



European Union  
Election Observation Mission

**MALAWI 2025**

Final Report



**General Elections**

16 September 2025



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*The Election Observation Missions are independent from the institutions of the European Union. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy and position of the European Union.*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AFORD	Alliance for Democracy
BVVD	Biometric Voter Verification Device
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
EBMCC	Election Broadcasts Monitoring Complaints Committee
EMD	Election Management Device
EMS	Election Management System
EU EOM	EU Election Observation Mission
FEDOMA	Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi
FP	Freedom Party
FPTP	First-past-the-post electoral system
IPOR	Institute of Public Opinion and Research
PPA	Political Parties Act
PPLGEA	Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act
PRVT	Process and Results Verification for Transparency
MACRA	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MACODA	Malawi Council for Disability Affairs
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MWK	Malawian Kwacha
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa - Malawi
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MPLC	Multi-Party Liaison Committee
NDP	National Development Party
NICE	National Initiative for Civic Education
NRB	National Registration Bureau
OZAM	Olya Zake Alibe Mlandu
ORPP	Office of the Registrar of Political Parties
PP	People's Party
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UDF	United Democratic Front
UTM	United Transformation Movement
ZBS	Zodiak Broadcasting Station

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The elections of 16 September 2025 in Malawi were laudably straight-forward, with a pluralistic competition, amidst a peaceful campaign, followed by a smooth transfer of power. The electoral process testified to the embeddedness of democratic principles in Malawi. The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) conducted the process efficiently, with results ultimately accepted by all contenders. At the same time, the absence of regulation of campaign finance, and the bias towards incumbency demonstrated by state media, contributed to inequity in campaigning. While fundamental freedoms were respected during the campaign period, the political participation of women as candidates was low.

Presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections took place simultaneously. Voters elected the president and vice president on a single ticket, as well as 229 Members of Parliament (MPs) and 509 ward councillors. The electoral race between the two frontrunners, incumbent president Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), and former President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was conducted in a competitive environment, amid severe economic hardship and acute food insecurity. The outcome was a landslide victory for President Mutharika and Vice President Dr. Jane Ansah.

The electoral legal framework, comprising the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi 1994 and consolidated election laws, provides an adequate foundation for democratic elections, guaranteeing universal suffrage, political rights, and periodic constituency reviews, although disparities in representation between constituencies exist. The Judiciary is held in high regard, but the dispute resolution system is characterised by delay. In the present elections, electoral disputes were resolved so close to election day that polls were postponed in two parliamentary constituencies as a consequence.

The independence of MEC has been enhanced in recent years. While the appointment mechanism ensures proportional representation of the main political parties among commissioners, this was fully effected only a week prior to polling day, with the appointment of the third DPP representative. There were repeated calls for the resignation of the MEC chairperson and chief elections officer by the opposition due to perceived political bias over the year leading up to the elections. At regional and district levels, MEC appeared as largely impartial and professional and the institution operated transparently, with the exception of information sharing on election technology.

Election management devices and biometric voter verification devices, together with appropriate systems and infrastructure, were introduced to improve the efficiency and transparency of the electoral process, but this was not communicated clearly or transparently to stakeholders or the public and became a source of public and political contention. Late deployment and opaque procurement of biometric voter verification devices, as well as insufficient stakeholder engagement, and unclear communication on the role of technology overall, undermined confidence in the electoral process and fuelled confusion and misinformation, reinforcing suspicions among political actors already concerned by the refusal of an independent technology audit. While all electronic processes ran in parallel with paper-based ones, most challenges observed on election day and in the transmission of results were human or procedural in nature, rather than technical.

Electoral preparations were completed in a timely manner and largely according to the published operational plan. A notable exception, however, was the detailed tally centre procedures for constituency, district and national levels, which were not published. These left stakeholders uninformed of the details of this critical part of the process.

The disaggregated final voter registration data published do not appear to indicate systematic suppression of registration in any part of the country. Seven million two hundred thousand voters were registered, representing 65.7 per cent of the projected voting-age population.

The inclusive and well managed candidate nomination process resulted in a high number of candidates for all three elections, and competitive elections in nearly all constituencies. However, the candidates were only approved to contest several weeks after the start of the official campaign period.

Civil rights of political participation were respected during the sixty-day election campaign period. Campaigning activity was modest, constrained by the prevailing economic crisis and the lack of access to resources. Personality-based campaigning often took precedence over issue-based campaigning, particularly among opposition candidates. Installation and elevation of traditional leaders, nearly tripling the budget for their annual honoraria, as well as a series of high-profile inaugurations and launches of major public works by incumbent members of Government during the campaign period, blurred the line between official duties and campaign activity.

The absence of effective campaign finance regulation resulted in wealthier candidates campaigning without restriction, while others, particularly women and independents, struggled to fund their campaigns. Handouts remained widespread and largely culturally tolerated. Although the Political Parties Act became fully operational with the appointment of the Registrar of Political Parties, the office was under-resourced. In addition, there are significant lacunae in the law, with no limits in place on either campaign fundraising or expenditure. In this context, the Registrar issued a formal warning to the incumbent to refrain from giving cash handouts to teachers, youths, traditional leaders and vendors at state residences.

The Malawi media landscape was diverse and radio-dominated, but the overall media reach was limited. The legal framework for freedom of expression is gradually improving. Although journalists generally felt free to operate, economic reliance on politically affiliated advertisers, with up to 80 per cent of advertising bought by government, and payment of allowances by candidates, curtailed this freedom, affecting the information voters received. The appointment mechanism of both the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) and the state broadcaster Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) did not allow for the necessary independence, contrary to Malawi's obligations under regional and international human rights law.

All broadcasters offered considerable paid airtime, inconsistently labelled, favouring wealthier candidates and reducing editorial coverage on radio, television and Facebook. The state broadcaster MBC did not fulfil its legal obligations of neutrality and balanced coverage. The incumbent, MCP, and the Government, received an undue advantage through extensive MBC coverage, while the station provided limited and biased reporting on opponents. Private broadcasters, particularly Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS), provided more balanced coverage of leading candidates. The Times Group, however, shifted its focus to favour the incumbent late in the campaign. MACRA, despite some positive steps, did not take adequate corrective measures, failing to uphold the freedom of expression.

Although only 18.4 per cent of Malawians are online, social media shaped key narratives during the campaign. The EU EOM analysed 10,530 posts (of which 6,264 were classified as political and election related), finding that MCP enjoyed disproportionate amplification through state-linked accounts, while disinformation largely originated from pro-DPP proxy outlets. Around 16 per cent of proxy content contained false or misleading claims, mostly targeting MCP. Official party accounts avoided disinformation. Fact-checking responses were reactive, and a few cases of online gender-based violence were also observed.

Social, cultural and financial barriers continue to inhibit women's political participation in Malawi. Forty-eight women have been elected to the National Assembly, amounting to 20.9 per cent of MPs, representing a decrease from the 22 per cent women in the last parliament. A single woman competed in the presidential election, among a total field of 17 candidates.

Despite a broadly favourable legal framework, persons with disabilities (PWD) faced significant obstacles to accessibility as voters, candidates and supporters. However, the halved nomination fees contributed to an increased participation of PWD in these elections, with 78 candidates contesting and one winning a parliamentary seat, while four won local government elections.

Youth remain underrepresented in elected office and marginalised in political decision-making. Structural and institutional barriers, including exclusionary party practices, and financial obstacles, limit youth access to leadership roles. While initiatives like the Youth Decide Campaign and training by the Inclusive Democracy Academy have enhanced advocacy and candidate preparedness, most young aspirants were eliminated during primaries or relegated to mobilisation roles. Political parties did little to translate youth-focused commitments into meaningful inclusion of the youth in their decision-making processes, while the MEC's refusal to release age-disaggregated electoral data hinders comprehensive analysis of youth participation.

Civil society deployed a large number of observers to provide public scrutiny of the polling and counting and thus enhance the transparency of the process. The MEC accreditation timeline did not consider the needs of the long-term observation of the entire campaign period.

Voting on election day was peaceful, orderly and transparent. Voters were able to freely express their will, procedures were largely followed, and party representatives were present in all but one polling station observed. The overall conduct of the voting was assessed positively in 99 per cent of the 359 polling stations visited by the EU EOM observers. Counting was assessed to be less well organised and less transparent, but tabulation of results at constituency, district and national level was transparent and credible.

Rival presidential candidates conceded defeat, including the incumbent in a national address hours before the declaration of results by MEC. Despite premature and conflicting claims of victory, as well as disinformation spread by the two main parties in the days following the elections, the post-electoral period was tense but peaceful. The electorate demonstrated strategic voting behaviour, differentiating between presidential, parliamentary, and local government contests, and electing a hung parliament. While the DPP emerged as the largest parliamentary party, it fell short of a majority and will rely on independents, now the second-largest bloc.

Split-ticket voting signalled a possible decline in traditional regional and ethnic voting patterns. While the DPP won the presidency, with 56.8 per cent of the vote, it secured only 35 per cent of parliamentary seats and 49 per cent of local wards. MCP, the second most dominant party, secured 24 per cent of MPs and 28 per cent of councillors. Independents emerged as a significant force, becoming the second-largest bloc in Parliament and third in local councils.

### Priority Recommendations

The EU EOM has made 21 recommendations for improving the way elections are organised, managed, and conducted in Malawi. They include six priority recommendations:

- 1. Clarify standard operating procedures to guide the use and management of election technology. Consider establishing a clear legal framework governing the use of electronic tools at all stages of the electoral process, defining standards for functionality and security as well as oversight, including audit.***



2. *Enhance fairness in campaign financing by imposing limits on campaign fundraising and expenditure, while enhancing transparency and accountability of political parties and candidates by requiring timely and disaggregated disclosure of income and expenditure.*
3. *Ensure MACRA's independence through transparent nomination of its members and chairperson by various institutions, as well as media and telecommunication professionals and broader civil society, and appointment by the National Assembly. Revoke ministerial policy directions over the regulator.*
4. *Transform the state-owned broadcaster MBC into a genuinely independent public service broadcaster with independent management and oversight, appointed by, and accountable to, the public through the legislature.*
5. *Consider the introduction of temporary special measures, such as new district-wide parliamentary constituencies, within each district, reserved exclusively for women, to promote their political participation.*
6. *Consider the adoption of legislative time limits requiring the judiciary to resolve election-related cases expeditiously.*

## II. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the 16 September general elections in Malawi, following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Malawi Electoral Commission. The EOM was present from 2 August to 6 October 2025.

The EU EOM was led by the Chief Observer, Lucia Annunziata, Member of the European Parliament from Italy. The EU EOM comprised a core team of 11 experts based in Lilongwe and 28 long-term observers who arrived on 17 August and deployed to all regions of the country. Thirty-two short-term observers were present from 10 - 20 September and deployed throughout the country.

For the election day, the EU EOM was reinforced with 23 locally recruited observers from diplomatic representations of EU Member States. In total, the EU EOM deployed 110 observers from all 27 EU Member States, as well as from partner countries Canada, Norway and Switzerland. In addition, a delegation of seven Members of the European Parliament was led by Mr. Reinhold Lopatka, Member of the European Parliament from Austria.

The mission's mandate was to observe all aspects of the electoral process and assess the extent to which the elections complied with regional and international commitments for elections, as well as with national legislation. The EU is independent in its findings and conclusions. The mission followed an established methodology and adhered to the "Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation", endorsed under United Nations auspices in October 2005 and now espoused by over 50 organisations.

### III. POLITICAL CONTEXT

#### *Bi-party dominance, weak party democracy and voter discontent, amid economic hardship*

General elections were held on 16 September 2025, comprising presidential, parliamentary and local government contests. Voters elected the president and the vice president on a single ticket, as well as 229 MPs, and 509 ward councillors. The presidential race, contested primarily between incumbent Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP and his predecessor, former President Arthur Peter Mutharika of the opposition DPP, took place against the backdrop of profound economic hardship and acute food insecurity. Underlying difficulties included rising costs of essential goods, shortages of fuel and foreign exchange, and persistent fiscal instability, deepening citizens' socio-economic insecurity. Significant discontent over economic management and public sector corruption were reported as key concerns by EOM interlocutors.

The 2025 elections saw a record number of presidential and parliamentary contestants, including an unprecedented share of independents, often former party aspirants who failed to secure nominations. Their rise was widely seen as a sign of persistent shortcomings in intra-party democracy, irregularities in highly contested primaries, and erosion of trust in party structures. The political landscape was characterised by personality-driven party dynamics, limited ideological differentiation among candidates, and a declining influence of regional and ethnic voting patterns. There was a dominance of veteran candidates, with the leading candidates being 85 (DPP) and 70 (MCP) years of age respectively.

Although 17 presidential candidates were successfully nominated, and six political parties held seats in the out-going parliament, the presidential race was effectively dominated by two main political forces: the ruling MCP, with its primary support from the Central Region, and the opposition DPP, backed by its Southern Region stronghold and allied with the Northern Region-based Alliance for Democracy (AFORD).

A poll by the Institute of Public Opinion and Research (IPOR), released less than two weeks before the elections, suggested a narrowing race between the opposition DPP and ruling MCP, with indications of a second presidential round. Dalitso Kabambe (United Transformation Movement - UTM), Atupele Muluzi (United Democratic Front - UDF), and Joyce Banda (People's Party - PP) followed at a distance, pointing to a fragmented opposition landscape, shifting voter dynamics and a competitive contest. Most parties preferred to run separately to secure a maximum number of parliamentary and local government seats. Their reluctance to form alliances could have been contributed to by the demise of the Tonse Alliance, which had brought MCP and UTM to power in 2020.

While 24 political parties were officially registered, only 11 submitted presidential nominations, and 17 fielded parliamentary candidates. The MCP contested in 96 per cent of parliamentary constituencies, while the DPP offered a candidate in 85 per cent, leaving several constituencies in the Central Region without a DPP candidate.

## IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS EU EOM RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Progress on EU election mission recommendations mixed, as legal reforms advance while key priority measures on transparency and dispute resolution stall*

After the 2019 elections, the EU EOM offered twenty-four recommendations for electoral reform, with five highlighted as priorities. Progress since then has been uneven, with some significant reforms enacted, but with further reform measures required. Of the total, three recommendations were fully implemented, eight partially implemented, while thirteen saw no change.

Reform of the legal framework represented the clearest advance. The harmonised Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act was passed in 2023, eliminating inconsistencies between earlier laws. A constitutional amendment clarified voter eligibility, enfranchising citizens turning 18 by polling day. In electoral administration, improvements were modest. MEC introduced some internal communication enhancements and revised recruitment of presiding officers, but no progress was made on priority recommendations such as the publication of clear tally centre procedures.

On campaign regulation and political finance, the appointment of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) in 2024 was an overdue but important step. The ORPP has started addressing complaints and has issued warnings against the distribution of handouts, but limited resources continue to undermine its effectiveness. There has been little progress concerning participation and inclusion. Gender representation has stagnated, with women still underrepresented as candidates and councillors, and political parties failing to adopt stronger equality measures. MEC has started collecting data on voters with disabilities, but implementation gaps persist. In the media and rights sphere, there was notable progress with the repeal of sedition provisions and the High Court declaring criminal defamation unconstitutional. However, presidential control over appointments to key broadcasting and media regulatory bodies remains unchanged, undermining independence.

Finally, in electoral dispute resolution, systemic reform to introduce clear timelines and judicial fast-tracking was not adopted. The minimum swearing-in period for elected officials remains too short to adequately accommodate the petition processes.

## V. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

### *Electoral law provides an adequate basis for democratic elections*

#### International Principles and Commitments

Malawi has ratified or acceded to most international legal instruments pertaining to human rights and the conduct of elections. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the UN Convention against Corruption. It has also acceded to several regional treaties, such as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. Malawi is also a state party to several legal instruments of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

#### Constitutional Human Rights

The Constitution of 1994 marked the transition of Malawi from a one-party to a multi-party system, following a national referendum in 1993. It establishes the separation of the three branches of power, and guarantees the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It provides for universal and equal suffrage and prohibits discrimination in any form. It grants every person the rights to freedom of association, opinion and expression, rights of assembly and peaceful demonstration, the right to form, join and participate in the activities of a political party and to campaign for a political party or cause, to participate in peaceful political activity intended to influence government policies, to freely make political choices and the right to an effective remedy by a court of law for acts violating the rights and freedoms granted by the Constitution or any other law.

### **Electoral Legislation**

The legal framework for elections in Malawi includes the Constitution, the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act (PPLGEA), 2023, the Electoral Commission Act, 1998, and the Political Parties Act, 2018. The 2023 electoral reforms marked a significant shift, repealing the 1993 electoral laws and consolidating them into the PPLGEA, harmonising the fragmented legal framework that had previously governed the presidential, parliamentary and local government elections separately.

The harmonisation enabled MEC to administer elections more effectively, including the enfranchisement of eighteen-year-old voters by allowing those that would attain the age of eighteen by polling day to register in advance. In 2025, the PPLGEA was further amended to permit individuals on official duty during polling, such as polling staff, candidate representatives and security personnel, to vote at the stations where there were deployed.

Several substantive reforms were introduced by constitutional amendment following the High Court's nullification of the 2019 elections, upheld in the Supreme Court in 2020. The most significant change was the adoption of the requirement that a president must win the election by a majority of more than fifty per cent of the valid votes to secure victory in the poll. The framework further provides that where a candidate has not attained the required quantity of votes, a fresh election must be conducted between the first and second ranked candidates within sixty days of the declaration of results.

