



MALAWI ELECTORAL COMMISSION

**Speech by the Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral
Commission, Justice Annabel Mtalimanja during a press
briefing on Supplementary Voter Registration**

**Sunbird Mount Soche Hotel, Blantyre,
17 January 2025**

SALUTATIONS

- Fellow Commissioners
- MEC Chief Elections Officer, Mr Andrew Mpesi
- MEC Deputy Chief Elections Officer, Mr Andrew Kamkwalala
- Esteemed members of the press
- Management and staff from the Malawi Electoral Commission
- And all Malawians who are listening or watching us

Good evening and happy New Year.

It is with great honour that I come before you, to address you today during this important Press Conference organised by the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). The purpose of this Press Conference is to inform the public about the supplementary voter registration that the Commission will conduct.

As you may all recall, in readiness of the General Election on 16th September 2025, the Commission commenced registration of voters on 21st October, 2024 in Phase 1 Councils. During this process, the National Registration Bureau (NRB) was requested by the Commission to deploy officials in our centres, to provide identification and verification services to those citizens who were duly registered with the NRB, but whose national identity cards were still being processed, lost, defaced, or could not be read by the registration equipment, the Election Management Device (EMD).

It will also be recalled that on 25th October, 2024, the High Court sitting at the Principal Registry in the case of *George Chipwaila and others, Civil Cause No. 130 of 2024*, ordered that the NRB should immediately take steps and put in place adequate mechanisms that would ensure that persons who meet the eligibility criteria set by section 77 of the Constitution

and present themselves at the Commission's registration centres, but do not have proof of eligibility issued to them by it, are assisted to register in its database and given unique identifiers in line with the requirements of section 12 of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act and then be allowed to register as voters with the Commission.

It will further be recalled that during Phase 1 of voter registration, some eligible Malawians were unable to register due to unavailability of civil registration services at our voter registration centres, and for some in Phase 2 and 3 Councils, because their unique identification numbers had not been issued at the close of voter registration in those phases.

Therefore, in order to give effect to the Order of the court of 25th October, 2024 by addressing the challenges highlighted above, the Commission will conduct the supplementary voter registration from the 21st of January to the 3rd of February 2025.

The Commission wishes to emphasize that this is not an extension of the voter registration exercise, but it is supplementary, being conducted to give effect to the order of the Court by giving opportunity to persons that failed to register as voters because:

1. They were unable to register with the NRB when they presented themselves at the voter registration centres in Phase 1 Councils because NRB had not yet deployed civil registration teams to the voter registration centres to register those without national IDs. Thus, in Phase 1 Councils the supplementary voter registration will target only those persons that would have registered with the NRB from 21st October 2024, the date voter registration commenced and 4 January 2025 the last date for the supplementary civil registration conducted by the NRB in

phase 1 councils. You may wish to note that, in order to comply with the court judgement, the NRB conducted supplementary civil registration in all councils that were in phase 1 of voter registration from 29 December 2024 to 4 January 2025.

2. In Phases 2 and 3 Councils, some eligible voters presented themselves at voter registration centres and applied for civil registration with the NRB, but were not issued with their unique National ID number by the close of the voter registration, and were consequently unable to register as voters. Thus, in Phase 2 and 3 Councils the supplementary voter registration will target only this category of persons.

For the avoidance of doubt, let me emphasise that:

- an opportunity to register as a voter during this supplementary voter registration exercise will not be availed to anyone who registered with NRB before 21st October 2024 and after 4th January 2025.
- The supplementary voter registration will not cover all the people that were already registered with NRB but failed to register as voters for whatever reason.
- It is a crime to register as a voter more than once. Those that registered as voters should not go and register again in this supplementary voter registration. If they have moved to another place they should wait for the voter transfer window to process their transfer at the centre where they want to vote at.
- There will be NO fresh civil registration taking place in voter registration centres during supplementary voter registration. However, NRB teams will be available in all the registration centres to help voters with verification of their civil registration.

Some guiding statistics

- i. Ladies and Gentlemen, you may wish to recall that the National Statistical Office (NSO) had given us a population projection of 10,957,490 as those that would be 18 years and above by 16th September 2025. Out of this target, according to our preliminary figures released last year, 7,162,127 people registered as voters in targeted 6,339 voter registration centres. Centres were opened for a maximum period of fourteen (14) days as provided by section 4(3) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act.
- ii. For the Supplementary voter registration, the target population is based on the number of eligible people that have been registered by the NRB from 21st October 2024, which was the first day of voter registration, up to 4th January 2025 which was the last day of a special civil registration process that NRB conducted to assist the Commission and put into effect the Order of the High Court of 25th October 2024.
- iii. On 10th January 2025, the National Registration Bureau released figures, in which they informed the nation that they had registered a total of 373,996 Malawians between 21st October 2024 to 4th January 2025. Out of this 271,784 would be 18 years and above by 16th September 2025, and that 70 applications were still being processed by that time. The Commission therefore wishes to announce that the target population for the supplementary voter registration is a maximum that would range between 271,784 to 271,854 people only. We are using the word maximum because we are aware that out of this number, some were already registered as voters under phases 2 and 3 of voter registration.
- iv. The Supplementary voter registration will be done in a maximum of 1,974 voter registration centres, representing 31% of the total number of centres.

