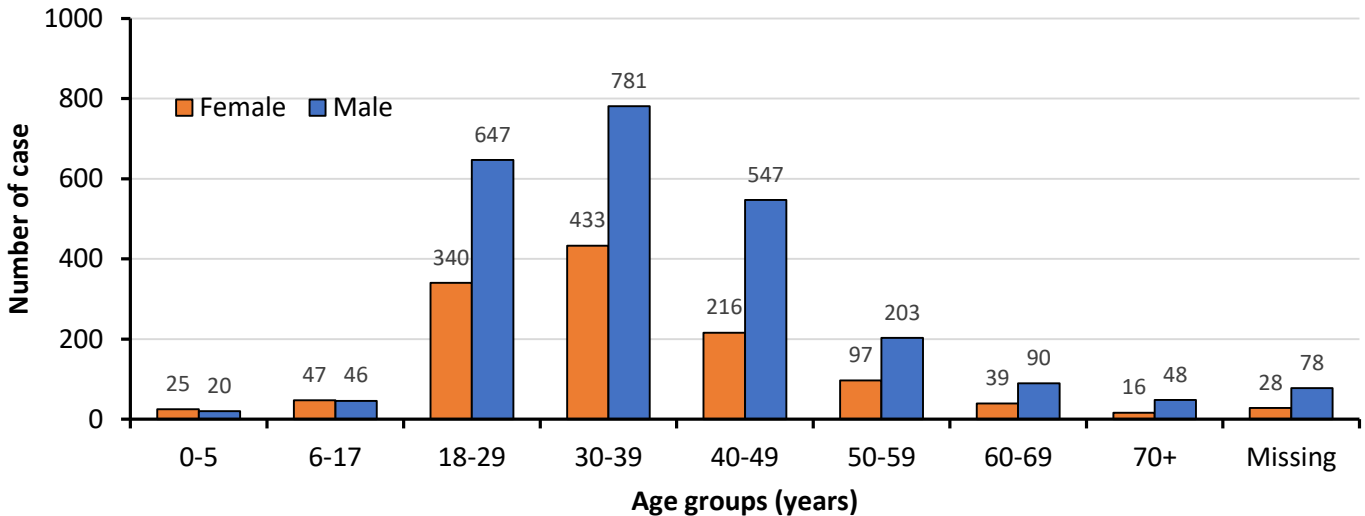


Figure 3: Age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases in Malawi as of 27 July 2020

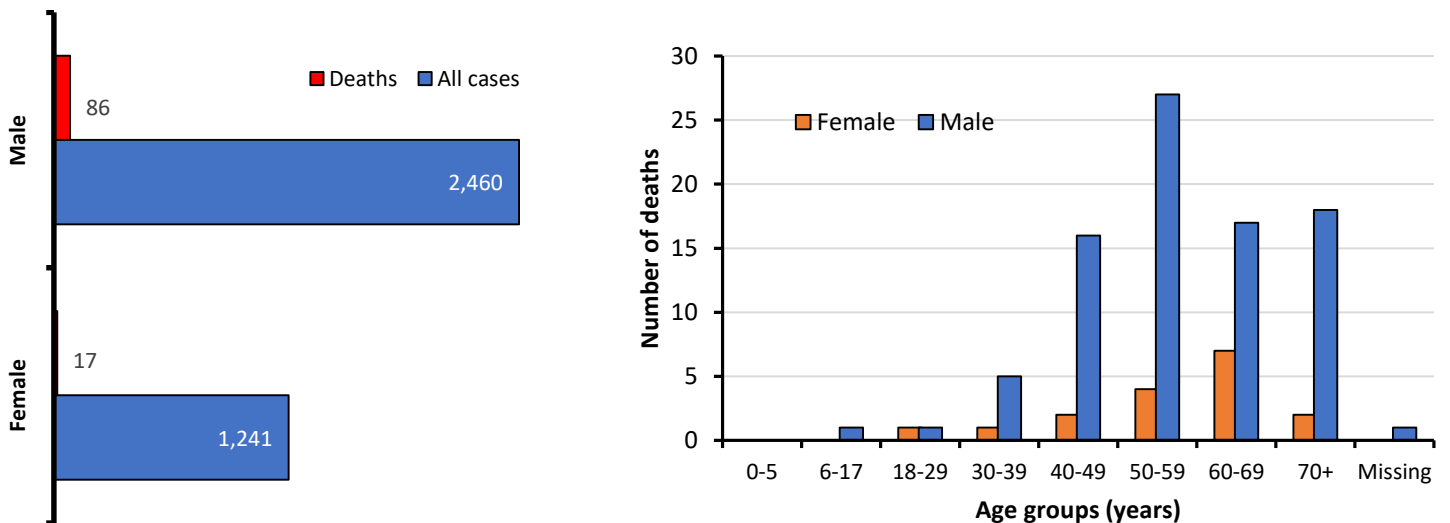


Figure 4: Age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases and deaths in Malawi as of 27 July 2020, 06:00

Summary of Prevention and Response Activities

Laboratory testing

Fourteen laboratories are testing COVID-19 using RT-PCR and 37 laboratories are testing using GeneXpert.