The harmonised framework also extended the constituency boundary review period from five years to ten years, potentially facilitating MEC in electoral planning. Moreover, the reforms enhanced the authority and accountability of MEC by requiring verification and confirmation of results before declaration. Additionally, the timeframe for declaring results was extended to ensure thorough verification by the MEC, eight days for presidential election results, fourteen days for parliamentary elections, and 21 days for local government elections.

### **Electoral System and Constituency Delimitation**

Malawi's political system is a multi-party democracy with presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections held every five years. The President, who serves as both Head of State and of Government, is directly elected. Constitutional change in 2023 introduced a two-round system in presidential elections: to be elected in the first round, a candidate must secure more than 50 per cent of the valid votes<sup>1</sup>. If no candidate reaches this threshold, a runoff is held, within 60 days, between the two leading contenders. There has not yet been a run-off conducted under this constitutional provision, although there was a poll in 2020, following the nullification of the 2019 election, which involved only the two front-runners in the earlier election. National Assembly members (229 seats) are elected in single-member constituencies under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system. Councillors are, similarly, directly elected through FPTP contests at ward level.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 80 (2) of Constitution of the Republic of Malawi.

Constituency delimitation in Malawi is governed primarily by the Constitution<sup>2</sup>. MEC is mandated to review and determine constituency boundaries. The guiding principles are that constituencies must contain, as nearly as possible, equal numbers of voters, taking into account population distribution, geographical features, and administrative convenience. Any boundary changes proposed by MEC must be tabled before the National Assembly for approval.

The Constitution and the Electoral Commission Act mandate the Malawi Electoral Commission to conduct constituency delimitation in a manner that promotes equitable representation. MEC is required to determine and review constituency boundaries at an interval of not more than ten years, to ensure that they reflect demographic changes, while maintaining approximately equal numbers of eligible voters. The process is guided by specific considerations namely: population density, ease of communication, geographic features and existing administrative boundaries.

Prior to the 2021–2022 constituency and ward review, Malawi's previous comprehensive review of constituency boundaries was conducted in 1998 in preparation for the 1999 General Elections.

The 2022 review resulted in an increase in the number of parliamentary constituencies from 193 to 229. This increase was determined on the basis of population statistics projected by the National Statistics Office (NSO), which estimated that the national population of eligible voters in 2025 would be 10,957,490. As mandated by law, the National Assembly, in exercising its oversight over the delimitation process, was required to confirm the boundary changes, which it duly did in 2022.

Significant variations exist in the number of voters between constituencies. For example, Karonga Songwe Constituency has 33,687 voters, Dowa Southeast Constituency 58,859 voters (both rural), Mchinji Central East Constituency 65,299 voters, Blantyre City Nkolokoti–Ndirande Matope Constituency 53,938 voters, and Chikwawa North Constituency 36,276 voters<sup>3</sup>. This indicates over- and under-representation in both rural and urban areas, with some rural constituencies favoured in terms of demarcation compared to urban centres. While the 2022 delimitation mitigated some of the disparities previously observed in larger constituencies, further constituency delimitation remains necessary to address persistent inequalities in representation.

**Recommendation:** *Consider measures to promote equal suffrage in constituency delimitation, in order to address disparities in representation between rural and urban areas.*

## VI. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

### *Timely preparations but without published tally centre procedures*

MEC is a constitutional body composed of a chairperson, a High Court judge, nominated by the Judicial Service Commission and appointed by the president, and no less than four and no more than six commissioners. The commissioners are appointed by the president based on nominations from the political parties that secured more than 10 per cent of the national vote in the previous parliamentary elections. This mechanism ensures proportional representation

<sup>2</sup> Section 76 (2) of Constitution of the Republic of Malawi.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Electoral Commission to the National Assembly of the number and Boundaries of Constituencies and Wards for the 2025 General Election <https://mec.org.mw/maps/>.



of the main political parties in the Commission. There are currently six commissioners, with three commissioners representing both MCP and DPP.<sup>4</sup>

There were repeated calls for the resignation of the MEC chairperson and chief elections officer by the opposition due to perceived political bias over the year leading up to the elections. A legal challenge to the appointment of the CEO was dismissed on procedural grounds. Nevertheless, there appeared to be a high level of trust towards MEC amongst the general public<sup>5</sup>, and MEC did not take any decision that could be perceived as clearly partisan.

Throughout the whole deployment, the EU EOM had only one bilateral meeting with MEC at the central level. The meeting to discuss observer accreditation was held online on 20 August, as, at that time, the entire leadership of MEC was in the United Arab Emirates for some three weeks overseeing the ballot paper printing. All subsequent requests to meet the MEC Secretariat's departments, channelled through a designated focal point, were denied, citing unavailability of the staff concerned due to their other working commitments.

The MEC at regional and district levels was impartial, competent and regularly available to meet the EU observers. The institution operated transparently, with the exception of information sharing on the introduction and use of election technology.

Electoral preparations were completed in a timely manner and largely according to the operational plan published well in advance. A notable exception, however, was the publication of the detailed polling station procedures, only 29 days before elections. Detailed tally centre procedures, for constituency, district and national levels, were not published at all. These left stakeholders uninformed of the details of this critical part of the process. The PPLGE Act provides general guidance on the tabulation process but does not address important technicalities related to the hybrid transmission of results, data entry method, data quality control, audit triggers and quarantine procedures.

**Recommendation: *Adopt and publish the detailed tally centre procedures regulating tabulation of results at constituency, district and national level, well in advance of elections.***

The cascade training of presiding officers and polling staff observed by the EU EOM observers was largely well organised, but often limited to reading out the polling station manual with only sporadic use of role plays and practical simulations. Regrettably, except for one session, the EU EOM was denied access to training of the election management devices (EMD) and biometric voter verification devices (BVVD) operators, as MEC declared it to be an internal activity not accessible to observers.

Before elections, MEC engaged stakeholders at the national level through two National Election Consultative Forum meetings, ad-hoc meetings convened whenever a need arose, as well as through its website and social media, namely Facebook and WhatsApp.<sup>6</sup> At the district and council level, MEC communicated with stakeholders through Multi-Party Liaison Committee and District Elections Supervisory Team meetings. LTO teams reported that the frequency and agenda of these meetings varied, district to district, depending on local dynamics.

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<sup>4</sup> One DPP position was vacant between 23 April and 12 September, as the president had rejected three successive DPP nominees who reportedly did not pass an opaque vetting process. The fourth nominee was eventually appointed and sworn-in shortly before election day.

<sup>5</sup> According to the IPOR surveys of July and September 2025, 76 per cent of adult Malawians trusted MEC and 80 per cent had confidence that the election results announced would reflect the true outcome of their votes.

<sup>6</sup> The official MEC Facebook page has 127K followers, as of September 2025.

## Voter Education

MEC is legally mandated to conduct civic and voter education (CVE). At the national level this was done primarily through electronic and social media. In the immediate pre-election period MEC increased the frequency of CVE programmes aired on radio and TV. Daily CVE messages were also posted on the MEC Facebook page and WhatsApp groups, but their reach was likely to be limited due to low internet penetration. LTO teams reported that, at the grassroots level, most of the observed CVE activities were conducted by MEC constituency voter educators and staff of the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE). Other CVE providers included traditional authorities, community radio stations, religious leaders, civil society organisations and, political parties.<sup>7</sup>

The quality of CVE delivered during the events observed was assessed positively, though, unlike in previous elections, MEC did not provide sample ballot papers to be used for CVE purposes. According to some civil society assessments, 15 per cent of registered voters did not receive any form of CVE messages ahead of the elections. The IPOR survey results of September 2025 showed that only 64 per cent of adult Malawians received some form of CVE information or participated in CVE activity in the last 12 months.

## VII. ELECTION TECHNOLOGY

### *New Technology Introduced without Sufficient Clarity and Stakeholder Engagement*

Biometric voter verification devices (BVVDs) were used for voter verification on election day and to transfer voters with accreditation to vote outside their registered polling station. The devices also transmitted an image of the result sheets from polling stations. Election management devices (EMDs), also used for biometric voter registration and candidate nomination earlier, transmitted consolidated results electronically from constituency and district tally centres. MEC owned and operated all technology, including internal systems and infrastructure, with very limited involvement of the technology supplier in election-day operations. All electronic processes ran in parallel to paper-based ones.

EMDs and the Election Management System (EMS) were procured in 2024, through a restricted international tender, which some interlocutors considered an unusual instrument. The tender invited three offers and received one. BVVDs appear to have been considered and procured only in May–June 2025, with delivery in August–September. Little public information was available on the procurements, including decision-making, requirements, terms of reference, reasoning for the restricted tender, timelines or considerations as to how technology could support the core processes of elections.

New technology, employed with the aim of increasing the efficiency of and transparency in the electoral process, as well as preventing multiple and proxy voting, therefore became a major source of public and political contention in 2024 and 2025. Late introduction of BVVDs, opaque procurement processes, unclear communication on the purpose of the devices, and insufficient stakeholder engagement, undermined the generally high trust in the elections. MEC insisted that technology management systems and security safeguards were in place, while offering little evidence of systematic technology governance, which contributed to misinformation, mistrust and, at times, protest.

Stakeholders and voters wished to see legal and procedural clarity. In June 2025, MEC refused a request for an independent technology audit made by five opposition parties, citing lack of legal obligation or evidence of irregularity. Two opposition parties challenged the adoption of

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<sup>7</sup> MEC accredited over 100 CSOs to conduct CVE, but due to the lack of available funding, only a few of them were visible on the ground.

devices and the denial of the audit in the High Court. The Court ruled, less than a week before election day, that MEC had the authority to decide on the use of technology, as well as to accept or refuse an audit. The court also noted that only paper documents count for official results, something MEC had not communicated unambiguously before that.

Regional and local election MEC officials expressed trust in technology, even before exposure to the devices or procedures. There was little evidence of core elements of technology governance, including requirements, policies, management frameworks, timelines, operational procedures, testing documentation, and information security measures. It is unclear whether anomaly detection or other data integrity safeguards were in place. These gaps in technology governance and management were compounded by the fact that key senior technology and management personnel at the MEC had not run elections before.

**PRIORITY recommendation: *Clarify standard operating procedures to guide the use and management of election technology. Consider establishing a clear legal framework governing the use of electronic tools at all stages of the electoral process, defining standards for functionality and security as well as oversight, including audit.***

MEC's communication on technology was inconsistent and limited. For example, the Commission repeatedly stated that there would be no electronic transmission of results from polling stations, calling the image taken of the results sheet a "selfie." In fact, the BVVDs did transmit images of results sheets, which was only clarified in a fact sheet a few days before the election. This, combined with concerns about a paper trail, reinforced suspicions among political parties, as well as some media and civil society.

More broadly, electoral stakeholders lacked access to adequate information on technology-related decisions, governance frameworks, and management or operational policies. Some stakeholders, including political parties, were unsure about the function of technology even in the weeks before election day, and this contributed to distrust among their voters, particularly in regions where there had been difficulties with biometric voter registration. While MEC published and broadcast technology explainers and organised a briefing for both stakeholders and observers, these mostly offered assurances rather than substantive evidence to justify confidence. Late, and with insufficient detail, these efforts did little to address concerns, fill the information vacuum, or meet audiences at their level of knowledge, leaving space for worries and misinformation<sup>8</sup>.

EU EOM observers were denied access to seven of the eight BVVD and EMD operators' training sessions which the mission attempted to observe, due to a decision of MEC. The single session observed used good quality materials and covered election-day procedures, but provided insufficient hands-on practice, particularly for exceptional cases such as voting outside of assigned PS, which operators struggled with on election day.

**Recommendation: *Consider systematic and proactive communication measures that provide information on election technology using channels and tools appropriate to the target audience; make non-security sensitive processes and documents, including those on information security, technology governance and procurement, available to the public and to stakeholders with a view to encourage trust and confidence in the use of technology.***

While the EU EOM assessed the conduct of polling extremely positively, technology-related delays were observed on election day, largely due to process and human factors. Use of BVVDs

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<sup>8</sup> The SADC Model Law on Elections, 2018, provides on the use of technology, that "If technology is used in the polling station, the EMB shall ensure that its staff is properly trained in the use of that technology, and such technology shall be simple to use and understandable to all voters, who shall be apprised of the technology during voter education."



varied significantly across polling stations: in some, verification was fast, while, in others, operators struggled. For example, the EU EOM observed failures to complete opening procedures before voter verification, attempts to scan all fingers when only four fingerprints were in the voter registry, inability to take pictures for facial recognition because of strong backlight, and process inconsistencies, reflecting insufficient training. Support was not always promptly available, and, in a few cases, devices arrived insufficiently charged.

On election day, 85 per cent of participating voters were identified using the BVVDs, with alternatives foreseen if fingerprints could not be captured. In eleven per cent of polling stations observed, problems with devices created delays that hindered operations. In ten per cent, the BVVD was observed being handled by someone other than the operator. Problems lessened considerably after four hours of voting, indicating unfamiliarity as the cause. Difficulties in the electronic transfer of results from tally centres using the EMDs were observed, though it is unclear whether the cause was connectivity problems, human error, or server issues.

The introduction of new technologies is typically most challenging in terms of processes and human capacity, with effectiveness improving over subsequent electoral cycles, as familiarity with devices increases and management practices mature. The long-term effectiveness of technology will depend on its use in multiple electoral cycles, which requires lifespan management, including proper storage, battery maintenance, and preventative servicing. Similar devices have been used successfully elsewhere for over a decade and the lifespan of commercial technologies in Malawi is broadly consistent with international best practice.

## VIII. VOTER REGISTRATION

### *Controversial process with lower-than-expected turnout, but without evidence of systematic suppression*

The right to vote is guaranteed by the Constitution, and the voter eligibility criteria are overall in line with the principle of universal suffrage. A person can register as a voter if s/he is a citizen of Malawi or resident for seven years, at least 18 years of age on election day, and is resident or was born in the constituency of registration, or is employed or carries on business in that area. Persons declared mentally incompetent, sentenced to death, or convicted of violation of any law relating to elections, are disqualified from registering as voters. The disqualification on the grounds of mental incompetency is not in line with international standards set out in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Currently there are two nationwide biometric registers in Malawi – the civil registry and the voters' register – compiled and maintained by the National Registration Bureau (NRB) and MEC respectively. Both registers are closely linked, as only the persons registered in the civil registry can be registered as voters in the voters' register.

The fresh biometric voter registration exercise, conducted between October 2024 and February 2025, was a controversial part of the election process. The opposition unsuccessfully objected to the use of the NRB-issued national ID cards as the sole proof of identity and to the use of EMDs to register the voters. They also accused MEC and NRB of deliberately suppressing voter registration in its strongholds.

In total, 7.2 million voters were registered, representing 65.7 per cent of the projected voting-age population. MEC registered 343,820 voters more than in 2019, but, due to a significant increase in the voting-age population, the registration rate decreased by almost 15 per cent.

*Voter registration data 2014 – 2025*

Elections	Projected voting age population	Number of registered voters	Registration rate
2014	8,009,734	7,470,806	93.3%
2019	8,525,538	6,859,570	80.5%
2025	10,957,490	7,203,390	65.7%

A short voter registration period and the opposition's lack of mobilisation of their supporters ahead of the registration process appeared to be the main reasons for the lower-than-expected registration turnout. Other reasons mentioned by stakeholders included a lack of voter education, a social media misinformation and disinformation campaign against EMDs, inability of the NRB to register citizens and issue them with the national ID cards in a timely manner, long travel distances to the voter registration centres, and technical issues with EMDs.

**Recommendation:** *Extend opportunities for eligible citizens to register as voters in order to maximise enfranchisement.*

The disaggregated final voter registration data published do not indicate any apparent systematic suppression of registration in any part of the country. There are only small differences in the regional registration rates, and the share of registered voters corresponds to the share of projected eligible population in all three regions.

*Regional voter registration data 2025*

Region	Projected population	Registered voters	Registration rate in %	% of projected population	% of reg. voters
North	1,423,502	895,310	62.89	12.99	12.43
Central	4,827,703	3,235,762	67.02	44.06	44.92
South	4,706,285	3,072,318	65.28	42.95	42.65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,957,490</b>	<b>7,203,390</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## IX. REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES

*Inclusive and well managed candidate nomination, but late in the process*

The right to stand for election was sufficiently upheld, without unreasonable restrictions. The only exception appeared to be the level of non-refundable candidate nomination fees, which some stakeholders considered too high given that 71 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty.<sup>9</sup> The candidate nomination process, which took place from 24 to 30 July, was inclusive and well managed by MEC. Following the vetting of the nominations submitted, MEC approved and published lists of 17 presidential, 1,480 parliamentary and over 3,000 local government candidates.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The nomination fee, determined by MEC, was 10 mil. MWK (4,800 EUR) for presidential election, 2.5 mil. MWK (1,200 EUR) for parliamentary elections and 200,000 MWK (95 EUR) for local government elections.

<sup>10</sup> The lists of presidential and parliamentary candidates were published within the legal deadlines of 7 and 14 days, respectively. The list of local government candidates was published two days after the legal deadline.

Elections were competitive overall, except for one parliamentary and one local government constituency in which the MCP candidates were declared winners unopposed.<sup>11</sup> The 229 parliamentary seats were contested by 634 independent candidates, followed by MCP, DPP and UTM with 220, 196 and 170 candidates respectively. The timing of the candidate nomination process, as determined by MEC, did not follow a logical sequence within the election process, as the candidates were approved to contest only several weeks after the start of the official campaign period. Such uncertainty could deter campaign activity and expenditure in advance of confirmation of candidature. Also, rejected candidates did not have sufficient time to seek effective legal redress before ballot papers were printed without their names. MEC had to suspend and postpone elections in two parliamentary and one local government constituency, after the court reinstated three candidates initially rejected by MEC. Elections could not be held because ballot papers were printed without their names.

