

Highlights

- Phalombe district has registered its first case
- Ten new COVID-19 cases, one new recovery, and no new deaths have been recorded in the past 48 hours.
- A cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases recorded to date is 82, with 3 deaths and 28 recoveries.
- 323 people transporting essential goods and services have entered the country in the past 48 hours
- Kamuzu Central Hospital and Partners in Hope laboratories are new additions to COVID-19 testing sites, bringing the total number of laboratories with the capacity to test COVID-19 to thirteen and 2411 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 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 21 May 2020, 4 893 186 (103 981 new) COVID-19 cases have been reported globally, including 323 256 (4 467 new) deaths. Out of these cases, 68 347 (2 391 new) cases and 1 910 (64 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	156	10	0	0	0
Zambia	832	60	7	0	0
Tanzania	509	0	21	0	14

Local situation

In the past 48 hours, Malawi has registered ten new COVID-19 cases. Seven cases in Blantyre, one case in Phalombe, one in Mzuzu, and one in Lilongwe. One new recovery and no new deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours.

Cumulatively, Malawi has recorded 82 cases including 3 deaths. **Figure 1** is a map of Malawi showing the number of cases in each affected district. Of the 82 cases, 45 were locally transmitted while 34 were imported and 3 are still under investigation. Twenty-eight of the total cases have now recovered (15 in Lilongwe, 9 in Blantyre, 1 in Chikwawa, 1 in Nkhotakota, 1 in Zomba, and 1 in Thyolo) bringing the total number of active cases to 51. The median age of the cases is 35.5 years, the youngest case is aged 6 years and the oldest is 75 years. **Table 3**, and **Figures 2, 3**, and **4** show a detailed breakdown of cases.

Currently, Malawi has officially closed all borders except three borders to allow transit of essential goods and services. In the past 48 hours, 323 personnel transporting essential goods and services entered Malawi. Active tracing and monitoring of contacts of confirmed COVID-19 are ongoing, currently, a total of 673 contacts of COVID-19 cases have been traced out of which 442 have been tested. **Table 2** below provides a summary statistics of surveillance activities.

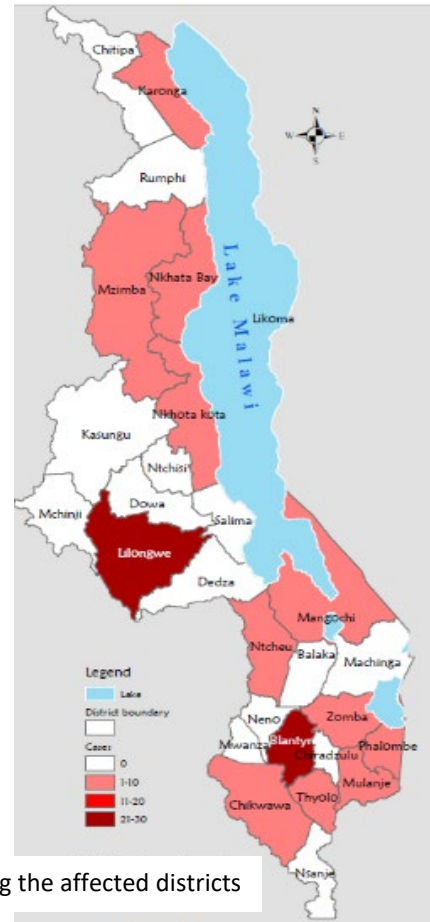


Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing the affected districts

Table 2: Summary statistics for COVID-19 outbreak in Malawi as of 21 May 2020

Parameter	Statistic
Cumulative confirmed cases	82
Number of active cases	51
Number of cases with a positive result in the past 48 hours	10
Cumulative deaths	3
Cumulative recoveries	28
Suspected cases	2459
Cumulative specimen received by the lab	2459
Cumulative specimen tested	2411
Specimen received by the lab in the past 24 hours	230
Cumulative contacts listed and follow up (primary and secondary)	673
Contacts tested to date	442
Personnel transporting essential goods and services, PoEs* entries in the last 24 hours.	323
High-risk travellers on follow up at district level **	3038
Cumulative travellers completed 14 days follow up at district level	1895

