



**RESULTS DECLARATION SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN,
JUSTICE DR CHIFUNDO KACHALE**

FOR THE 26TH MARCH 2024 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY-ELECTIONS IN:

- 1. KAPORO WARD IN KARONGA NORTH CONSTITUENCY**
- 2. CHILANGA WARD IN KARONGA NORTH-WEST CONSTITUENCY**
- 3. RUKURU WARD IN KARONGA NORTH-WEST CONSTITUENCY**

**27TH MARCH 2024
MAGHEMO SECONDARY SCHOOL HALL**

Salutations

- Commissioners of the Malawi Electoral Commission
- The Chief Elections Officer, Mr Andrew Mpesi and all staff from the Commission,
- The Acting District Commissioner, Mr Frank Mkandawire
- Members of the District Elections Supervisory Team
- The Constituency Returning Officers
- Representatives of various political parties and the independent candidates here present,
- Representatives of various Civil Society Organizations,
- Distinguished Invited Guests,
- Members of the Press,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning

On Tuesday, 26 March 2024 registered voters in:

- Kaporo Ward in Karonga North Constituency
- Chilanga Ward in Karonga North-West constituency
- Rukuru Ward in Karonga North-West constituency

went to the polls to elect three new councillors for their respective wards. From the close of polling, the Commission has been meeting to determine the results brought to it by the Returning Officers. Now that we have finished, we are ready to announce the official results, but before I do that, allow me to give a brief background and overview to the process.

Background to the Vacancy

Ladies and gentlemen, the three wards became vacant when the Magistrate's Court sitting at Karonga on 1st September 2023 convicted three councillors on offences involving dishonesty. This conviction rendered their seats vacant. According to Sections 23 and 47 of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act, the Commission has a duty to conduct by-elections.

Inspection of Voters' Register and Registration of Voters

The law mandates the Commission to determine the period for voter registration, to be a period of not less than seven days and not more than fourteen days. For this by-election, the Commission opened centres for seven (7) days for voter registration and inspection of the voters register from 19 to 25 February 2025.

During the exercise, the Commission registered a total of 1,320 new voters as follows:

- a) Kaporu Ward 610 voters
- b) Rukuru Ward 364 voters
- c) Chilanga Ward 346 voters

However, during the processing of the registrants to add them to the voters' register, it was discovered that 123 new registrants registered using invalid proof of eligibility to register as a voter. The registrants registered using NR 1 forms or slips which are not valid proof of eligibility to register to vote in an election.

Section 12 of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections (PPLGE) Act states that, *"A person who is eligible to be registered as a voter in an election shall, as proof of eligibility, present in person to a registration officer, proof of his or her national registration issued by the National Registration Bureau"*.

The only valid proof of eligibility to register to vote is the National Identity Card. Registration Officers were under strict instruction not to accept any other form of proof other than the National Identity Card. It was, therefore, wrong for Registration Officers to accept and register people bearing NR 1 forms. The Commission is investigating all the circumstances surrounding this wrongful registration and will hold accountable all officers who were responsible or complicit for this serious misconduct.

Therefore, the 123 irregular registrants were not added to the voters' register which meant that the total number of new registrants was 1,197. This brought the total number of new registrants to 68,410 and represented a 1.8 percent increase from the 2019 voter registration total for the constituency which was 67,213.

I should also mention that during registration of voters at Chowo Centre in Chilanga Ward, two individuals were discovered with more than one National Identity Card bearing different sets of particulars. The matter has been reported to the Police and the National Registration Bureau for investigation and prosecution.

Inspection of the Voters' Register by new registrants

The Commission provided for two days, on 2nd and 3rd March, 2024 specifically for all new registrants for these by-elections to go and inspect their names in the preliminary updated voters' register. This was done in accordance with section 21 (1) and (2) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act and the exercise run successfully.

Allow me to emphasise the importance for inspection of the voters' register. This exercise helps to identify and rectify any identified defect or anomaly in the register so that when it comes to polling everything runs smoothly.

Nomination Of Candidates

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Commission opened the nomination process on 25 January 2024. As per provision of the new electoral laws, candidates were supposed to deposit the on-refundable nomination fees before collecting the nomination papers.

The Commission received nomination papers from aspiring candidates on 6th March 2024. On 8th March 2024, the Commission met to endorse the names of the candidates who have been duly nominated.

During the nomination process, the Commission rejected nomination papers from two aspirants, who wanted to stand on Leadership with Compassion Party (LCP) ticket. The rejection was on the basis that the LCP was not a duly registered political party with the Registrar of Political Parties as such it does not yet have the right to sponsor candidates for election. The two aspirants were Gertrude MWANYONGO who wanted to stand in Chilanga Ward and Medelina Deliwe MWAIPINGA who wanted to contest in Rukuru Ward. Ms Mwaipinga was not a registered voter. It should also be mentioned that the LCP had taken the Commission to court challenging the decision to reject its candidates. On 19 March 2024, the High Court dismissed the application for an order of injunction sought by the LCP.