**Recommendation:** *Conclude the candidate nomination process before the start of the official campaign period.*

The legal framework provides clear procedures for candidate qualification for nomination and submission of the nomination papers. It requires MEC to review nomination papers within the time allowed for nominations and to notify candidates of any defects in the nomination papers, allowing timely rectification before the close of the nomination period.<sup>12</sup> However, MEC did not publicly disclose the number or nature of nomination related complaints it received. Nonetheless, some cases challenging the decision of MEC to disqualify candidates were brought before the courts appealing the decision of MEC.<sup>13</sup>

### Registration of Political Parties

The Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association, and more specifically the right to form, join and participate in the activities of a political party. Currently, there are 23 political parties registered in Malawi. The Political Parties Act, 2018 established the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, empowered to register and deregister political parties. The Office is headed by the Registrar of Political Parties, appointed by the Minister of Justice and confirmed by the parliamentary Public Appointments Committee through a competitive process.

The requirements for registering a political party include that a party must demonstrate support by having at least 100 members, who are eligible voters and residents, in each of the country's 28 districts. A party may be deregistered if, after contesting two consecutive general elections, it fails to win at least one parliamentary seat or five per cent of the national vote. Likewise, deregistration applies if the party fails to secure at least two local government seats or ten per cent of the total national vote in local government elections.

**Recommendation:** *Develop mechanisms for ensuring democratic practices within parties, including competitive candidate selection and consultative decision-making processes, to strengthen accountability and internal governance structures.*

<sup>11</sup> Elections in one parliamentary and four local government constituencies (wards) were suspended due to the death of candidates.

<sup>12</sup> Section 39(3) of the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Act.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Binda v MEC, Johnstone Ndlovu v MEC; Brian Khumbeni v MEC; Charles Sandram v MEC.

## X. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

### ***Peace and plurality without parity: inequitable conditions favoured wealthier and incumbent candidates***

There was a peaceful and pluralist sixty-day election campaign, during which fundamental rights of political participation were respected. Campaigning was constrained by shortages of resources, with limited intensity and visibility due to the economic crisis. Candidates appealed to voters through rallies, whistle-stop tours, door-to-door campaigning, in-person constituency debates and televised debates with presidential candidates<sup>14</sup>.

Candidates, particularly the opposition, often resorted to personal attacks, moving away from policy-based campaigning and diverting attention from pressing voter concerns such as food security, rising cost of living and road infrastructure. Where campaign events observed by the EU EOM were issue-based, messages prioritised the empowerment of youth and women and improved public service delivery. Most candidates also utilised traditional or religious platforms to appeal to specific communities.

Candidates campaigned in a largely peaceful environment, in contrast to some incidents of political violence reported during the pre-campaign period. Freedoms of assembly, expression and movement were guaranteed, apart from isolated incidents of obstruction of campaigning and of intimidation in the Central and Southern regions. While there were fears of violence, fuelled by alarmist rhetoric and disinformation, it fortunately did not materialise. Security forces did not overstep their functions at the campaign events observed by the EU EOM, nor were there instances of hate speech, inflammatory rhetoric or incitement to violence observed.

There was good campaign access to the different party strongholds, long considered “no-go zones” for rival parties, helped by the coordination of rally calendars to reconcile campaign schedules by some District Election Officers and traditional leaders. Traditional Authorities were also reported to be influential community mobilisers and constructive peace mediators. The neutrality of some chiefs was, however, questioned as, in contravention of their legal obligations of impartiality, they endorsed specific candidates in Kasungu, Mulanje, Mzimba and Machinga. Multiparty Liaison Committees were active and contributed to the generally peaceful campaign climate, including through promotion of signed peace commitments.

Despite the PPLGEA’s explicit prohibition of the use of public resources for campaigning, the EU EOM observed what could constitute a misuse of public resources in 17 out of the 87 events observed (particularly the use of state vehicles and security services), undermining conditions for a level playing field. Although the Presidents (Salaries and Benefits) Act regulates office holders’ security entitlements, EU EOM observers reported what could constitute misuse of state security and transport facilities for campaign purposes, in 67 per cent of the observed campaign events by the political party of the Vice-President, Ody Zake Alibe Mlandu (OZAM), 52 per cent of observed events by MCP, and 25 per cent of events by the People’s Party leaders. Other contestants were required to privately fund police or private security officers and vehicles for their campaign events. As a result, security forces were observed at all campaign events by the People’s Party, at two-thirds of MCP and OZAM events, at half of DPP events, at 14 per cent of events by independent candidates, and at none of the observed campaign events by UDF and NDP.

Mass installation and elevation of traditional leaders, which took place during the campaign period, nearly tripled their annual budget, with benefits to paramount and senior chiefs, as well as to traditional authorities nationwide, the timing suggesting patronage. Inauguration and

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<sup>14</sup> Organised by National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) Trust and by the Presidential Debates Taskforce, chaired by MISA Malawi.

launching of major public facilities by the incumbent and his running mate weeks ahead of the elections<sup>15</sup> were also recorded.

**Recommendation:** *Consider restrictions on the activities of the president and members of the government during the election campaign to mitigate the possible benefits of incumbency.*

### Campaign Finance

**Weak campaign finance rules and poor enforcement entrench unfair advantages in regulation of Malawi's elections.**

Campaign financing in Malawi remains inadequately regulated, undermining transparency, accountability and fairness in the electoral process. Although the Political Parties Act was enacted in 2018 to introduce scrutiny of party funding and expenditure, its effective implementation only commenced with the appointment of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) in June 2024. The ORPP is obliged to monitor compliance, but its institutional authority is limited, as it lacks the power to sanction political parties directly and must refer cases of non-compliance to the Director of Public Prosecution.

The law does not contain any restrictions on campaign fundraising or expenditure. There are no limits either on the amount of donations that may be received or on the source of donations, including anonymous or foreign sources. There is a very modest requirement of disclosure of donations above one million MWK (489 EUR) from individuals and two million MWK (979 EUR) from organisations, but there is no public entitlement of access to such information. No such donations were reported to the ORPP during the course of the election campaign. There is also a lack of regulation of campaign spending, allowing access to financial resources to be, therefore, a huge determinant of electoral participation and success. In addition, there are no obligations upon political parties or candidates to report on their campaign spending, except in the case of the parties in receipt of public funding, which must disclose use of the public funding to the ORPP<sup>16</sup>. The absence of enforceable transparency measures stands in contrast to Malawi's obligations under the UN Convention against Corruption<sup>17</sup>, to which it is a party.

**PRIORITY recommendation:** *Enhance fairness in campaign financing by imposing limits on campaign fundraising and expenditure, while enhancing transparency and accountability of political parties and candidates by requiring timely and disaggregated disclosure of income and expenditure.*

Prohibitions on cash and in-kind handouts exist in law, but the practice has long been tolerated as a cultural practice, shifting voter focus from candidates' abilities and programmes to their financial inducements, disproportionately benefitting wealthy candidates. The newly appointed ORPP has begun to use the powers of the office to warn against and restrain the distribution of handouts. This was most notable in the issuing of a formal warning to the incumbent and the ruling party early in the campaign period, cautioning against handouts at State Residences. Nevertheless, reports of handouts persisted nationwide, with EU observers confirming their occurrence at several campaign events<sup>18</sup>.

In May 2025, the ORPP promulgated Regulations on Complaints Handling, establishing, for the first time, a mechanism for the public to address campaign handouts. The PPA itself is

<sup>15</sup> Inauguration of Joyce Chitsulo Stadium (Mwanza) on 4 September, Nthali Community Hospital (Chitipa) on 11 August and National Cancer Centre (Lilongwe) on 3 July.

<sup>16</sup> Section 40 (2) of the Constitution provides that the State shall provide funds to any political party which has secured more than one-tenth of the national vote in elections to the Parliament, with just DPP and MCP in receipt during the last parliament.

<sup>17</sup> Article 7 (3) United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

<sup>18</sup> Handouts were observed by the EU EOM at eight of the 87 campaign events observed.



narrowly framed and contains significant legislative gaps: it narrowly defines what does not constitute a handout rather than specifying prohibited expenditure. Campaign materials, transportation and meal reimbursement, and unpublicised religious obligations are excluded from the definition, leaving wide areas of campaign spending unregulated.

**Recommendation:** *Provide greater legal clarity on the definition of prohibited handouts, in the Political Parties Act, to restrain candidates engaging in buying votes through handouts. Provide additional resources to the ORPP to pursue effective enforcement of the law, including through augmentation of staff capacity of the office.*

## XI. MEDIA

***Unbalanced coverage of the state broadcaster in favour of the incumbent, and private broadcasters' prioritisation of parties able to pay for airtime, affected voters' access to information essential to make a well-informed choice.***

### Media Environment

The Malawi media landscape is diverse and primarily dominated by radio, but the overall media reach is limited: 42 per cent of households own a functional radio and 10 per cent own a television set.<sup>19</sup> Circulation of newspapers is sparse. Beyond the long-standing, state-owned Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), a variety of commercial, community, and faith-based radio stations and television channels, with diverse ownership, operate across national, regional, and local levels.<sup>20</sup>

MBC was the most widely watched and listened-to broadcaster nationwide, but it lagged behind the largest private broadcasters in social media engagement. Facebook followership similarly indicated the dominance of private broadcasters over MBC on the platform, which was mostly used by the young urban male population.<sup>21</sup> Major media houses have increasingly integrated Facebook into their distribution strategies during the elections, particularly through paid-for live streaming of campaign events, and posting of news bulletins.

Two isolated incidents saw supporters from two main parties physically intimidate and harass media workers during the presidential nomination process, apparently breaching the MEC Code of Conduct for Electoral Campaign. While neither MEC nor political parties publicly took a firm stance on the incidents, the Malawi chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA Malawi) came out in defence of journalists and the Media Council of Malawi successfully engaged with the political parties to request respect for media freedom during the campaign.

Although journalists generally felt free to operate during the campaign, economic reliance on politically affiliated advertisers, with up to 80 per cent of advertising bought by government, and payment of transport or food allowances by candidates, undermined their independence. Some media postponed their most critical pieces until nearing the end of the campaign.

Additionally, in the last weeks of the campaign, and during the compilation of results, journalists working for major private broadcasters reported pressure and threats from unidentified individuals, as well as alleged members of the ruling party, to refrain from publishing news reflecting poorly on the ruling party, including dashboards displaying partial,

<sup>19</sup> MACRA National survey on access and use of ICT by households and individuals in Malawi in 2023 [https://macra.mw/wpfd\\_file/national-ict-survey-2023/](https://macra.mw/wpfd_file/national-ict-survey-2023/)

<sup>20</sup> From just two radio broadcasters in the early 1990s, Malawi now counts 72 licensed radio stations, 17 licensed television stations, and two major print houses.

<sup>21</sup> ZBS and Times Group followership on Facebook reach approximately 1.8 million and 1.3 million, respectively, while MBC Digital's total followers' number reach 0.8 million (September 2025).

unofficial election results. While internal policies of media and self-regulation mechanisms should encourage creating firewalls between commercial and editorial departments, to isolate them from political interference, state advertising practices should be regulated and subject to review.<sup>22</sup>

**Recommendation: Empower MACRA to monitor state advertising practice, publish information on procurement and volume, and specify financial thresholds that would trigger investigations by the media regulator; provide for redress measures.**

Regional and community radio stations played an important role in providing information in remote areas. Yet they faced challenges that constrained their coverage of the elections, limiting voters' information and candidates' exposure in some remote regions. Challenges included a shortage of trained journalists, frequent power outages, and financial hurdles stemming from a limited advertising market and annual and licence fees disproportionately impacting upon their budget, payable to the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) in US dollars.

Despite their advocacy of inclusion, journalists were excluded from the benefit of PPLGEA section 74 amendment allowing polling staff, candidate and party representatives, as well as security personnel on duty during polling to vote where stationed. They were effectively disenfranchised on election day if reporting distant from their place of registration.

### Legal Framework

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the right to access information.<sup>23</sup> Commendably, Malawi is progressively aligning its legal framework with the Constitution and with Malawi's obligations under regional and international human rights law. In July 2025, the High Court of Malawi, sitting as a Constitutional Court, declared section 200 of the Malawi Penal Code, which criminalised defamation, to be unconstitutional. Nevertheless, broad provisions remain in several laws that could be used to curtail freedom of expression.<sup>24</sup>

Access to public information is gradually improving, although slowed by a lingering culture of secrecy, as well as by non-compliance with legal deadlines for the provision of information. The Access to information Act, 2016, mandates proactive disclosure of information held by public entities, and establishes the procedure to request information. While the Malawi Human Rights Commission oversees implementation, it lacks sufficient budgetary and other resources to effectively ensure legal compliance. Community radio stations faced greater hurdles to access public information than national media houses, leading to gaps in their reporting. In the positive, journalists regarded the MEC as largely open and transparent, both at local and national levels.

The regulatory framework applying to media during elections provides for equitable access and equal treatment of contestants, as well as for fair, balanced coverage of political parties and independent candidates, by state and private electronic and print media.<sup>25</sup> The PPLGEA requires the state-broadcaster to maintain neutrality and provide equal coverage of contestants

<sup>22</sup> African Union [Declaration on Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa](#), art.14.2: "States shall not use their power over the placement of public advertising as a means to interfere with media content."

<sup>23</sup> Sections 35; 36; 37.

<sup>24</sup> This includes provisions in the Penal Code (publication of false information, s.60), the Electronic Transactions and Cybersecurity Act (offensive communication, s.87), the Protected Flag, Emblems, and Names Act (s.4).

<sup>25</sup> The role of the media is elaborated in the PPLGEA, the Communications Act, 2016, the MACRA General Terms and Conditions for a Content Service Licence, and further supported by the Code of Conduct for Electoral Campaign, 2025.

news broadcasts.<sup>26</sup> While MACRA oversees and monitors broadcasters, the PPLGEA tasks MEC with monitoring news casts on MBC, and allocating equal airtime to every political party and independent candidate, thereby unnecessarily duplicating and overtaking the role of the media regulator.

The Communications Act, 2016, vests the power to regulate information and communication technology services in MACRA. Although MACRA and MBC are required to be independent by law, the appointment of the members, board and chairpersons of both bodies is a prerogative of the President, subject to confirmation by the Public Appointments Committee of Parliament. In addition, Section 5 of the Act allows for the direct influence of the Minister of Information and Digitalisation on MACRA and this is in use. This does not allow for independence, in contradiction to Malawi's international commitments.<sup>27</sup> Although MACRA identified that the state broadcaster disproportionately featured the incumbent during the campaign, it did not issue warnings, nor did it impose appropriate sanctions to address the situation.<sup>28</sup>

**PRIORITY recommendation: *Ensure MACRA's independence through transparent nomination of its members and chairperson by various institutions, as well as media and telecommunication professionals and broader civil society, and appointment by the National Assembly. Revoke ministerial policy directions over the regulator.***

Although not legally required, MACRA released the results of its monitoring of broadcasters, from 27 June to 10 August, publicly on 3 September. However, it published only one report, and late in the process, limiting time for correction. MACRA's regulation establishes the Election Broadcasts Monitoring Complaints Committee (EBMCC), to investigate election-related complaints.<sup>29</sup> Although no formal complaint was lodged, on 3 September, the EBMCC engaged with five broadcasters over breaches of the law, based on MACRA monitoring.<sup>30</sup> As an advisory committee, the EBMCC did not have the power to issue warnings or sanctions, a prerogative of MACRA's board. The law does not provide deadlines for MACRA to review violations of the rules, nor does it provide adequate or timely redress for violations of the law. MACRA's board did not make any formal decision, failing to uphold freedom of expression.<sup>31</sup>

**Recommendation: *Introduce appropriate legal deadlines for the publication of broadcasting monitoring results by MACRA; and impose responsibilities upon MACRA to review violations of the rules by broadcasters in a timely manner.***

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<sup>26</sup> PPLGEA, section 57.

<sup>27</sup> AU, [Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa](#), Principle 17: "A public regulatory authority that exercises powers in the areas of broadcast, telecommunications or internet infrastructure shall be independent and adequately protected against interference of a political, commercial or other nature. [...] shall be accountable to the public [...] A multi-stakeholder model of regulation shall be encouraged."

<sup>28</sup> The [broadcasting monitoring results of MACRA from 27 June till 10 August 2025](#) indicated that the state broadcaster MBC allocated 62 per cent of airtime to the incumbent on television, against 26 per cent for DPP, on television, and 51 per cent on Radio 2, against 2 per cent for DPP. MBC Radio 1, the most political state radio, was not featured in MACRA's report.

<sup>29</sup> General Terms and Conditions for a Content Service Licence, Schedule 2, section 8. The EBMCC is composed of MEC (chair), MACRA (secretariat), MISA Malawi, Media Council of Malawi, Centre for Multiparty Democracy, NICE Trust and Malawi Law Society.

<sup>30</sup> MBC Radio and TV, Zodiak TV, Mibawa TV, Times Radio and TV, and Luntha TV. Violations identified included airing of derogatory, inflammatory, hate speech; biased coverage; broadcasting of unverified allegations.

<sup>31</sup> [African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance](#), art. 1: "The [...] parties to the present Charter shall recognize the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in this Chapter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to effect to them."