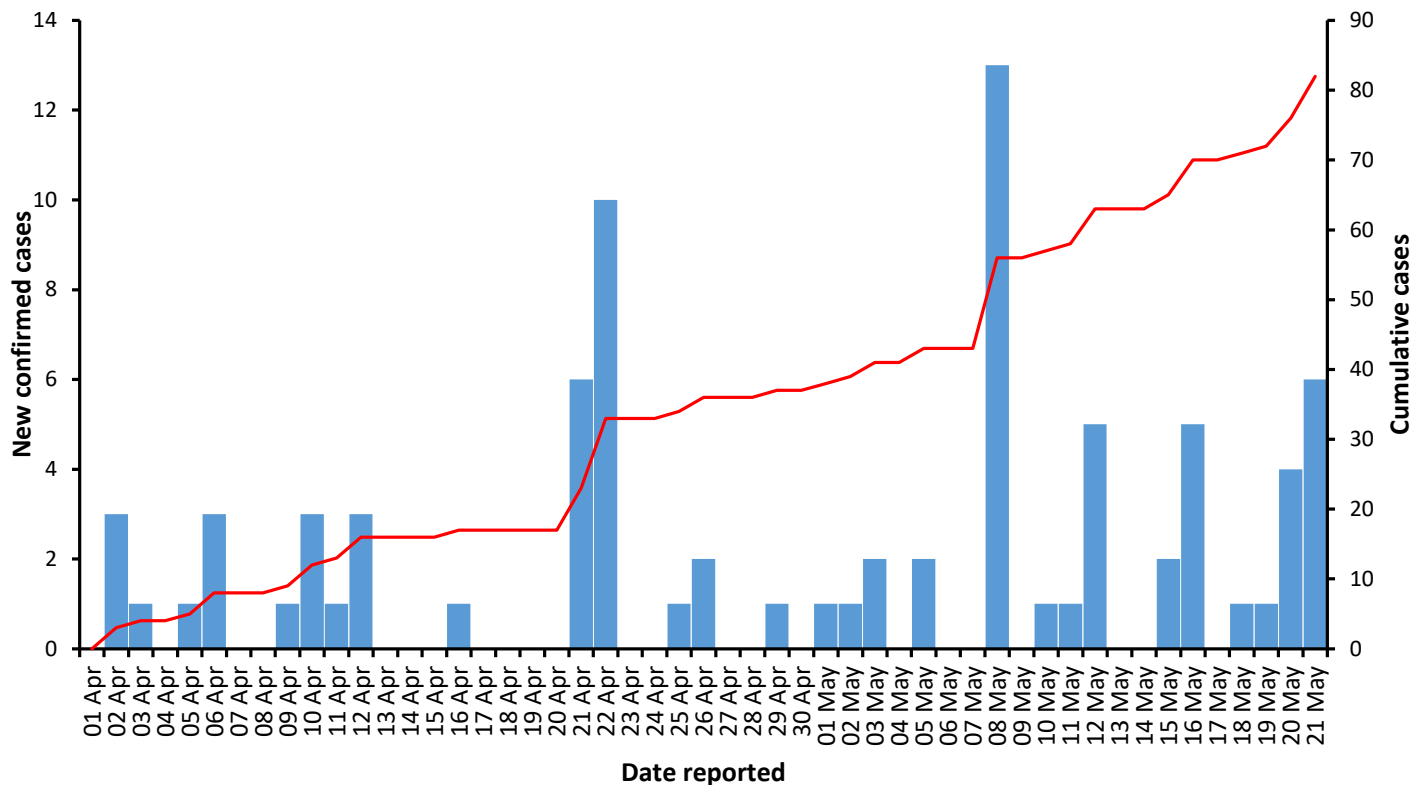
* Point of entry

**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 21 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	30	0	2	0	15	8	21	0	1
Blantyre	7	24	0	1	0	9	10	13	2	0
Thyolo	0	10	0	0	1	1	1	9	0	6
Mzuzu	1	4	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0
Nkhata Bay	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	4
Zomba	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	4
Chikwawa	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	36
Nkhotakota	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	34
Karonga	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	22
Mangochi	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	9
Mulanje	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	7
Ntcheu	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Phalombe	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	10	82	0	3	1	28	34	45	3	