Now, out of the total of 21 nominated candidates in all the three wards, only two are female. Chilanga and Kaporo wards had all male candidates, and the solace was from Rukuru Ward with two female candidates. Out of the 16 registered political parties, six participated by featuring candidates. There were four independent candidates. The summary of the duly nominated candidates is as follows:

1. Kaporo Ward : six candidates, all males

2. Rukuru Ward : Seven candidates (two females and five males)
3. Chilanga Ward : eight candidates all males

Official Campaign Period

The official campaign period started on 24 January 2024. This was in line with Section 51(1) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act which provides that campaign period should run for 60 days ending 48 hours to the start of polling. In view of this arrangement, candidates and political parties were allowed to start campaigning before presenting nomination papers. The official campaign period ended at 6.00am on 24 March 2024.

The Commission extends its commendation to the people of the three wards for their remarkable dedication to upholding law, order, peace, and tranquillity throughout this period. Your steadfast commitment has set a noteworthy precedent, serving as a beacon for others to emulate. Everyone who follows electoral history and familiar with the political terrain of Karonga district, will agree that this has been a great accomplishment.

Polling, Counting And Results Announcement

Polling took place on Tuesday, 26 March, 2024 from 6.00am to 4.00pm according to the provisions of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government. All the 87 polling stations opened and ran uninterrupted. The Commission operated a call centre where all voter identification related issues were referred to and addressed.

The Commission monitored the polling process by visiting polling stations and observed that there were people:

- who presented themselves for voting with the national ID yet they did not register as voters. They were not allowed to vote because their names were not in the voters' register. So, I take this opportunity to echo our message that for one to vote, they need to register as a voter, registration with the National registration Bureau is not for voter registration but would facilitate registration as a voter.
- Were duly registered in the ward having by-elections but presented themselves at the wrong polling station. These were referred to the right centre where they registered. vote.

As per procedure, counting of results commenced immediately after the polls closed at the same polling station. No ballot box was moved from the polling station without being counted. The results from the polling stations were transported to the Constituency Returning Officer, who subsequently delivered them to the Commission's main tally centre for further processing.

The Commission extends its gratitude to all political parties and candidates who deployed their representatives to polling stations and tally centres to monitor the counting and tallying processes. Their presence significantly contributed to enhancing the transparency and credibility of the entire results management process.

Appreciation To Stakeholders

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to express sincere appreciation for the support and collaboration we received from all government ministries, departments and agencies for the support rendered to the Commission in the management of elections.

In a special way we extend our gratitude to the Malawi Police Service for their invaluable role in providing security throughout the by-election. Their dedication

contributed significantly to maintaining a secure environment for voters and ensuring the overall success of the electoral process.

The media played a vital role in raising public awareness about the by-election, and we are thankful for their continuous efforts in providing updates during each stage of the process. Their role in keeping the public informed and engaged was instrumental in the success of the by-election.

Our appreciation also goes to the members of the District Election Supervisory Team, the Constituency Returning Officer, and the Multiparty Liaison Committee. Their dedication and hard work on the ground were essential in managing the by-election effectively. We would also like to thank the various political party leaders for their collaboration in the preparation and conduct of the by-election.

I would like to convey my personal commendation to members of the Commission and the dedicated MEC staff. Your professionalism, commitment, and selflessness significantly contributed to the successful management of the electoral process. In a special way I wish to thank all the staff that braved the rains during voter registration and polling. We had some areas which could not be accessed by vehicles, and we had to deploy staff on hired motorcycles and ox-carts. Well, done and let us continue to uphold these standards in our future endeavors.

Lastly, we express our sincere gratitude to all registered voters for their active participation in the democratic process. Your turnout and engagement demonstrate the true spirit of democracy, and we are thankful for the ultimate love you have shown to your community.

Complaints and Incidences

In accordance with section 65 (h) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act, 2023 the Commission placed Polling Station Complaints Logbooks at all polling stations established in Wards. The Commission having retrieved and reviewed all Polling Station Complaints Logbooks is satisfied that that all complaints were resolved at the Polling Stations and no issue was referred to the Commission.

The Commission wishes to acknowledge receipt of written complaints from the Democratic Party and the Malawi Congress Party. The Commission has had to consider the complaints. Both complaints are allegations of issuance of handouts which is a criminal offence under the Political Parties Act, 2018. The Commission, therefore, the complainants have been advised to refer the complaints to Police and the Registrar of Political Parties for investigations and possible prosecution. Formal responses have been sent to the complainants to that effect.

Examination of Void Votes

The new electoral law allows the Commission to examine void votes only when there is a possibility of affecting the outcome of an election. The Commission did not examine the void votes from the polling stations in the wards because they could not affect the outcome of the election.

Declaration of Results

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Commission, I will now proceed to declare the results.

The Commission monitored the voting that took place on 26 March 2024. We are satisfied that voting was conducted in an environment where the electorate

were free to elect a candidate of their choice without fear and intimidation. We are also confident that the results we are about to announce reflect the democratic will of the voters. The Commission, therefore, declares this election as a credible one that has met legal requirements and international best practices generally as far as free and fair elections are concerned.