## Media Monitoring Findings

The EU EOM monitored a sample of Malawian media from 12 August until 14 September to assess the conditions for the free and independent functioning of the media, as well as of the media coverage of the elections.<sup>32</sup>

National broadcasters focused mainly on the presidential race.<sup>33</sup> The nature of the media coverage varied from the state broadcaster, aligned with the ruling party, to private broadcasters that prioritised parties with perceived chances of winning and those with the financial ability to pay for airtime. Presidential contenders received the bulk of the coverage, however the DPP candidate, was covered minimally by all broadcasters, generally receiving some 2 per cent of airtime. MBC dedicated on average 50 per cent of its airtime to election-related information, through news casts, paid and live coverage and talk shows. By contrast, private broadcasters generally allocated some 25 per cent of airtime to electoral and political content and prioritised paid coverage.<sup>34</sup>

All broadcasters offered considerable paid airtime, up to two-thirds of airtime, comprising advertisements, live coverage of campaign events, and documentaries, on radio, television and Facebook.<sup>35</sup> While private broadcasters mainly provided paid coverage of the five major contestants (DPP, MCP, PP, UDF, UTM), paid airtime on MBC featured the incumbent almost exclusively. Live coverage of campaign rallies of the President was provided free of charge by MBC, while other candidates were requested to pay for it, breaching legal requirements for equitable treatment of candidates.<sup>36</sup> There were no legal provisions on labelling paid advertisements, which led to inconsistent practice across media and blurred the line between editorial and paid content.

**Recommendation: *Introduce legal requirements for broadcasters to clearly label paid-for airtime, in order to promote transparency.***

Although the PPLGEA provides for the allocation of equal time by MEC to all independent candidates and political parties to disseminate their campaign messages on the state broadcaster, opposition parties did not request such an opportunity, citing distrust of MBC. The state broadcaster did not air the two presidential debates, organised by the MISA Malawi-led Presidential Debate Task Force; only the first one was live streamed on Facebook.<sup>37</sup> Overall, this inhibited the voters' ability to compare the platforms of leading candidates, and restricted voters' access to the information necessary to make a well-informed choice.

News bulletins focused mostly on rallies and electoral promises, lacking some in-depth analysis. The economy was the major topic across all media. Voter education generally accounted for less than 1 per cent of the airtime on radio, mainly from MEC and NICE Trust, and 4 per cent on television.<sup>38</sup> Zodiak stood out, allocating respectively 23 and 10 per cent of airtime to voter information on radio and television. While most journalists remained neutral in tone, the EU EOM identified some instances of derogatory speech, with rare instances of incitement to violence by politicians and commentators on MBC, Times, Mibawa TV, and

<sup>32</sup> The EU EOM monitored MBC Radio1 and TV1, ZBS Radio and TV, Times Radio and TV, Capital FM and Mibawa TV, as well as The Nation and The Daily Times and their weekend printed editions. Results of the media monitoring are referenced in annexes.

<sup>33</sup> See Annex 2, charts 3 and 4.

<sup>34</sup> Charts 1 and 2.

<sup>35</sup> Charts 5 and 6.

<sup>36</sup> Communications Act, Second Schedule, Section 32.

<sup>37</sup> Two debates took place, on 21 August and 9 September. While five candidates were invited, only the UTM and UDF presidential candidates took part in the two debates; Joyce Banda (PP) participated in one, while the MCP and DPP candidates refused to participate.

<sup>38</sup> Chart 5 and 6.

ZBS, in comments and advertisements directed towards MCP, DPP and other opposition parties, violating the PPLGEA.

The state broadcaster MBC did not fulfil its legal obligations of neutrality and balanced coverage. The incumbent, the ruling party, and the Government, including the presidential running mate, received an undue advantage through extensive coverage during news casts, reaching 75 per cent of the airtime on average, while the incumbent received over 90 per cent of the direct speech among presidential candidates.<sup>39</sup> MBC also broadcast regular advertisements for MCP during news casts, as well as unfair reporting, unlabelled adverts and praise for the incumbent, while disparaging opponents. This violated national laws, breached Malawi's international commitments to equal treatment of candidates, and amounted to an abuse of state resources.<sup>40</sup>

**PRIORITY recommendation:** *Transform the state-owned broadcaster MBC into a genuinely independent public service broadcaster with independent management and oversight, appointed by, and accountable to, the public through the legislature.*

ZBS was the most balanced private broadcaster, granting equivalent airtime to three among the leading presidential candidates, Atupele Austin Muluzi, Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, and Dr. Dalitso Kabambe, and covering 15 of the 17 candidates overall.<sup>41</sup> Initially balanced, Times shifted its airtime allocation, late in the campaign, in favour of the incumbent.<sup>42</sup> The airing of paid coverage of party events, advertising, and the presidential debates significantly occupied Capital FM and Mibawa TV airtime, which otherwise offered rather balanced coverage between the leading candidates.

Print media offered some analysis on issues related to the funding of political parties and the use of public funds, although, overall, newspapers granted the incumbent more space than the others. Advertising accounted for 25 and 32 per cent, respectively, of the election and political space in *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*, more than 85 per cent of which was purchased by the ruling party and the incumbent, reducing editorial coverage.<sup>43</sup> The DPP and former President Mutharika were more visible in print than on broadcast media.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Charts 9 to 12.

<sup>40</sup> [SADC: Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections](#), principle 2.1.5: "SADC Member States shall adhere to the following principles in the conduct of democratic elections: Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the state media" [ICCPR, General Comment 34](#), para 16: "States parties should ensure that public broadcasting services operate in an independent manner. In this regard, States parties should guarantee their independence and editorial freedom."

<sup>41</sup> Charts 15 to 26.

<sup>42</sup> The incumbent received some 74 per cent of airtime during the last two weeks of the campaign on Times TV, up from 33 per cent during August.

<sup>43</sup> Charts 27 and 28.

<sup>44</sup> Charts 29 and 30.

## XII. SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

***Social media had a secondary but influential role, with limited candidate use, state-backed promotion of the ruling party, and proxy-driven disinformation that threatened public trust.***

### Social Media Environment

Malawi has comparatively low levels of internet access, with 18.4 per cent of the population online and 8.2 per cent active on social media.<sup>45, 46</sup> Among those connected, Facebook is the most widely used platform, accounting for 8.2 per cent of the population, followed by LinkedIn (1.7 per cent), Instagram (0.7 per cent), X (formerly Twitter) (0.5 per cent), and Messenger (0.3 per cent). Online news portals and Facebook pages increasingly shape political debate and public discourse, but their reach remains smaller than that of radio and television. Nonetheless, for urban and younger demographics, social media has become an important source of political information, particularly during election periods<sup>47</sup>. Significant urban–rural gaps exist, driven by weak infrastructure and high connectivity costs. Internet remains largely unaffordable for the majority of people, as mobile data prices are high, relative to average incomes, limiting access for low-income users<sup>48</sup>.

### Legal Framework for Social Media and Digital Rights

Digital rights in Malawi are guaranteed by the Constitution, which enshrines freedom of expression and access to information. Online activity is primarily regulated by the Electronic Transactions and Cyber Security Act, 2016, and the Communications Act, 2016, both of which give broad powers to the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA).<sup>49</sup> While these provisions are framed as measures to ensure cybersecurity and protect consumers, they also grant state-wide discretion in monitoring online content. There are no explicit regulations addressing disinformation or harmful content online, nor are there legal provisions governing campaign activities on social media. This leaves online political communication largely unregulated, beyond the general provisions of the Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

Malawi hosts a small but growing ecosystem of fact-checking initiatives, including *iVerify Malawi*, operated by MISA Malawi, with support from UNDP. These projects seek to counter misinformation by verifying claims submitted by the public. However, their work has largely been reactive, rather than proactive, issuing corrections after rumours had already spread. No systematic arrangements exist between electoral authorities, fact-checkers, and platforms to ensure rapid responses to disinformation during elections.

***Recommendation: Consider supporting the capacity-building of existing fact-checking initiatives, including strengthening their monitoring methodology and fostering cooperation with civil society, media, and other electoral stakeholders.***

### Social Media Monitoring Findings

The EU EOM social media monitoring unit reviewed 10,530 online posts during the electoral period, covering political parties, presidential candidates, supporters, media, institutions, and

<sup>45</sup> MACRA ICT Survey 2023: Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA). (2023). *ICT Survey Report*.

<sup>46</sup> Datareportal: Datareportal. (2024). *Digital 2024: Malawi*. Retrieved from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-malawi>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/social-media-and-news-fact-sheet/>

<sup>48</sup> Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI). (2023). *Affordability Report*.

<sup>49</sup> Government of Malawi, Electronic Transactions and Cyber Security Act (2016); Communications Act (2016); Data Protection Guidelines (2021); Penal Code; Protected Flag, Emblems and Names Act.

proxies. Of these, 6,264 (59 per cent) were classified as political and election related.<sup>50</sup> Facebook dominated as the main platform, accounting for 93 per cent of all posts, while only a small share appeared on X (Twitter). In some cases, actors maintained active profiles on both platforms, though many concentrated their activity on a single channel. Despite Malawi's relatively low social media penetration compared to regional averages, the online space still played a role in shaping electoral narratives.

Digital campaigning was limited compared to traditional outreach. Of the 34 presidential candidates (including running mates), only seven were active online. The incumbent president led, with 153 posts, about one-third of all candidate activity. He was followed by the presidential candidate of the UTM, with 52 posts, and by the DPP candidate with 22 posts. Overall, MCP candidates showed the strongest online presence, averaging two Facebook posts per day, while several contenders had no official online activity at all.

Campaign content from parties and candidates was largely general, with limited reference to manifesto commitments. The MCP emphasised infrastructure (33 per cent of content by topic) and agriculture (20 per cent), while the DPP and UTM focused on economic growth. Other themes—education, corruption, employment, and entrepreneurship—appeared only marginally.

MCP's presence in the online narrative was reinforced through state-linked government social media accounts. Malawi Government Facebook pages promoted the ruling party's presidential candidate in 92 per cent of their content, blurring the line between official communication and campaign activity. Similarly, MBC Digital, the online platform of the state broadcaster, accounted for 40 per cent of all media house posts (659), with 81 per cent of its output dedicated to the ruling party. Across the broader media landscape, 62 per cent of all posts favoured said party.

This level of amplification, combined with the absence of robust regulatory oversight, resulted in an uneven playing field online, where the ruling party benefited from higher visibility than its competitors. The blurring of state functions with campaign content on official pages raised concerns regarding the impartiality of digital communication during the electoral process.

While official party and candidate accounts largely avoided disinformation, proxy outlets became the main vectors of misleading narratives. Pro-DPP pages such as *Malawi Voices* (559 thousand followers), *Situation Malawi*, and *Malawi Cables Online*, circulated premature victory claims, fabricated documents, and allegations of irregularities. On the other side, outlets like *Malawi Focus Newspaper*, pushed partisan content favourable to the ruling party. In total, around 130 posts (16 per cent of proxy content) were classified by the monitoring team as disinformation.

Disinformation took the form of fabricated documents, forged opinion polls, premature announcements of results, and unverified claims of disruptions at polling centres. On election day, several proxy outlets even declared victory for the main opposition candidate before counting was complete. While such narratives risked undermining public trust, their reach was limited compared to mainstream digital media, and they did not dominate the official digital spaces of political parties. The mission also recorded a few cases of online gender-based violence directed at female candidates and journalists, mostly in Facebook comment sections rather than official party accounts. Although limited in scale, these incidents raised concerns about the potential chilling effect on women's political participation.

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<sup>50</sup> For more details, graphs and tables, please refer to the Social Media Analysis in Annex 3 at the end of this Report.

### XIII. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

#### *Women's participation in politics is constrained by cultural, social and economic obstacles*

Malawi ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1987. The Constitution protects gender equality by guaranteeing to women the right to participate fully in all areas of society on the basis of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.<sup>51</sup> However, these commitments have not been translated into concrete measures to enhance women's political representation. No quota system has been introduced to promote greater representation of women in parliament, local councils, or within the broader electoral process. While MEC reduced candidacy fees by fifty per cent for women contesting parliamentary and local government elections, compared to the fee in 2019 reduced by twenty-five percent, this measure had minimal impact in addressing structural barriers faced by women. The limited participation was evident in the presidential race, where only one-woman, former President Joyce Banda, contested, beside 16 men, reflecting gender imbalances in political participation.

In 2019, 295 women contested as parliamentary candidates, representing 22.2 per cent of candidates, compared to 326 women contesting in 2025, which represented 21.9 per cent of contestants, almost an equivalence. In 2019, 44 women were elected to the National Assembly, representing 22.9 per cent of MPs, while in 2025, 48 women were elected, representing 20.9 per cent of the membership of the National Assembly. The EU EOM observed very limited participation of women in the campaign events of smaller parties, with more significant presence of women in the campaign activities of larger parties, 53 percent for the DPP, and MCP at 51 per cent.

During the campaign, gender issues were scarcely addressed in party manifestos, debates, or agendas, leading to disappointment among many who had hoped for stronger commitments. Political parties provided no financial support to female candidates at the district level, leaving women at a disadvantage in their campaigns. Women's political participation remained limited as a result of financial constraints, lack of party support, and restrictive cultural norms, which continued to disadvantage women and hinder their meaningful engagement in the political process.

In 2017, the Malawi Law Commission recommended the introduction of constituencies reserved exclusively for women candidates, in addition to the existing electoral constituencies. This was seen as a direct mechanism to ensure women's representation in decision-making institutions. Building on this, the Special Law Commission, constituted by the Law Commission in consultation with the Judicial Service Commission, engaged in extensive public and stakeholder consultations. Its report put forward a significant constitutional reform proposal. Specifically, it recommended amending Section 62 of the Constitution to introduce reserved seats for women, by designating, within each district, a single-member constituency reserved exclusively for female candidates.

**PRIORITY recommendation:** *Consider the introduction of temporary special measures, such as new district-wide parliamentary constituencies, within each district, reserved exclusively for women, to promote their political participation.*

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<sup>51</sup> Section 13(a) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi.



#### XIV. PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

***Despite a favourable legal framework, PWD face significant obstacles to political participation***

According to the 2018 census, 11.6 per cent of the population are persons with disabilities (PWD). Malawi ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability. However, contrary to the CRPD, it also allows disqualification of prospective voters and candidates on the grounds of mental incapacity.

***Recommendation: Abolish voter and candidate disqualification on the grounds of mental incapacity, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).***

The Persons with Disabilities Act 2024 updated domestic legislation that implements the CRPD. The Act established an enforcement body, the Malawi Council for Disability Affairs (MACODA) and placed obligations on duty-bearers, including MEC. It requires MEC to provide appropriate and accessible voting procedures, materials and facilities. In line with the CRPD, the PPLGEA provides for a voter with a disability to be accompanied by another registered voter of his or her own choice to assist them in voting.

Despite this favourable legal framework, PWD face significant obstacles to accessibility when exercising their political rights as voters, candidates and supporters. They also remain under-represented in elected office and within political parties. In the positive, MEC took some practical steps to facilitate participation of PWD. These included using sign language interpreters, collecting information on PWD and their specific needs during voter registration, consulting the Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi (FEDOMA) and MACODA to test accessibility of the EMDs and to discuss appropriate voter education messaging, granting priority to PWD in queues during registration and voting, and introducing ballot paper templates for the visually impaired.<sup>52</sup> As for women, nomination fees for PWD were halved, with a reported increased participation of PWD as candidates in these elections. There were 18 parliamentary and 60 local government candidates contesting compared to the total of some 30 in 2019. Five of these candidates succeeded, winning one parliamentary and four local government seats.<sup>53</sup>

#### XV. PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

***A politically marginalised and underrepresented majority despite demographic dominance***

Malawi's remarkably young demographic profile, with over half the population under 18, and around 80 per cent below the age of 35, represents both a potentially significant electoral force and a driver of the country's political future. Despite their number, youth are severely underrepresented in elected office, lacking meaningful decision-making influence. Only one MP was below the age of 35 in the last legislature, as were about 10 per cent of local councillors. Young leaders are often assigned to campaign mobilisation roles rather than to substantive policymaking. Structural barriers, such as party constitutions and practices, the high financial cost of participating in elections, entrenched patronage networks, absence of

<sup>52</sup> MEC collected this information in line with an EU EOM 2019 recommendation. However, according to MEC's figures, only some 137,925 PWD were registered, representing 1.92 per cent of all registered voters. This is much less than their actual number in the voting-age population. It is likely that registration staff captured only visible cases of disability and some PWD were unwilling to disclose their disability status.

<sup>53</sup> Thirty-four of 78 candidates ran as independents, and 14 were women (5 parliamentary and 9 local government). All five winning candidates are men.

youth-inclusive policies within political parties and society's resistance to youthful political actors, continue to hinder their inclusion in decision-making.

The *Youth Decide Campaign*<sup>54</sup>, led by the NGO *Youth and Society* (YAS), developed the 2025 *Youth Manifesto* and lobbied all major political parties to integrate youth priorities into their programmes. The parties also signed the Youth Manifesto at Presidential Youth Dialogues, intended to make parties accountable for their performance after the elections. An audit of political parties by YAS, in terms of youth participation, identified nine parties with youth policies, although youth wings lack resources and are not meaningfully represented beyond campaign mobilisation.

Aspiring young candidates were trained by the *Inclusive Democracy Academy*<sup>55</sup>, but many were eliminated in party primaries or opted to run independently, due to limited party support. The *National Youth Council of Malawi* coordinated civic and voter education initiatives aimed at increasing youth turnout.

In December 2024, the MEC halved the nomination fees for parliamentary and local government candidates below the age of 35, as an affirmative measure to promote their participation in the elections. However, despite repeated formal requests from YAS, the Commission failed to release age-disaggregated data on the numbers of registered youth voters and candidates (18–35), or on turnout by youth voters, hampering comprehensive analysis of youth participation. YAS argued that the continued withholding of such information frustrates evidence-based youth advocacy and contributes to marginalisation of the country's largest demographic group.