Table 4: Laboratory testing for COVID-19 in Malawi as of 27 July 2020, 06:00

Name of Laboratory	Cumulative samples	In the past 24hrs		Total samples		Result		
		Samples received	Samples tested	Tested	Pending	Indeterminate	Positive	Negative
COM	3,420	0	0	3,412	8	43	427	2,942
NHRL	3,232	0	0	3,232	0	0	275	2,957
Blantyre DREAM	2,984	94	94	2,953	31	0	384	2,569
QECH	2,826	12	12	2,786	40	41	488	2,257
Mwanza	2,527	0	0	2,522	5	0	167	2,355
Mzuzu	1,874	23	23	1,849	25	33	465	1,351
KCH	1,309	207	65	1,167	142	19	144	1,004
Zomba	1,282	0	0	1,279	3	0	212	1,067
PIH	1,210	1	1	1,210	0	0	190	1,020
Bwaila	1,004	15	15	1,002	2	0	122	880
Mzimba South	839	0	0	831	8	0	74	757
MLW	782	0	0	778	4	14	51	713
Balaka DREAM	427	0	0	427	0	0	79	348
Nkhata Bay	368	5	5	368	0	0	94	274
Mangochi	331	0	0	330	1	0	26	304
Karonga	303	1	1	303	0	0	43	260
Salima	284	13	13	284	0	0	24	260
Mchinji	268	3	3	268	0	0	48	220
Dowa	215	0	0	215	0	0	53	162
Thyolo	192	0	0	192	0	9	19	164
Neno	179	0	0	178	1	0	35	143
Ntcheu	177	0	0	177	0	0	10	167
Kasungu	171	2	2	170	1	0	27	143
Balaka	165	2	2	164	1	0	29	135
Chitipa	151	0	0	151	0	0	35	116
Nsanje	143	1	1	143	0	0	22	121
Rumphi	131	1	1	131	0	0	21	110
Nkhotakota	126	2	2	124	2	0	7	117
Karonga MEIRU	124	0	0	124	0	3	14	107
Phalombe	94	2	2	94	0	0	6	88
Dedza	83	0	0	82	1	0	9	73
Mulanje	81	0	0	81	0	0	19	62
Kamuzu Barracks	56	0	0	56	0	0	30	26
Likoma	53	0	0	53	0	0	2	51
Lilongwe Lighthouse	52	0	0	52	0	0	8	44
Chikwawa	43	0	0	43	0	0	2	41
Ntchisi	36	0	0	36	0	0	6	30
Chiradzulu	29	0	0	29	0	0	10	19
Machinga	28	0	0	28	0	0	6	22
Blantyre Lighthouse	17	0	0	17	0	0	4	13
Malamulo Adventist	17	0	0	17	0	0	5	12
Nkhoma Mission	16	0	0	16	0	0	2	14
Wezi Medical Center	16	1	1	16	0	0	15	1
Total	27,665	385	243	27,390	275	162	3,709	23,519

NHRL; National Health Reference laboratory: COM; College of Medicine: MLW; Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust: QECH; Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital: KCH; Kamuzu Central Hospital: PIH; Partners in Hope:



Clinical case management

- 44 cases have been admitted in various treatment units across the country
- 54 cases are under institutional isolation
- 1,841 active cases are being managed as outpatients and are under self-isolation
- Cumulatively 1,667 cases have now recovered and 103 have died

Enforcement and security

- Police and Immigration are continuing border patrols
- Road traffic police continue to enforce new seating capacity for public transportation
- Control of crowds in public and private service outlets
- Roadblocks are being mounted in strategic points across the country

Point of entry

- Monitoring personnel transporting essential goods and services
- Only four borders and one airport remain open for essential personnel travel (e.g. petroleum services and other goods).
- Laboratory testing has been intensified in PoEs

Supply Chain & Stockpiles

- AMREF stocks distributed to Chitipa, Ntchisi, Mangochi, Machinga, Zomba and Chikwawa Districts
- Lilongwe DHO has also been supported with additional PPE
- Distribution of some PPE to Civil Aviation has been done
- COVID-19 Facility-level M&E tool is being developed with a goal of ensuring accountability and monitoring stock to track donated products to facility-level

Risk communication and community engagement

- The public can access the COVID-19 information by dialing *929#, 321 (Airtel), 54747, or by sending “hi” through WhatsApp to 0990 800 000.
- Information is also available on official Ministry of Health pages; Facebook – Ministry of Health – Malawi, Twitter @health_malawi and website <https://covid19.health.gov.mw>
- Continuous community engagement both at the national and district level through different platforms
- Continued airing of COVID-19 public service announcements on community radios, national radio, and TV stations.
- Daily COVID-19 situation updates to the public through different channels
- Production and printing of fact sheets, posters, leaflets, and roll-up banners. Revised communication products finalized and ready for printing
- Push messages on Airtel and TNM in both English and Chichewa.
- Daily press conferences to give updates on COVID-19 in the country
- Interface meetings with communities using mobile van units in all the districts in the country

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 Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC) meetings with cooperating partners and other stakeholders



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 and shortness of breath) 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

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

Confirmed COVID-19 cases are steadily increasing since the first three cases of COVID-19 were confirmed on 2 April 2020. Currently, the locally transmitted infections are more than twice the number of imported cases which highlights that the infection is now high within our communities. This has also been compounded by the inflow of Malawian residents returning from South Africa. 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.

Prepared by: Epidemiology Unit, Public Health Institute of Malawi (PHIM), available on
<https://malawipublichealth.org/index.php/resources/covid-19-daily-updates/detail>