1. Kaporo Ward in Karonga North Constituency

There was a total of 14,479 registered voters in Kaporo Ward out of which **4,556** turned out for polling representing **31** percent voter turnout. Total void votes were **30** representing **0.7** percent. The results are as follows:

1. Thumbiko Eddu KAONGA (M), Independent candidate got 146 votes
2. King Ngayambimba MVULA (M) of Malawi Congress Party (MCP) got 1,662 votes
3. Charles Blessings MWAKABAGHA (M) of National Development Party (NDP) got 802 votes
4. Saidi MWANDWAN (M) of UTM got 511 votes
5. Laston MWENITETE (M) of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) got 819 votes
6. Martin NKHONYA (M) of Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) got 586 votes

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission therefore declares King Ngayambimba MVULA who contested as MCP candidate the winner in the Kaporo Ward Local Government By-election.

2. Chilanga Ward in Karonga North-West Constituency

There was a total of **14,927** registered voters in Chilanga Ward out of which **5,294** turned out for polling representing **35** percent voter turnout. Total void votes were **28** representing **0.5** percent. The results are as follows:

1. Teddy Jailos KISHOMBE (M) of Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) got 151 votes
2. Hastings Daniel MWAMBAFULA (M) of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) got 486 votes
3. Talente Kalambo MWANTALULA (M) of Umodzi Party (UP) got 33 votes
4. Abraham Sahara MWANYASI (M) of National Development Party (NDP) got 787 votes
5. Hesco MWASHOGHE (M) Independent candidate, got 379 votes
6. Ndazona MWAUSEGHA (M) of UTM got 1,031 votes
7. Alick NG'OMA (M) of Malawi Congress Party (MCP) got 1,516 votes
8. Benedicto Mwamsamali ZUZE (M) Independent candidate got 883 votes

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission, therefore, declares Alick Ng'oma who contested as MCP candidate the winner in the Chilanga Ward Local Government By-election.

3. Rukuru Ward in Karonga North-West Constituency

There was a total of **38,405** registered voters in Rukuru Ward out of which **9,201** turned out for polling representing **24** percent voter turnout. Total void votes were **74** representing **0.8** percent. The results are as follows:

1. Monica KAIRA (F) of Umodzi Party (UP) got 49 votes

2. Dominic Robson KAMWAMBI (M) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) got 1,332 votes
3. Gift Kumbukani MWALE (M) of Malawi Congress Party (MCP) got 5,858 votes
4. Mayness MWALWENI (F) Alliance for Democracy (Aford) got 599 votes
5. Paul MWAMANDE (M) Independent candidate got 55 votes
6. Vincent Mwenembako MWAMUKONDA (M) of National Development Party (NDP) got 419 votes
7. George Glad MWAUSEGHA (M) of UTM got 815 votes

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission therefore declares Gift Kumbukani Mwale who contested as MCP candidate the winner in the Rukuru Ward Local Government By-election.

Closing remarks

In closing, I would like to extend sincere congratulations once again to all successful candidates in this by-election. Your victory reflects the trust and support bestowed upon you by the electorate, and we have full confidence in your ability to serve your constituents with integrity and dedication.

As you embark on this important journey of public service, I urge you to remain committed to the promises you made during your campaign. Your electorate have placed their faith in you to represent their interests and work towards their betterment, and it is essential that you fulfil this responsibility with diligence and sincerity.

To those who have not emerged victorious in this by-election, I want to remind you that democracy offers endless opportunities for participation and

engagement. Your dedication to your community and your commitment to serving its needs are what truly matter in the long run. Use this experience as a learning opportunity, gather feedback from your electorate, and continue to work towards making a positive impact in their lives.

For the sake of public knowledge, I should mention that the councillors elected today will serve the remainder of the term up to 23 April 2025 when councils shall be dissolved in accordance with section 147 of Republican Constitution.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the electoral process and let us move forward with determination and optimism towards a better tomorrow.

Preparation for 2025 General Election

Before I conclude I also wish to seize the opportunity to present some of the major activities on the electoral calendar that we anticipate being implemented in 2024 as we prepare for the General Election on 16 September 2025. They include:

1. Public Education And Voter Awareness

The Commission will next month be holding meetings in all the councils to educate the public regarding the new electoral laws, new constituency and ward boundaries including registration centres, and the conduct of the 2025 General Election including the 50 percent and one vote electoral system.

2. Voter Registration:

- a. Voter registration will start in September 2024 and run up to December 2024. Everyone will have to register as a voter and when coming they will be required to bring their national ID. I wish to emphasise that the national ID is not for voting.

- b. Everyone born on or before 16 September 2007 will be eligible to register as a voter. If anyone has no National ID, they need to go and register now at their respective National Registration Bureau offices.
- c. Ahead of the voter registration exercise, the Commission will introduce new hand-held Electoral Management Devices (EMDs) and accompanying software. The EMDs will replace the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) kits which were used in the 2019 and 2020 elections and are currently being used during by-elections. The EMDs will be used in key electoral processes including voter registration, voter transfer, voter verification, candidate nomination and results transmission and management.

With these few remarks I thank you all for listening
May God bless you.