*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 21 May 2020

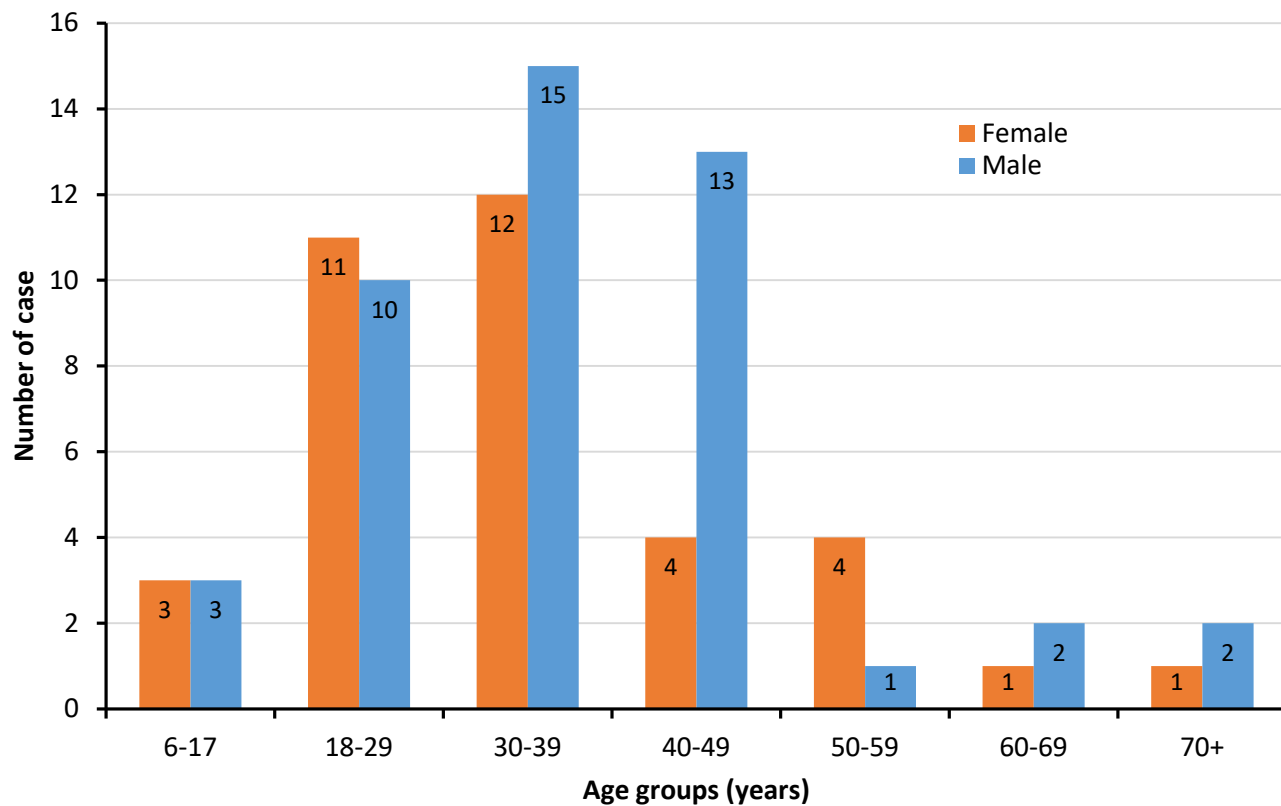


Figure 3: Age and sex distribution of COVID-19 cases in Malawi as of 21 May 2020

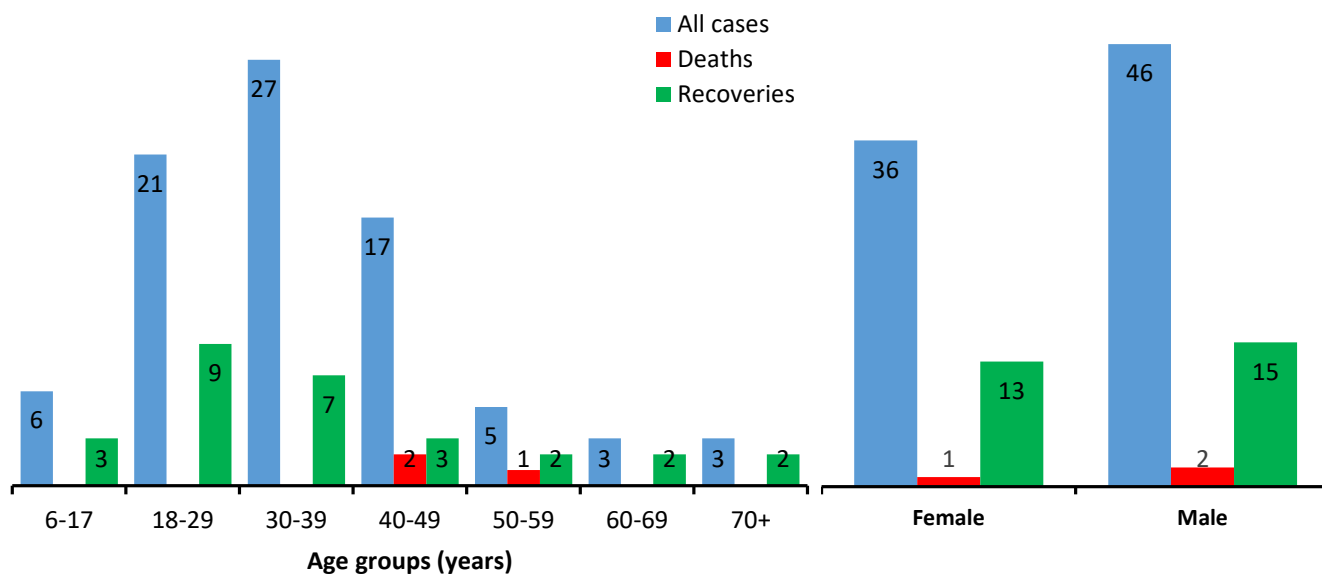


Figure 4: Distribution of COVID-19 cases, deaths and recoveries in Malawi as of 21 May 2020

Summary of Prevention and Response Activities

Laboratory testing

Kamuzu Central Hospital and Partners in Hope laboratories have been set up as COVID-19 testing sites bring a total of COVID-19 testing sites to 13. The other COVID-19 testing sites in the country 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 21 May 2020, a total of 2411 samples have been tested, with 82 positive results, 38 pending results and 27 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 as of 21 May 2020.

Name of Laboratory	Cumulative samples	In the past 24hrs		Total		Result		
		Samples received	Samples tested	Tested	Pending	Indeterminate	Positive	Negative
NHRL	683	40	40	683	0	0	30	653
COM	639	0	44	629	0	10	16	613
MLW	439	46	46	435	4	14	24	397
Mzuzu	182	0	0	180	2	0	10	170
Mzimba	290	21	0	269	21	0	0	269
Zomba	79	0	0	79	0	0	1	78
Balaka	67	1	1	62	5	0	0	62
Thyolo	32	3	3	32	0	3	1	31
Nsanje	7	0	0	7	0	0	0	7
QECH	8	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Dream BT	33	39	33	27	6	0	0	27
Total	2459	150	167	2411	38	27	82	2315

Clinical case management

- 47 active cases are being managed as outpatients and are under self-isolation
- 2 cases have been hospitalized
- 2 cases are under institutional quarantine
- Cumulatively 28 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 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

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

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**).

Prepared by: Epidemiology Unit, Public Health Institute of Malawi (PHIM), available on

<https://malawipublichealth.org/index.php/resources/covid-19-daily-updates/detail>