Mathematics would inform us that for a maximum population of 271,784 (which is 2.4% of the projected population of 10,957,490 eligible registrants), the Commission will conduct voter registration in 31% of the registration centres. The Commission has done this to get closer to where the people are.

The Commission will, therefore, publish the centres where supplementary voter registration will be conducted. We will further publish figures for the targeted population (271,784) as aligned according to our voter registration centres, wards, constituencies and councils.

Dates for supplementary voter registration

Supplementary voter registration will be conducted in three phases, and each will last a maximum of two (2) days. The Commission will ensure that it has adequate staff and equipment to register eligible Malawians within that period. The phases will be as follows:

Phase 1 will be conducted from 21st to 22nd January 2025 in the following Councils:

- (i) M'mbelwa (Mzimba)
- (ii) Lilongwe
- (iii) Lilongwe City
- (iv) Mangochi
- (v) Mangochi Municipality
- (vi) Mwanza
- (vii) Chikwawa
- (viii) Nsanje

Phase 2 will be conducted from 27th to 28th January 2025 in the following Councils:

- (i) Nkhata Bay
- (ii) Rumphi
- (iii) Likoma

- (iv) Kasungu
- (v) Kasungu Municipality
- (vi) Dowa
- (vii) Mchinji
- (viii) Ntcheu
- (ix) Zomba
- (x) Zomba City
- (xi) Blantyre
- (xii) Blantyre City
- (xiii) Thyolo
- (xiv) Luchenza

Phase 3 will be conducted from 2nd to 3rd February 2025 in the following Councils:

- (i) Chitipa
- (ii) Karonga
- (iii) Karonga Town
- (iv) Mzuzu City
- (v) Nkhotakota
- (vi) Ntchisi
- (vii) Salima
- (viii) Dedza
- (ix) Balaka
- (x) Machinga
- (xi) Chiradzulu
- (xii) Neno
- (xiii) Phalombe
- (xiv) Mulanje

Times for opening and closing of centres

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission further wishes to remind all the persons targeted in the supplementary voter registration to present themselves at the voter registration centres on the scheduled dates, between 8:00am and 4:00pm. It should also be noted that the Elections Management Devices (EMDs) have been configured to stop registering people on the 3rd of February 2025 at 4:00pm. It is therefore advisable that people should go earlier for the registration process. On our part as a Commission, we will ensure that registration centres have adequate equipment and personnel to register everyone who presents themselves in the two days of the exercise.

Monitoring and Observation of the exercise

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission is calling upon all political parties, aspiring independent candidates and civil society organizations to deploy their representatives to monitor and observe the supplementary voter registration exercise as required by law.

Political party representatives and CSO observers will play a critical role in enhancing the credibility of the registration process by monitoring and observing and reporting on the activities at registration centers. Political parties that wish to make changes to their list of representatives are advised to notify the respective MEC District Offices as soon as possible to ensure a smooth process and to avoid any unnecessary disruptions. All accreditations that were issued to observers are valid for this exercise.

The Commission is urging all Malawians to respect the laws of the land, rules and procedures governing this process. By doing so, we contribute to the integrity of the 2025 General Election, and ***promote democratic leadership through your vote***, as the theme for the 16th September 2025 General elections states.

Thank you for your attention

May God bless Malawi

COUNCILS COVERED UNDER EACH PHASE

Phase 1: From 20th to 21st January 2025 – will cover 652 voter registration centres from:

- (i) M'mbelwa (Mzimba)
- (ii) Lilongwe
- (iii) Lilongwe City
- (iv) Mangochi
- (v) Mangochi Municipality
- (vi) Mwanza
- (vii) Chikwawa
- (viii) Nsanje

Phase 2: From 27th to 28th February 2025 – will cover 637 voter registration centres from:

- (i) Nkhata Bay
- (ii) Rumphu
- (iii) Likoma
- (iv) Kasungu
- (v) Kasungu Municipality
- (vi) Dowa
- (vii) Mchinji
- (viii) Ntcheu
- (ix) Zomba
- (x) Zomba City
- (xi) Blantyre
- (xii) Blantyre City
- (xiii) Thyolo
- (xiv) Luchenza

Phase 3: From 2nd to 3rd February 2025 – will cover 685 voter registration centres from:

- (i) Chitipa
- (ii) Karonga

- (iii) Karonga Town
- (iv) Mzuzu City
- (v) Nkhotakota
- (vi) Ntchisi
- (vii) Salima
- (viii) Dedza
- (ix) Balaka
- (x) Machinga
- (xi) Chiradzulu
- (xii) Neno
- (xiii) Phalombe
- (xiv) Mulanje