**Recommendation:** *Strengthen policy frameworks to support young candidates by incentivising political parties to adopt meaningful youth inclusion measures, such as inclusive internal selection processes and youth representation in party National Executive Committees, complemented by the publication of age-disaggregated voter and candidate data by the MEC.*

## XVI. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION

### *Large number of civil society observers enhanced the transparency of the electoral process*

Civil society organisations deployed a large number of election day observers to provide public scrutiny of the polling and counting and thus enhance the transparency of the process. Two domestic observer groups – NICE and Chisankho Watch – together contributing more than 7,000 observers, conducted both long and short-term election observation.<sup>56</sup> Chisankho Watch also successfully conducted a PRVT (Process and Results Verification for Transparency) on a nationally representative statistical sample of 800 polling stations, results of which confirmed the presidential election results declared by MEC.

The MEC timeline for observer accreditation and the issue of mandatory observer ID cards did not properly consider the needs of domestic observer organisations, as the deadline for submitting applications for accreditation was too late for long-term observation and too early for short-term observation. Consequently, domestic observers began their observation during

<sup>54</sup> A coalition of over 48 youth-led and youth-serving organisations.

<sup>55</sup> Launched by YAS, Oxfam, Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) and Zivik Funding Programme

<sup>56</sup> Chisankho Watch is a coalition of four civil society organisations – the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), the Gender and Justice Unit (GJU) and Meeting HUB (mHUB).

the campaign period without accreditation and had to request an extension of the deadline to accredit large numbers of election day observers.<sup>57</sup>

**Recommendation:** *Issue observer identity cards to accredited observers continuously, from the start of the official campaign period until shortly before election day.*

In addition to the EU EOM, the African Union (AU)/Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries and the African Centre for Governance deployed short-term international election observation missions.

## XVII. ELECTORAL DISPUTES

### *Delays in adjudication affect resolution of electoral disputes*

Electoral dispute resolution in Malawi is handled by multiple institutions, including the Judiciary, MEC, and the office of the Registrar of Political Parties. The legal framework allows for appeals up to the Supreme Court. Delay has long been a feature of the judicial system, at all levels. While there are procedural rules in place to facilitate the expeditious adjudication of election petitions, they have not been respected during previous electoral cycles. A constitutional amendment was initiated earlier this year to restrict presidential election petitions exclusively to the Supreme Court, to expedite decision-making, but it was unsuccessful. The Judiciary Committee on Elections (JCE) has been established to promote expedition and expertise in the handling of electoral disputes. The JCE expressed the intention to dispose of any post-election petitions speedily, with superior court judges having been trained in electoral law and in the legal issues arising from the use of technology in elections in the weeks preceding the elections.

**PRIORITY recommendation:** *Consider the adoption of legislative time limits requiring the judiciary to resolve election-related cases expeditiously.*

### **Election Petitions**

The electoral framework provides for decisions of MEC to be reviewed by the High Court. Prior to the elections, the judiciary received thirty-four election-related cases, mostly stemming from political party primary elections, along with several cases concerning nominations and candidate disqualifications. Some of these matters were only resolved a week before election day. The fact of decisions being delivered close to the date of the election meant that, regardless of the successful outcome for incorrectly disqualified candidates, it was too late for their inclusion in the ballot papers, leading to the suspension of two parliamentary and one local government elections.

## XVIII. VOTING, COUNTING AND TABULATION OF RESULTS

### *Orderly and transparent voting followed by credible results tabulation*

On election day, 110 EU EOM observers visited 359 polling stations in all 28 districts of Malawi to observe opening, voting, closing and counting processes. This represented 2.4 per cent of all polling stations. The rural – urban ratio of the polling stations visited was 69 – 31 per cent, roughly mirroring the actual demography of the country.

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<sup>57</sup> The deadline was 31 July, i.e. 18 days after the start of the official campaign period, and 46 days ahead of election day. Until the deadline, MEC had not been issuing any observer ID cards to applicants, and the first cards were only issued some three weeks after the deadline.



## Voting

After delays in opening, when only seven of the 40 polling stations observed opened on time, at 6 am, voting proceeded in a peaceful, orderly and transparent manner, despite lengthy queues at 35 per cent of polling stations visited.<sup>58</sup> Key voting procedures were largely followed, and voters were able to freely express their will in 99 per cent of polling stations observed. The polling station layout sufficiently protected the secrecy of the ballot in 94 per cent, and it was adequate for the conduct of polling in 97 per cent of the visited polling stations. Citizen observers were present in 72 per cent, and party and candidate representatives in all but one, of polling stations observed. They were able to observe the voting process without undue restriction in 98 per cent of polling stations visited. The overall conduct of the voting was assessed positively in 99 per cent of polling stations visited by the EU EOM observers. The main irregularities observed included not checking for traces of ink in 23 per cent and unauthorised persons providing assistance to voters in 20 per cent of polling stations observed.

On election day, 85 per cent of participating voters were identified using the BVVDs, with alternatives foreseen if fingerprints could not be captured. In 11 per cent of polling stations observed, problems with devices created delays that hindered operations. In 10 per cent, the BVVD was handled by someone other than the operator. Problems lessened considerably after four hours of voting, indicating unfamiliarity as the cause.

## Counting

Counting, observed in 39 polling stations, was less well organised and less transparent than voting. Due to very slow progress of the count, only 10 observer teams were able to observe the whole counting process. The EU EOM observers assessed the overall conduct of the counting process positively in 31 of the 39 polling stations observed. The ballot paper reconciliation and counting procedures were not always followed, but party and candidate representatives were always present and received signed copies of the result forms in the counts where EU EOM observers were present.

## Tabulation and Declaration of Results

The process of tabulation and verification of presidential election results, which commenced on election night, was completed on 24 September, with MEC using the maximum number of eight days provided in the law for the declaration of the results. MEC provided regular updates on the progress of the tabulation process. The turnout of registered voters reached 76.4 per cent<sup>59</sup>, while 2.8 per cent of votes were declared void (invalid). The official parliamentary elections results were declared on 29 and 30 September<sup>60</sup> and local government election results on 3 and 5 October 2025. According to the published results transparency infographics, MEC planned to publish polling station breakdown of election results, but, at the time of the Mission's departure, this publication was yet to be done.

The EU EOM observers followed the tabulation at 35 of 229 Constituency Tally Centres (CTCs), 26 of 36 District Tally Centres (DTCs) and the National Tally Centre (NTC) in Lilongwe. Altogether the CTCs and DTCs were visited 127 times to observe the ongoing tabulation, and the overall conduct of the tabulation process was assessed positively, as credible and transparent in 97 per cent of tally centre visits.<sup>61</sup> Political party and candidate representatives were present during 87 per cent and citizen observers during 68 per cent of

<sup>58</sup> The main reason for late opening was unpreparedness of polling staff.

<sup>59</sup> Turnout calculated from the projected number of voting age population was much lower, 50.2 per cent.

<sup>60</sup> MEC nullified parliamentary elections in two constituencies due to serious procedural violations during the tabulation.

<sup>61</sup> There were also 32 visits during which no tabulation was taking place and therefore the overall conduct could not be assessed.

visits. Difficulties in the electronic transfer of results from tally centres using the EMDs were observed, though it is unclear whether the cause was connectivity problems, human error, or server issues.

At the NTC, all stakeholders had, upon request, access to hardcopies of all polling station and tally centre results forms received and processed. This transparency measure allowed independent verification of the declared totals.

## **XIX. RESULTS AND POST-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT**

### **Publication of Results**

#### ***Split protest vote delivers a landslide opposition victory and a hung parliament***

The MEC announced the official presidential results on 24 September and the parliamentary results on 30 September 2025, both within the legally mandated deadlines of eight and 14 days respectively. Former President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, together with his running mate Dr. Jane Ansah, was elected with an absolute majority of 56.8 per cent of the valid vote, eliminating the need for a presidential run-off. Incumbent President Dr. Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP secured 33 per cent. Twelve of the 17 presidential candidates, including six independents, achieved 2.8 per cent of the votes.

In what observers have deemed a strategic protest vote, citizens sanctioned the government for the unmet socio-economic expectations. The Northern Region shifted allegiance away from the MCP-led Tonse Alliance of 2020, while the DPP's victory in traditional MCP strongholds such as Lilongwe City, Salima and Nkhosha suggests a possible decline in regional and ethnic voting dynamics.

UTM's distant third place in the presidential election, with four per cent of the votes, followed by UDF with 1.9 per cent and the People's Party with 1.6 per cent of the votes, signals eroded electoral support for formerly prominent parties. The turnout of registered voters reached 76.4 per cent, while 2.8 per cent of votes were declared void (invalid), illustrated in the results tables in Annex 1.

The parliamentary election results produced a hung legislature, with the number of parliamentary parties rising from six to nine following the entry of the National Development Party (NDP), People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Freedom Party (FP), each securing a single seat. The opposition DPP emerged as the largest parliamentary force, with 78 seats of a total of 229, or 35 per cent, below their 56.8 per cent presidential victory. In the absence of a legislative majority, the incoming DPP administration will depend on coalition-building or ad hoc alliances with independents to advance its legislative agenda. While some analysts highlighted the democratic deficit and exclusionary primaries within the party that contributed to the rise of independents, others welcomed the fragmentation as an opportunity for a more consensus-driven legislature and as a sign of voter demand for individual accountability. UTM emphasised principled issue-based collaboration rather than blanket alliances, signalling potential for a more policy-centric parliamentary culture.

The MCP retained significant parliamentary strength with 52 seats, accounting for 23 per cent of MPs, with the MCP support base in the Central Region. There was a surge in independent MPs, from four in 1999 to 73, amounting to the second-largest group in the legislature. The UTM doubled its parliamentary presence to eight seats, AFORD tripled to three seats, while traditional parties such as UDF and People's Party continued to decline, to four and three seats respectively. Reportedly, 48 women were elected to the Parliament, diminishing their representation from 23 to 21 per cent in the new legislature. Five seats remained vacant, due either to postponed or nullified elections.

## Complaints Relating to the Election Results

The law requires MEC to resolve all electoral disputes before announcing official results. In this context, UDF, UTM and MCP submitted complaints challenging the presidential election results. MEC dismissed the complaints as being without merit. Separately, President Chakwera and MCP filed an application with the High Court seeking judicial review of MEC's management of the results process and an injunction sought to halt the declaration of results. While the High Court granted permission for judicial review, it denied the request for an injunction, allowing MEC to pronounce the results. MCP withdrew the case subsequent to the declaration of results. Post-election petitions to the High Court were permitted within seven days of declaration of results, but none was submitted challenging the presidential election results.

## Post-election Developments

### *Peaceful transition of power and exemplary democratic maturity and resilience*

Rival presidential candidates, including incumbent President Chakwera, publicly conceded defeat, with the President delivering a national address just hours before the official declaration of results by MEC. The post-electoral environment remained peaceful, with no serious incidents of violence, despite initial premature and conflicting claims of victory and disinformation spread by both main parties. Electoral complaints were filed by MCP, UDF, and UTM, while instances of political pressure and threats were reported, targeting a few electoral officials, as well as private media outlets and journalists, to prevent the publication of unofficial results.

The President-elect and DPP Secretary General both adopted a unifying and reconciliatory tone in public statements. DPP committed itself to combatting corruption and warned against any abuse of the transition period, vowing to nullify irregular decisions and hold public servants to account. Irresponsible celebratory actions by supporters were publicly condemned, alongside a call for respect for institutions and the rule of law. A joint transition team coordinated a smooth transition process. The inauguration ceremony of President Mutharika took place on 4 October 2025 in Blantyre, completing the constitutional transfer of power. This peaceful and orderly transfer of power, driven by responsible political leadership and electoral institutions, showcased Malawi's democratic maturity.

## XX. RECOMMENDATIONS

NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM						
1	12	<p>MEC is mandated to review and determine constituency boundaries. The guiding principles are that constituencies must reflect, as nearly as possible, equal numbers of voters, taking into account population distribution, geographical features, and administrative convenience.</p> <p>The primary objective is to ensure that all constituencies contain approximately equal numbers of eligible voters.</p> <p>As it stands, there are significant variations in the number of eligible voters between constituencies.</p>	<p>Consider measures to promote equal suffrage in constituency delimitation, in order to address disparities in representation between rural and urban areas.</p>	No legal change	MEC	<p><b>Equal suffrage</b></p> <p>ICCPR Article 25: “Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity [...] (b) to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage [...]”</p> <p>General Comment 25, p. 21: “The principle of one person, one vote, must apply, and within the framework of each State’s electoral system, the vote of one elector should be equal to the vote of another. The drawing of electoral boundaries and the method of allocating votes should not distort the distribution of voters or discriminate against any group and should not exclude or restrict unreasonably the right of citizens to choose their representatives freely.”</p> <p>SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections Article 13.2.5: “In furtherance of the values of Electoral Justice, the SEOM shall ensure that the delimitation of election boundaries was done in a manner acceptable to stakeholders, and whether the factors that</p>



NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
						<i>prompted delimitation were in accordance with the laws of the land."</i>
ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION						
2	13	MEC did not publish the detailed tally centre procedures regulating the results tabulation and transmission in constituency, district and national tally centres. This left stakeholders uninformed about this critical part of the electoral process. The PPLGE Act provides general guidance on the tabulation process but does not address important technicalities related to the hybrid transmission of results, data entry method, data quality control, audit triggers and quarantine procedures.	Adopt and publish the detailed tally centre procedures regulating tabulation of results at constituency, district and national level, well in advance of elections.	No change	MEC	<p><b>Genuine elections that reflect the free expression of the will of the people</b></p> <p>ICCPR GC 25, paragraph 20</p> <p><i>"An independent electoral authority should be established to supervise the electoral process and to ensure that it is conducted</i></p> <p><i>fairly, impartially and in accordance with established laws which are compatible with the Covenant."</i></p>
ELECTION TECHNOLOGY						
3	15	Following the introduction of technology in the 2025 elections, the processes and governance of introducing, managing and operating technology in elections, including for biometric voter registration and verification, as well as electronic results transmission, were not clear to all	<p><b>PRIORITY</b></p> <p><b>Clarify standard operating procedures to guide the use and management of election technology. Consider establishing a clear legal framework governing the use of electronic tools at all stages of the electoral process, defining standards for functionality and security as well as oversight, including</b></p>	<p>Amend the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act, 2023</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>the Malawi Electoral Commission Act,</p>	MEC, National Assembly	<p><b>Rule of law</b></p> <p>African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, (2007)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Article 2 (11): <i>"Promote best practices in the management of elections for purposes of political stability and governance"</i>.</p> <p>SADC Model Law on Elections</p>



NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
		stakeholders. The legal basis for the use of technology in elections is phrased in a general manner, and the governance processes lacked specificity.	<b>audit.</b>	2023, Section 8 (1) (i)		Article 73 (Use of Technology): <i>“If technology is used in the polling station, the EMB shall ensure that its staff is properly trained in the use of that technology, and such technology shall be simple to use and understandable to all voters, who shall be appraised of the technology during voter education.”</i>
4	15	MEC’s communication on technology while in line with the legal provisions, was perceived by some stakeholders as limited and not fully consistent. Electoral stakeholders could have benefitted from access to more information on technology-related decisions, procurement, governance frameworks, and management or operational policies.	Consider systematic and proactive communication measures that provide information on election technology using channels and tools appropriate to the target audience; make non-security sensitive processes and documents, including those on information security, technology governance and procurement, available to the public and to stakeholders with a view to encourage trust and confidence in the use of technology.	No change	MEC, Malawi Human Rights Commission, Department of Access to Information, Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority	<b>Transparency and access to information</b>  UNCAC, Article 10, Public reporting: <i>“Taking into account the need to combat corruption, each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system and with due regard to the protection of privacy and personal data, take measures to enhance transparency in its public administration, including by such measures as: (c) Provision to the public of timely, accessible and reliable information regarding the activities of public administration, including on opportunities to participate in the decision-making process and the implementation thereof.”</i>  ICCPR – Article 19.2: <i>“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include</i>



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						<p><i>freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”</i></p> <p>SADC Model Law on Elections Article 73 (Use of Technology): Cited above – rec.2.</p>
VOTER REGISTRATION						
5	17	A short voter registration period and the opposition’s lack of mobilisation of their supporters ahead of the registration process appeared to be the main reasons for the lower-than-expected registration turnout.	Extend opportunities for eligible citizens to register as voters in order to maximise enfranchisement.	Amend the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections Act, 2023, part II	National Assembly, MEC	<p><b>Right and opportunity to vote</b> ICCPR, Art. 25(b) Cited – rec. ICCPR GC25, p.11 “<i>States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right. Where registration of voters is required, it should be facilitated and obstacles to such registration should not be imposed.</i>”</p>
REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES						
6	18	The timing of the candidate nomination process, as determined by MEC, did not follow a logical sequence within the election process, as the	Conclude the candidate nomination process before the start of the official campaign period.	No change	MEC	<p><b>Fairness in the election campaign</b> UNCAC, Art. 7(2) “<i>Each State Party shall also consider adopting appropriate legislative and</i></p>





NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
		<p>candidates were approved to contest only several weeks after the start of the official campaign period. Such uncertainty could deter campaign activity and expenditure in advance of confirmation of candidature. Also, rejected candidates had not sufficient time to seek effective legal redress before ballot papers were printed without their names.</p>				<p><i>administrative measures, consistent with the objectives of this Convention and in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, to prescribe criteria concerning candidature for and election to public office.”</i></p> <p>Right to effective remedy</p> <p>ICCPR, Art. 2 (3a)</p> <p><i>“To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy.”</i></p>
7	18	<p>The record-high number of independent candidates, many formerly affiliated with political parties but unsuccessful in party primaries, signals a need for more inclusive and transparent candidate selection processes, as well as more robust internal party democracy and organisational structures.</p>	<p>Develop mechanisms for ensuring democratic practices within political parties, including competitive candidate selection and consultative decision-making processes, to strengthen accountability and internal governance structures.</p>	<p>Amend the Political Parties Act, 2018</p>	<p>National Assembly</p> <p>ORPP</p>	<p><b>Right to participate in public affairs</b></p> <p>ICCPR, GC 25, p. 26: <i>“States should ensure that, in their internal management, political parties respect the applicable provisions of Article 25 in order to enable citizens to exercise their rights thereunder.”</i></p>
CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT						
8	20	<p>The EU EOM observed the possible misuse of public resources in 19.5 per cent of campaign events it attended, primarily involving official vehicles and security services. By</p>	<p>Consider restrictions on the activities of the president and members of the government during the election campaign to mitigate the possible benefits of incumbency.</p>	<p>Introduce legislation to prevent state officials (ministers, president) who are candidates from campaigning in their</p>	<p>National Assembly</p>	<p><b>Prevention of corruption / fairness in the election campaign</b></p> <p>UN CAC Article 7 (1, 3): <i>“(1) Each state party shall [...] endeavour to adopt, maintain and strengthen</i></p>





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		contrast, some contestants were required to fund security and transportation costs privately. This has a bearing on the fairness of the campaign. Additionally, installation and elevation of traditional leaders, as well as a series of high-profile inaugurations and launches of major public works by members of the government just before the elections, risks blurring the line between official duties and campaign activity.		official capacity.		<i>systems for the recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion and retirement of civil servants and, where appropriate, other non-elected public officials (and) (3) [...] shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures [...] to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties.”</i>  SADC PF Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region, part 2 (3): “ <i>In the interest of creating conditions for a level playing field for all political parties and promoting the integrity of the electoral process, parties should not use public funds in the electoral process. The electoral law should prohibit the Government to aid or to abet any party gaining unfair advantage.</i> ”
9	21	Prohibitions on cash and in-kind handouts exist, with enforcement being recently pursued by the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP), although prosecutions are difficult as the practice is tolerated. Indeed, handouts were reported nationwide and observed by the	Provide greater legal clarity on the definition of prohibited handouts, in the Political Parties Act, to restrain candidates engaging in buying votes through handouts. Provide additional resources to the ORPP to pursue effective enforcement of the law, including through augmentation of staff capacity of the office.	Amend the Political Parties Act, 2018	National Assembly	<b>Prevention of corruption / fairness in the election campaign</b>  UN Convention Against Corruption, Article 7. 3: Cited – rec. 7  ICCPR, GC 25, p. 19: Cited rec. 7



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		EU EOM.				
CAMPAIGN FINANCE						
10	20	<p>The current legal framework does not put limits on expenditure or on fundraising for campaign purposes. There are only minimal reporting requirements in place, failing to provide transparency in campaign financing. There is an obligation, under the Political Parties Act, that donations from an individual of one million MWK (489 EUR), and of two million MWK (979 EUR) from an organisation, must be declared to the Registrar of Political Parties. Granting public access to such information would boost transparency around campaign financing.</p>	<p><b>PRIORITY</b></p> <p><b>Enhance fairness in campaign financing by imposing limits on campaign fundraising and expenditure, while enhancing transparency and accountability of political parties and candidates by requiring timely and disaggregated disclosure of income and expenditure.</b></p>	Amend the Political Parties Act, 2018	National Assembly ORPP	<p><b>Prevention of corruption / fairness in the election campaign; transparency and access to information</b></p> <p>UNCAC, art. 7 (3): Cited rec. 7</p> <p>UN HRC General Comment 25 p. 19: <i>“Reasonable limitations on campaign expenditure may be justified where this is necessary to ensure that the free choice of voters is not undermined or the democratic process distorted by the disproportionate expenditure on behalf of any candidate or party.”</i></p> <p>SADC Protocol against Corruption Article 4 (1) (d) (g): [...] <i>each State Party undertakes to adopt measures which will create, maintain and strengthen: (d) mechanisms to promote access to information to facilitate eradication and elimination of opportunities for corruption; (g) institutions responsible for implementing mechanisms for preventing, detecting, punishing and eradicating corruption.</i></p> <p>And article 7 (1): <i>“State Parties undertake, to the extent possible, to</i></p>



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						<i>develop and harmonise their policies and domestic legislation for the attainment of the purpose of this Protocol.”</i>
MEDIA						
11	22	The state is the largest advertiser, and the withdrawal of advertising has been used in the past as a retaliatory measure, putting pressure on media. Some media have postponed their most critical pieces until nearing the end of the campaign. In the last weeks of the campaign, and during the compilation of results, media and journalists reported threats and pressure to refrain from publishing news reflecting poorly on the ruling party or to report positively on the opposition. While internal policies of media and self-regulation mechanisms should encourage creating firewalls between commercial and editorial departments, to isolate them from political interference, state advertising practices should be regulated and subject to review.	Empower MACRA to monitor state advertising practice, publish information on procurement and volume, and specify financial thresholds that would trigger investigations by the media regulator; provide for redress measures.	Amend the Communications Act, 2016  Amend the Access to Information Act, 2017	National Assembly	<b>Freedom of opinion and expression</b>  AU, <a href="#">Declaration on Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa</a> , art.14.2: “States shall not use their power over the placement of public advertising as a means to interfere with media content.”  <a href="#">Joint Declaration on Media Freedom and Elections, 2023</a> : “Public advertising: Allocation of public advertising should be subject to clear and non-discriminatory requirements, be based on objective criteria, and be managed by independent bodies. States should avoid discrimination on the basis of political or government viewpoints in their decisions over the allocation of public advertising. Public authorities should be fully transparent with regard to the amount, scope, requirements, and criteria for the allocation of their advertising.”
12	23	MACRA’s board members and chairperson are directly appointed	<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>Ensure MACRA’s independence</b>	Amend the Communications Act,	National Assembly	<b>Transparency and access to information</b>



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		by the President. In addition, MACRA receives directives from the Ministry of Information, which does not ensure the necessary independence. MACRA did not take sufficient measures to correct the unbalanced and biased coverage by the state broadcaster MBC during the election campaign, as per its mandate.	<b>through transparent nomination of its members and chairperson by various institutions, as well as media and telecommunication professionals and broader civil society, and appointment by the National Assembly. Revoke ministerial policy directions over the regulator.</b>	2016, Articles 5, 8, & 10		AU, <a href="#">Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa</a> , Principle 17:  “A public regulatory authority that exercises powers in the areas of broadcast, telecommunications or internet infrastructure shall be independent and adequately protected against interference of a political, commercial or other nature. [...] shall be accountable to the public [...] A multi-stakeholder model of regulation shall be encouraged.”  <a href="#">Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Elections in the Digital Age, 2020</a> , p. 1.b.ii:  “Any administrative body which has the power to oversee rules relating to the media during election periods should be independent of the government and its decisions should be subject to timely judicial review.”
13	23	The absence of deadlines for the board of MACRA in the publication of broadcasting monitoring results, or for the adjudication of complaints of alleged violations of the rules, did not provide adequate or timely redress for violations of the law, failing to uphold the freedom of	Introduce appropriate legal deadlines for the publication of broadcasting monitoring results by MACRA; and impose responsibilities upon MACRA to review violations of the rules by broadcasters in a timely manner.	Amend the Communications Act, 2016	National Assembly	<b>Freedom of expression</b> <a href="#">ICCPR</a> , art. 2 (3): cited rec. 5  <a href="#">African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance</a> , art. 1:  “The [...] parties to the present Charter shall recognize the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in this



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		expression.				<p><i>Chapter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to effect to them.”</i></p> <p><a href="#">Joint Statement on the Media and Elections, 2009</a>: “Oversight of any rules relating to the media and elections should be vested in an independent administrative body which should address any complaints promptly. The decisions of this body should be subject to judicial review.”</p>
14	24	The state and private broadcasters allocated large amounts of airtime to paid-for coverage of campaign events and advertising. There are no legal provisions on labelling paid advertisements and other types of coverage, which led to inconsistent practice and blurred the line between editorial and paid-for content.	Introduce legal requirements for broadcasters to clearly label paid-for airtime, in order to promote transparency.	Amend the Communications Act, 2016	National Assembly	<p><b>Freedom of opinion and expression</b></p> <p>ICCPR, <a href="#">General Comment 25</a>, p. 19: “Voters should be able to form opinions independently, free of violence or threat of violence, compulsion, inducement or manipulative interference of any kind.”</p> <p><a href="#">UNHRC: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression</a>, para. 82. b: <i>The obligations to promote the enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression require that States guarantee the transparency of all aspects of political and electoral processes, and should particularly put in place measures to: (...) (b) Put in place measures to ensure that, in all circumstances, paid political</i></p>



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						<i>advertising is identified as such and not disguised as news or editorial coverage, and that the origin of its financial backing is evident.'</i>
15	25	MBC board members and chairperson are appointed by the President, which does not allow for the required level of independence for said body; MBC provided disproportionate coverage to the ruling party, while providing limited and biased coverage to the opposition.	<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>Transform the state-owned broadcaster MBC into a genuinely independent public service broadcaster with independent management and oversight, appointed by, and accountable to, the public through the legislature.</b>	Amend the Communications Act, 2016, article 112	National Assembly	<p><b>Freedom of opinion and expression</b></p> <p><a href="#">ICCPR</a>, 19.2 cited rec. 3</p> <p><a href="#">ICCPR, GC 34</a>, p. 16: “States parties should ensure that public broadcasting services operate in an independent manner. In this regard, States parties should guarantee their independence and editorial freedom.”</p> <p>AU <a href="#">Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa</a>, Principle 11.2</p> <p>“State and government-controlled broadcasters shall be transformed into public service broadcasters, accountable to the public through the legislature or other mechanism for public accountability.”</p> <p>AU <a href="#">Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa</a>, principle 13.1 and 13.2:</p> <p>“States shall establish public service media governed by a transparently constituted and diverse board adequately protected against undue</p>





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						<i>interference of a political, commercial or other nature”</i>  <i>“The senior management of public service media shall be appointed by and accountable to the board.”</i>
SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL RIGHTS						
16	26	During the electoral period, disinformation was spread primarily by proxy pages and unaffiliated outlets rather than by official party accounts. These actors amplified misleading narratives. While fact-checking initiatives were present, they lacked the necessary tools and robust monitoring methodology to address disinformation in real time. This limited their preventive impact and reduced their ability to reach broader audiences.	Consider supporting the capacity-building of existing fact-checking initiatives, including strengthening their monitoring methodology and fostering cooperation with civil society, media, and other electoral stakeholders.	No change	MEC; MACRA; MISA Malawi; Media Council of Malawi, Media CSOs	<b>Freedom of opinion and expression; transparency and access to information</b>  SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections: <i>“Member States shall ensure that citizens enjoy fundamental freedoms and human rights, including freedom of expression, and guarantee unhindered access of political parties and electoral stakeholders to communicate freely with the media.”</i>  African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Article 9: <i>“Every individual has the right to receive information and the right to express and disseminate opinions within the law.”</i>  African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance: <i>“Recognises access to information, transparency, and accountability as essential to democratic elections and requires States to guarantee citizens</i>



NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
						access to credible information before, during and after elections.”  ICCPR, Articles 19 and 25: cited above.
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN						
17	28	<p>Socio-cultural norms and lack of financial resources continue to restrict women’s political participation. Women comprised just 22 per cent of parliamentary candidates, and one amongst the 17 presidential candidates was a woman.</p> <p>The 2017 Law Commission report proposed creating a constituency reserved exclusively for women within each district, in addition to the existing constituencies.</p>	<p><b>PRIORITY</b></p> <p><b>Consider the introduction of temporary special measures, such as new district-wide parliamentary constituencies, within each district, reserved exclusively for women, to promote their political participation.</b></p>	<p>Amend the Constitution and the Political Parties Act, 2018</p>	National Assembly	<p><b>Women’s participation in public affairs / equality between men and women</b></p> <p>CEDAW art 4.1: “<i>Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention [...].</i>”</p> <p>And art. 7: “<i>Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life and shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to vote and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.</i>”</p> <p>SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, art. 13: “<i>Parties shall adopt specific legislative measures and other strategies to enable women to have equal opportunities with men to participate in all electoral processes including the administration of</i></p>



NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
						<i>elections and voting."</i>
PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES						
18	29	Despite ratification of the CRPD, the legislation still allows disqualification of prospective voters and candidates on the grounds of mental incapacity.	Abolish voter and candidate disqualification on the grounds of mental incapacity, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).	Amend Constitution 51.2(b), 76.3(a), 80.7(a)  Amend PPLGE Act  38.2(b)	National Assembly	<b>Freedom from discrimination</b>  CRPD, Art. 29: " <i>State Parties ... shall undertake to ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected.</i> "  The African Commission on Human and People's Rights: Case of Purohit and Moore v The Gambia.
PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH						
19	30	Malawi's predominantly young population remains significantly underrepresented in elected office, with limited decision-making influence despite its demographic weight. Access to age-disaggregated data on registered youth voters, candidates, and turnout, is needed to assess and strengthen youth	Strengthen policy frameworks to support young candidates by incentivising political parties to adopt meaningful youth inclusion measures, such as inclusive internal selection processes and youth representation in party National Executive Committees, complemented by the publication of age-disaggregated voter and candidate data by the MEC.	Amend the Political Parties Act, 2018	National Assembly  Office of the Registrar of Political Parties  Malawi Electoral Commission	<b>Right and opportunity to participate in public affairs and hold office</b>  African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 13(1) " <i>Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his or her country, either directly or through freely chosen</i>



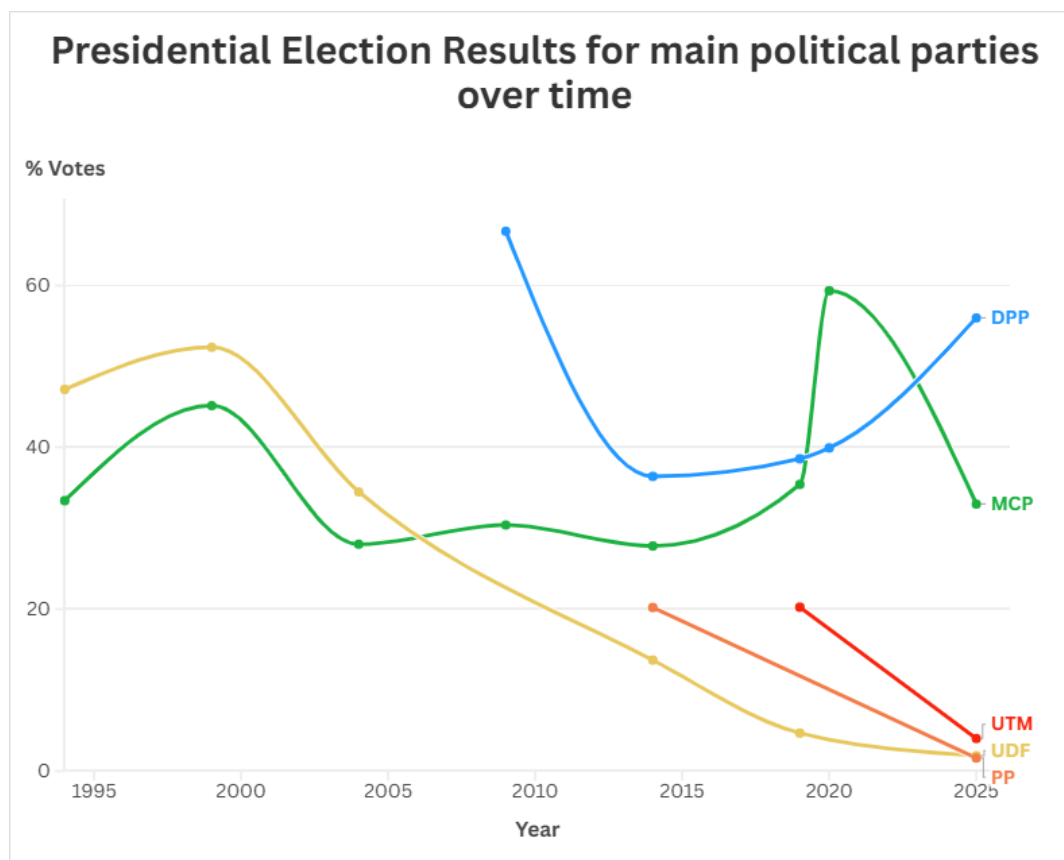
NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
		inclusion.				<p><i>representatives in accordance with the law.</i>"</p> <p>African Youth Charter (2006)</p> <p>Article 11 (1) and (2)(a): Youth Participation <i>"Every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society."</i></p> <p><i>"States Parties shall take the following measures to promote active youth participation in society: (a) Guarantee the participation of youth in parliament and other decision-making bodies in accordance with prescribed laws."</i></p> <p>UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (2015), Paragraph 1</p> <p><i>"Urges Member States to consider ways to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions [...]"</i></p>
CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION						
20	31	The MEC timeline for observer accreditation did not meet the needs of domestic observer organisations, as the deadline for submitting applications for	Issue observer identity cards to accredited observers continuously, from the start of the official campaign period until shortly before election day.	No change	MEC	<p><b>Right and opportunity to participate in public affairs and hold office</b></p> <p>African Charter on Democracy,</p>



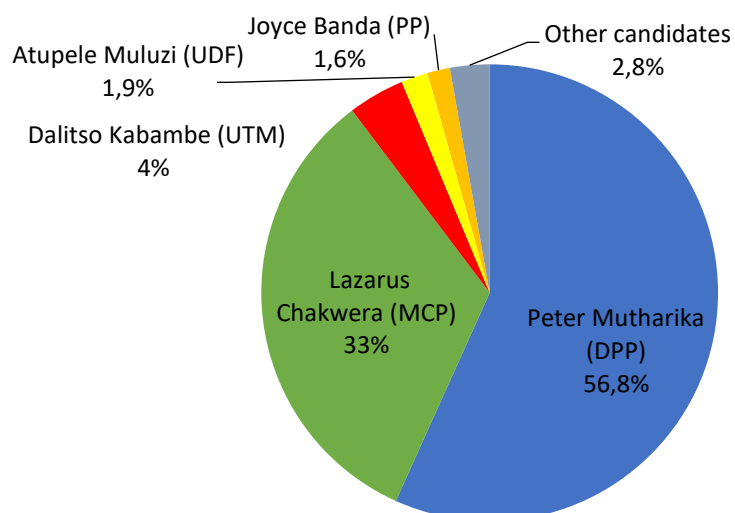
NO.	FR page #	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
		accreditation was too late for long-term observation and too early for short-term observation, with the consequence that domestic long-term observers began their observation activities without accreditation and requests had to be made to extend the deadline for accreditation of large numbers of e-day observers.				Elections and Governance, Art. 19 (2): <i>“Each State Party shall guarantee conditions of security, free access to information, non-interference, freedom of movement and full cooperation with the electoral observer mission.”</i>  SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, Art. 5.1.7: <i>“Ensure timely accreditation of observers in accordance with national laws as appropriate.”</i>
ELECTORAL DISPUTES						
21	31	There are no binding time limits laid down in legislation for the determination of electoral disputes by the judiciary, although there are rules of court in place in the matter. This creates a risk of pre-election disputes not being resolved prior to E-Day. Similarly, there is a risk that post-election petitions may not be adjudicated expeditiously.	<b>PRIORITY</b>  <b>Consider the adoption of legislative time limits requiring the judiciary to resolve election-related cases expeditiously.</b>	Amendment of the Constitution and of the PPLGEA	National Assembly	<b>Right to effective legal redress</b>  ICCPR art. 2.3: cited rec. 5  SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections Section 4.1.10: <i>“[...] States hereby commit themselves to upholding the following “Principles for Conducting Democratic Elections” in the furtherance of democratic elections in the SADC region: Promote and respect the values of electoral justice which include integrity, impartiality, fairness; professionalism, efficiency and regularity of elections.”</i>

## ANNEX 1 – ELECTION RESULTS

Graph 1. Evolution of presidential election results (Malawi Electoral Commission 1994-2025)



Graph 2: Final presidential election results of main candidates (MEC 2025)





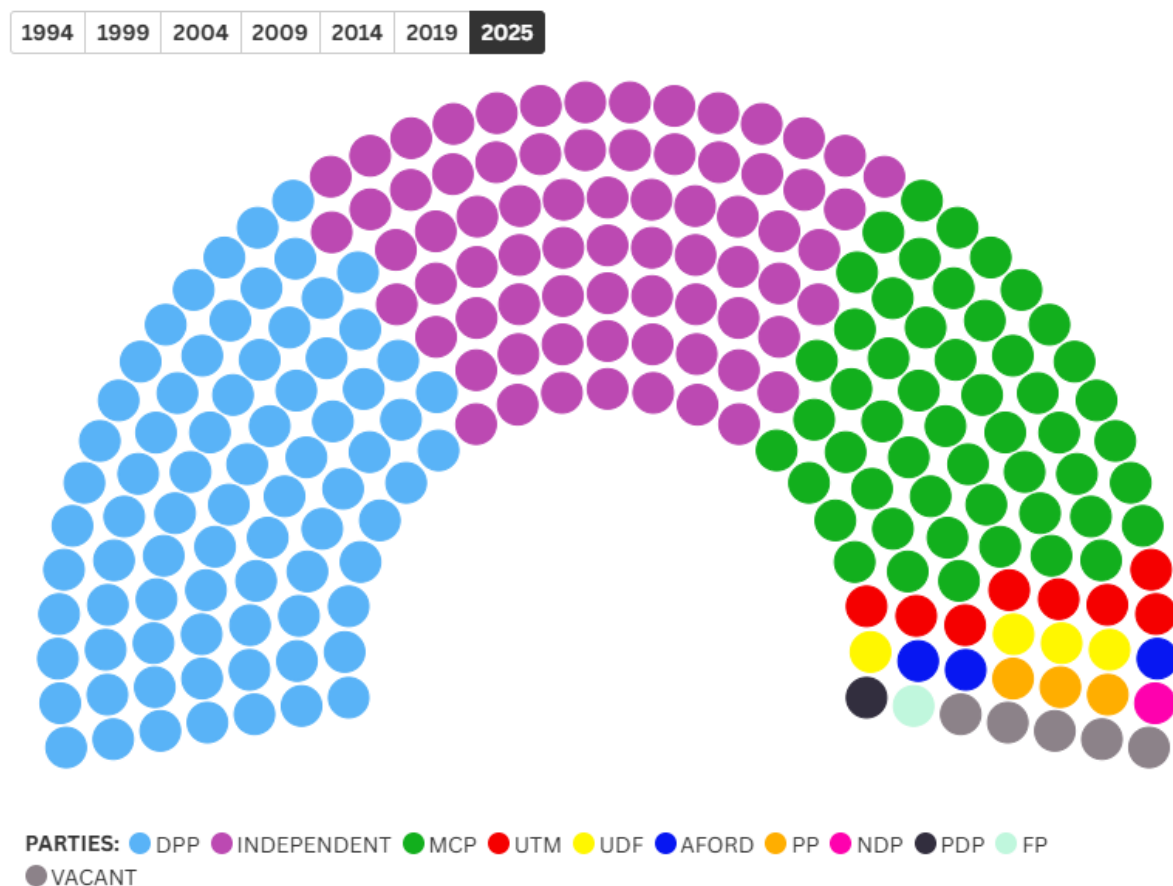


*Table 1. Final presidential election results of main candidates, per Council (MEC 2025)*

Council	Peter Mutharika (DPP)		Lazarus Chakwera (MCP)		Dalitso Kabambe (UTM)		Atupele Muluzi (UDF)		Joyce Banda (PP)		Other candidates		TOTAL
	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes
Chitipa	35,827	54	13,936	21	9,035	13	687	1	4,743	7	2,730	4	66,958
Karonga Town	8,971	61	4,388	30	413	3	182	1	269	2	549	4	14,772
Karonga District	45,525	56	19,072	23	6,867	8	824	1	5,229	6	4,015	5	81,532
Rumphi	29,957	45	24,486	37	6,627	10	518	1	3,066	5	1,938	3	66,592
Mzuzu City	25,077	45	15,013	27	12,782	23	550	1	1,078	2	1,309	2	55,809
Mzimba	118,117	45	91,509	35	19,876	8	2,501	1	20,182	8	8,684	3	260,869
Nkhatabay	39,813	56	15,903	22	6,946	10	845	1	5,041	7	2,259	3	70,807
Likoma	4,177	61	1,817	27	485	7	110	2	87	1	118	2	6,794
Nkhotakota	52,259	46	50,776	45	2,866	3	1,801	2	1,696	2	3,664	3	113,062
Kasungu	7,831	43	8,818	48	1,019	6	229	1	98	1	246	1	18,241
Kasungu District	50182	22	160,210	70	5,015	2	1,082	0	5,008	2	7,238	3	228,735
Ntchisi	11,365	11	81,635	80	2,671	3	350	0	2,006	2	3,787	4	101,814
Dowa	15,906	6	216,091	87	3,534	1	617	0	3,522	1	8,128	3	247,798
Salima	60,830	49	49,443	40	3,673	3	3,220	3	1,593	1	4,356	4	123,115
Lilongwe City	145,908	49	112,787	38	28,570	10	4875	2	1,438	0	4,353	1	297,931
Lilongwe District	45,477	8	511,625	86	8,459	1	1,816	0	5,362	1	21,746	4	594,485
Mchinji	30,160	18	126,187	74	4,294	3	1,662	1	2,384	1	6,499	4	171,186
Dedza	44,576	14	169,710	53	5,035	2	8,040	3	3,334	1	147,43	5	317,438
Ntcheu	107,432	78	9,095	7	14,291	10	2,015	1	954	1	3,234	2	137,021
Mangochi Municipality	22,113	79	1,290	5	880	3	3,069	11	173	1	355	1	27,880
Mangochi District	257,098	84	10,080	3	5,020	2	23,091	8	3,712	1	7,404	2	306,405
Balaka	120,021	89	3,343	2	3,389	3	4,543	3	914	1	2,006	1	134,216
Machinga	177,387	88	4,541	2	2,492	1	10,598	5	2,480	1	3,782	2	201,280
Phalombe	134,205	95	2,305	2	950	1	2,032	1	548	0	1,711	1	141,751
Zomba City	35,536	80	3,472	8	3,990	9	738	2	326	1	504	1	44,566
Zomba District	213,241	90	5,676	2	3,762	2	5,624	2	4,414	2	4,014	2	236,731
Chiradzulu	117,098	94	2,116	2	1,834	1	1,919	2	519	0	1,537	1	125,023
Thyolo	200,131	95	2,943	1	2,516	1	2,463	1	574	0	2,157	1	210,784
Blantyre City	197,532	79	17,419	7	25,572	10	4,783	2	952	0	2,540	1	248,798
Blantyre District	118,691	88	5,002	4	5,158	4	3,568	3	687	1	1,874	1	134,980
Nsanje	93,197	85	10,063	9	1,619	1	1,584	1	689	1	2,567	2	109,719
Neno	36,607	90	1,370	3	1,024	3	544	1	358	1	760	2	40,663
Mulanje	207,596	92	3,195	1	2,579	1	2,923	1	692	0	9,527	4	226,512
Chikwawa	187,283	91	7,290	4	2,736	1	3,227	2	1,567	1	4,351	2	206,454
Luchenza	7,547	91	336	4	232	3	81	1	18	0	114	1	8,328
Mwanza	30,576	83	2,228	6	2,203	6	533	1	463	1	798	2	36,801
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,035,249</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,765,170</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>208,414</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>175,244</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>86,176</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>144,799</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5,379,049</b>

*Graph 2: Composition of the 2025-2030 Parliament and evolution of number of seats since 1994*

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS



PARTIES	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019	2025	Seat change
● DPP				113	50	62	78	↑ 16
● INDEPENDENT		4	40	32	52	55	73	↑ 18
● MCP	55	66	57	27	48	55	52	↓ 3
● UTM						4	8	↑ 4
● UDF	84	93	48	17	14	10	4	↓ 6
● AFORD	36	29	6	1	1	1	3	↑ 2
● PP					26	5	3	↓ 2
● NDP							1	↑ 1
● PDP							1	↑ 1
● FP							1	↑ 1
● VACANT							5	↑ 5

Table 2. Number of registered voters, voter turnout and void votes, per Council (MEC 2025)

Council	Registered Voters	Voter Turnout	Turnout %	Void votes	Void votes %
Chitipa	86,980	68,131	78.3	1,173	1.7
Karonga Town	26,702	18,235	68.3	463	2.5
Karonga District	122,430	83,916	68.5	2,364	2.8
Rumphi	94,936	67,982	71.6	1,390	2.0
Mzuzu City	76,629	56,776	74.1	967	1.7
Mzimba	371,563	269,140	72.4	7,369	2.7
Nkhatabay	107,406	72,776	67.8	1,968	2.7
Likoma	8,664	6,937	80.1	143	2.1
Nkhotakota	172,331	116,945	67.9	3,973	3.4
Kasungu Municipality	25,645	18,614	72.6	373	2.0
Kasungu District	345,041	236,250	68.5	7,515	3.2
Ntchisi	141,799	104,757	73.9	2,923	2.8
Dowa	347,295	256,698	73.9	8,900	3.5
Salima	186,585	128,351	68.8	5,236	4.1
Lilongwe City	409,625	305,858	74.7	7,927	2.6
Lilongwe District	826,779	617,030	74.6	22,545	3.7
Mchinji	252,605	176,840	70.0	6,154	3.5
Dedza	335,183	256,038	76.4	10,610	4.1
Ntcheu	172,874	140,727	81.4	3,706	2.6
Mangochi Municipality	37,840	28,443	75.2	563	2.0
Mangochi District	410,603	316,871	77.2	10,466	3.3
Balaka	170,027	137,121	80.6	2,905	2.1
Machinga	253,176	206,559	81.6	5,279	2.6
Phalombe	170,605	143,912	84.4	2,161	1.5
Zomba City	57,250	45,185	78.9	619	1.4
Zomba District	289,428	241,553	83.5	4,833	2.0
Chiradzulu	146,878	127,545	86.8	2,522	2.0
Thyolo	253,105	215,377	85.1	4,222	2.0
Blantyre City	306,531	253,445	82.7	4,647	1.8
Blantyre District	166,739	138,086	82.8	3,106	2.2
Nsanje	147,500	113,704	77.1	3,781	3.3
Neno	50,826	41,433	81.5	770	1.9
Mulanje	279,761	231,763	82.8	5,251	2.3
Chikwawa	270,767	213,518	78.9	7,064	3.3
Luchenza Municipality	10,237	8,455	82.6	127	1.5
Mwanza	51,045	38,011	74.5	1210	3.2
TOTAL	7,183,390	5,502,982	76.6	155,225	2.8

## ANNEX 2 – MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS

From 12 August until 14 September, the EU EOM monitored a sample of broadcast and print media. Media monitoring included quantitative and qualitative analysis of the coverage of the campaign and other socio-political issues, assessing the amount of time and space allocated to candidates, political parties, public officials, and other politically relevant subjects, as well as evaluating the tone of the coverage and the gender balance across the media landscape. The media monitoring aimed at providing reliable data on the distribution of time and space to relevant political actors and to assess if the media guaranteed a sufficient level of information on political alternatives in a balanced manner. The monitoring sample for audio-visual media included the state-owned broadcasters, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), three private TV channels and three private radio stations. All were selected based on their reach and audience. The EU EOM also monitored the two national print outlets and their weekend editions, from 13 August till 14 September.

### **The media outlets monitored by the EU EOM were as follows:**

Four TV channels were monitored daily from 18:00 till 00:00, from 12 August until 14 September:

- MBC TV1 – state-owned
- Times TV – private (Times Group)
- Zodiak TV – private (Zodiak Broadcasting Station)
- Mibawa TV – private

Four radio stations were monitored daily from 06:00 till 08:00, 12:00 till 13:00 and 18:00 till 22:00, from 12 August until 14 September

- MBC Radio 1 – state-owned
- Times Radio – private (Times Group)
- Zodiak Radio – private (Zodiak Broadcasting Station)
- Capital FM – private

Two daily and three weekly newspapers were fully monitored from 12 August until 14 September

- The Daily News – private, daily (Times Group)
- The Nation – private, daily (Nation Publications Limited)
- Malawi News – private, weekly (Times Group)
- Weekend Nation – private, weekly (Nation Publications Limited)
- Nation on Sunday – private, weekly (Nation Publications Limited)

### **How to read the charts**

The bar/column charts show the distribution of airtime or space (in percentage) by type of format by media outlet, as well as the tone of the coverage (negative, neutral, positive).

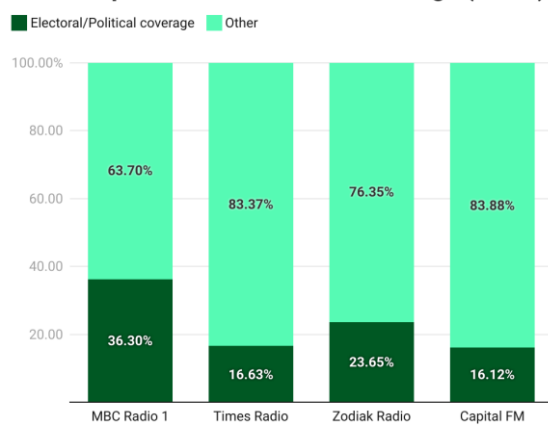
The pie charts show the share of airtime and space allocated to the leading presidential and their respective parties, and the Government, by media outlet, as well as the share of direct speech of the candidates on the state-owned broadcaster.

The time is monitored in seconds for the electronic media and converted in hh:mm:ss, and space is measured in cm<sup>2</sup> for print media.

## 1. Share of political and electoral coverage

During the 34-day-long monitoring period, the EU EOM coded TV broadcasts lasting 816 hours, with an average of 39 per cent being allotted to electoral and political content, mostly on the state broadcaster. The EU EOM coded radio broadcasts lasting 952 hours, with an average of 23 per cent being granted to political communication. Charts 1 and 2 show the share of airtime each media outlets devoted to the coverage of electoral and other socio-political issues. Charts 3 and 4 show the prevalence of the presidential race in the airtime allocation.

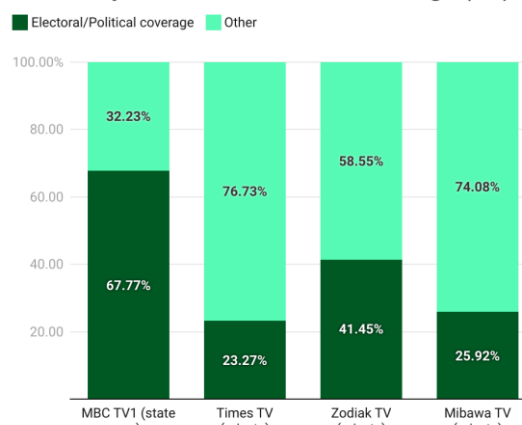
**Share of political and electoral coverage (Radio)**



Base Airtime: MBC Radio 1 86:23:43, Times Radio 39:34:48, ZBS Radio 56:17:01, Capital FM 38:19:58  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025

Chart 1

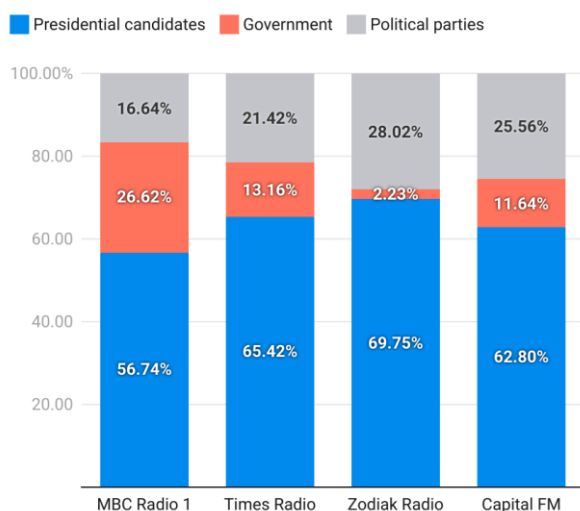
**Share of political and electoral coverage (TV)**



Base Airtime: MBC TV1 138:14:35, Mibawa TV 52:52:28, Times Television 47:28:32, Zodiak Television 84:33:23  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025

Chart 2

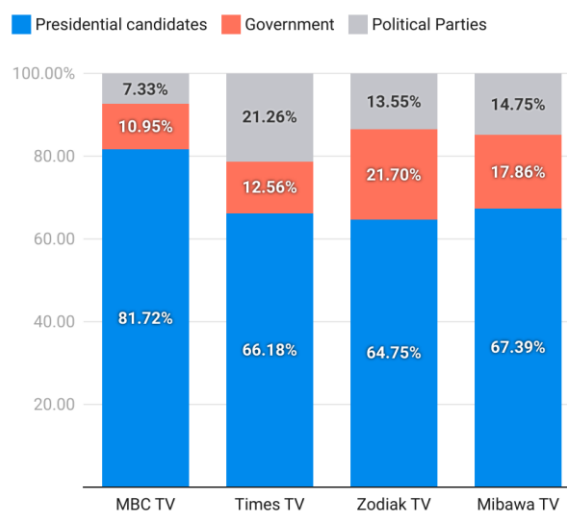
**Share of airtime by type of actors on radio**



Base Airtime: MBC Radio 1 86:23:43, Times Radio 39:34:48, ZBS Radio 56:17:01, Capital FM 38:19:58  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025

Chart 3

**Share of airtime by type of actors on TV**



Base Airtime: MBC TV1 138:14:35, Mibawa TV 52:52:28, Times Television 47:28:32, Zodiak Television 84:33:23  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025

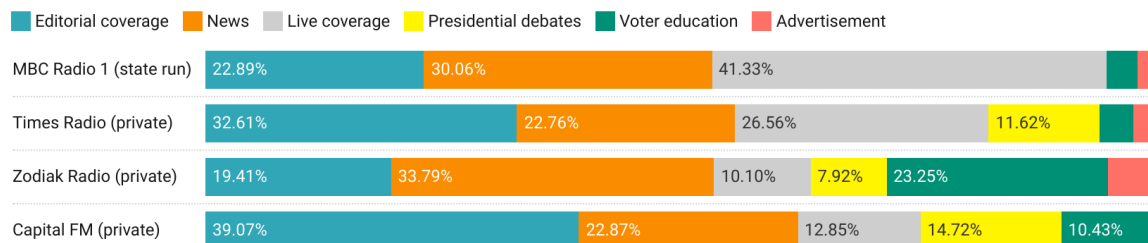
Chart 4

## 2. Broadcast media political and electoral coverage by format

Charts 5 and 6 show the breakdown of types of radio and TV broadcasts featuring political communication. Presidential debate includes the two debates organized on 21 August and 9

September. Voter education programmes include short voter information clips and interviews produced by the MEC and civil society organisations. Advertisement includes short paid-for political publicity clips that were marked as such. Live coverage, which was also paid for, was shown in a separate category as it was not clearly labelled.

### Share of political and electoral coverage by format (Radio)

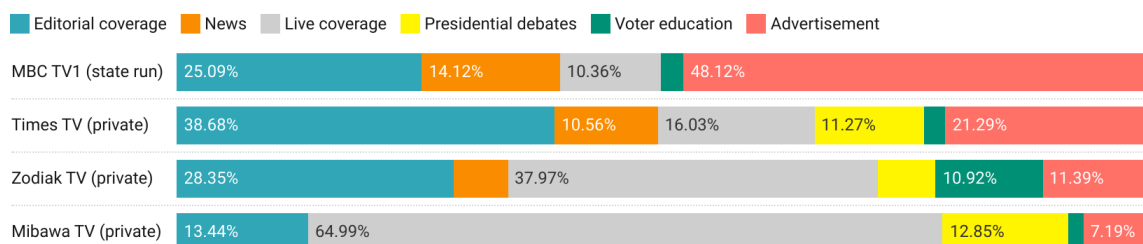


Base Airtime: MBC Radio 1 86:23:43, Times Radio 39:34:48, ZBS Radio 56:17:01, Capital FM 38:19:58

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025

Chart 5

### Share of political and electoral coverage by format (TV)



Base Airtime: MBC TV1 138:14:35, Mibawa TV 52:52:28, Times Television 47:28:32, Zodiak Television 84:33:23

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025

Chart 6

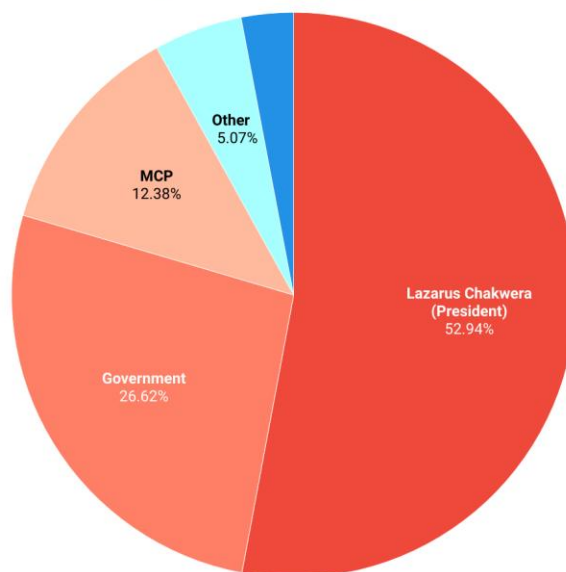
## 3. State-owned broadcaster – MBC Radio 1 and TV1

Charts 5 to 12 show proportional distribution of airtime among political actors on state radio and television, as well as the tone used by the media to portray the leading candidates, and the vice-president, which as covered mostly negatively by the state broadcaster. Political parties and their candidates, the president, and the government ministers are represented in the visuals.



### Share of airtime MBC Radio1 (state owned) - Total coverage

■ Lazarus Chakwera (President) ■ Government ■ MCP ■ Other ■ Arthur Peter Mutharika/DPP-Aford



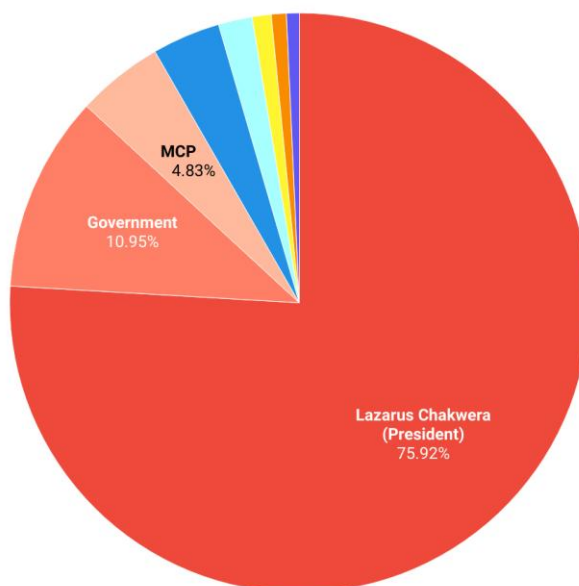
Base Airtime: MBC TV1 78:55:00

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 7

### Share of airtime MBC TV1 (state owned) - Total coverage

■ Lazarus Chakwera (President) ■ Government ■ MCP ■ Arthur Peter Mutharika/DPP-Aford  
■ Other ■ Dalitso Kabambe/UTM ■ Joyce Banda/PP ■ Atupele Austin Muluzi/UDF



Base Airtime: MBC TV1 131:36:28

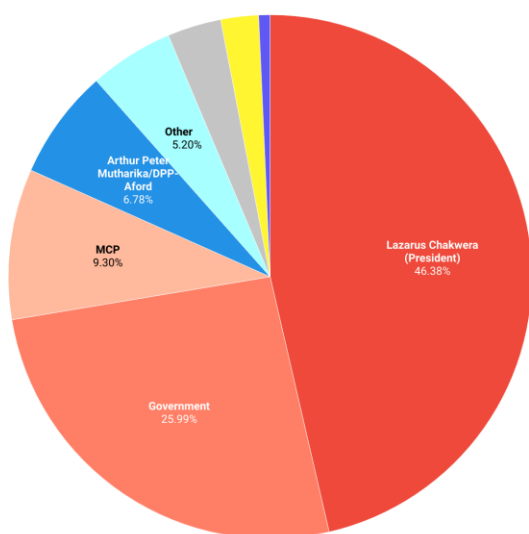
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 8



Share of airtime MBC Radio1 (state owned) - News casts

Lazarus Chakwera (President) Government MCP Arthur Peter Mutharika/DPP-Aford Other  
Michael Uisi/OZAM Dalitso Kabambe/UTM Atupele Austin Muluzi/UDF

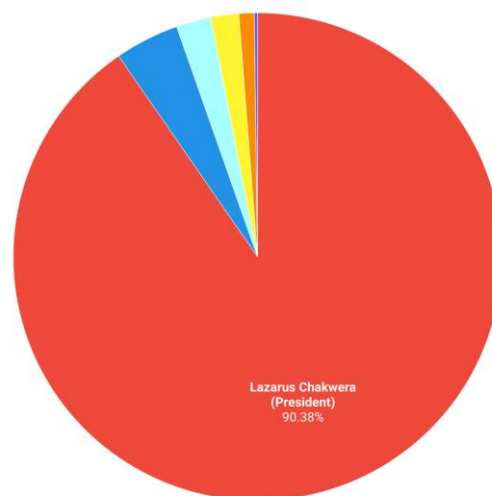


Base Airtime: MBC Radio1 24:02:16  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 9

Share of direct speech of the leading candidates on MBC Radio1 (state owned) - News casts

Lazarus Chakwera (President) Arthur Peter Mutharika Other candidates Dalitso Kabambe  
Joyce Banda Atupele Austin Muluzi

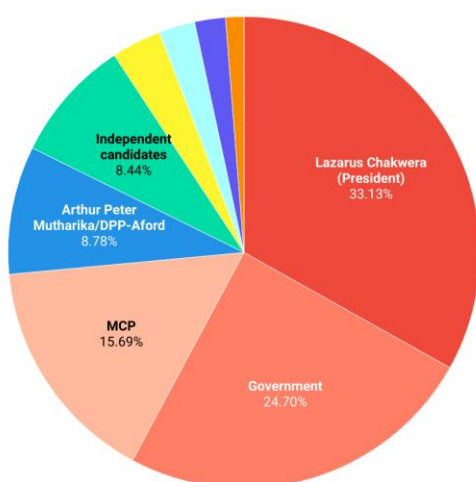


Base Airtime: MBC Radio1 02:29:52  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 10

Share of airtime MBC TV1 (state owned) - News casts

Lazarus Chakwera (President) Government MCP Arthur Peter Mutharika/DPP-Aford  
Independent candidates Dalitso Kabambe/UTM Other Atupele Austin Muluzi/UDF  
Joyce Banda/PP

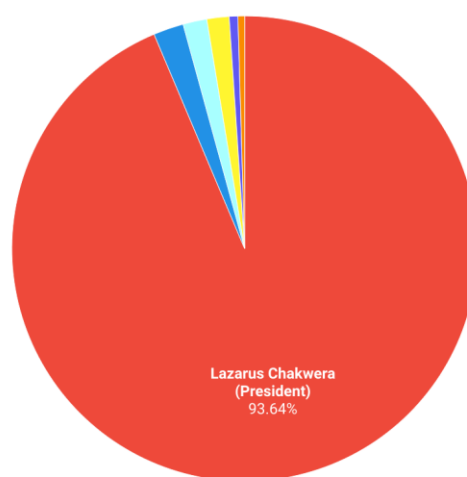


Base Airtime: MBC TV1 14:58:48  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 11

Share of direct speech of the leading candidates on MBC TV1 (state owned) - News casts

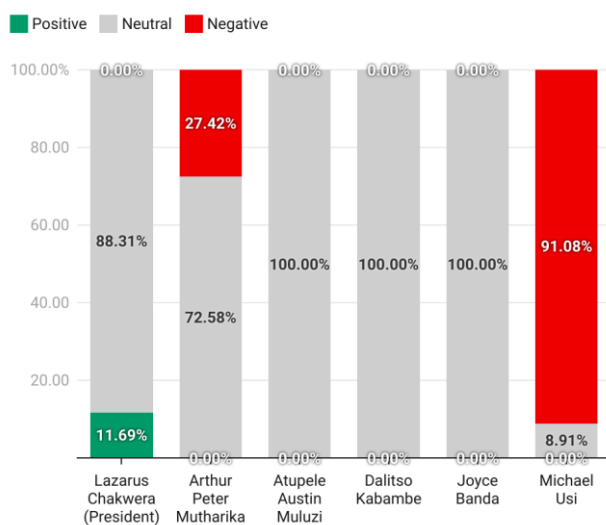
Lazarus Chakwera (President) Arthur Peter Mutharika Other candidates  
Dalitso Kabambe Atupele Austin Muluzi Joyce Banda



Base Airtime: MBC TV1 02:14:07  
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 12

### Tone by candidate - MBC Radio1 (state owned)

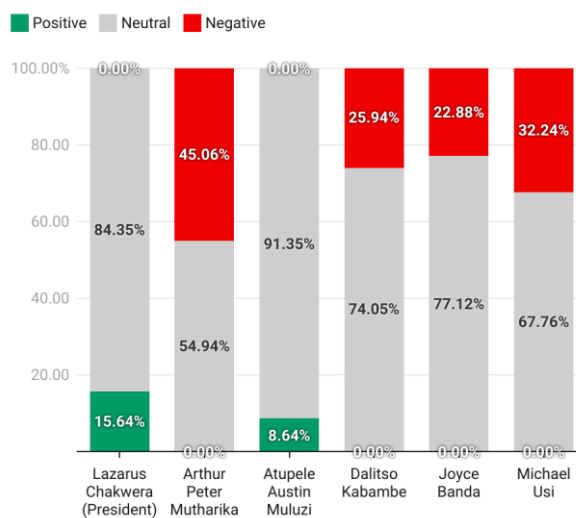


Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 41:46:41, Arthur Peter Mutharika 01:11:14, Atupele Austin Muluzi 00:04:16, Dalitso Kabambe 00:22:21, Joyce Banda 00:09:28, Michael Usi 00:40:57

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 13

### Tone by candidate - MBC TV1 (state owned)



Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 99:55:18, Arthur Peter Mutharika 02:54:39, Atupele Austin Muluzi 00:34:20, Dalitso Kabambe 00:51:04, Joyce Banda 00:57:54, Michael Usi 00:26:56

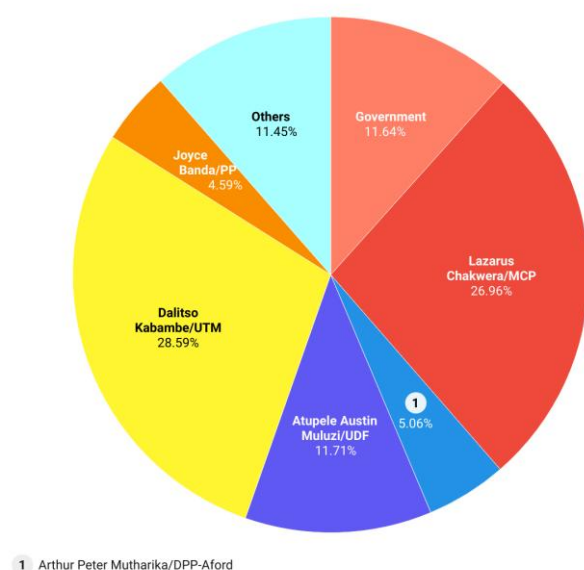
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 14

## 4. Private broadcasters

Charts 13 to 24 show proportional distribution of airtime among political actors by private broadcasters, as well as the tone used by the media houses to portray the leading candidates and the vice-president. Pie charts include political parties and their candidates, the president, and the government ministers.

### Share of airtime Times Radio (private) - Total coverage



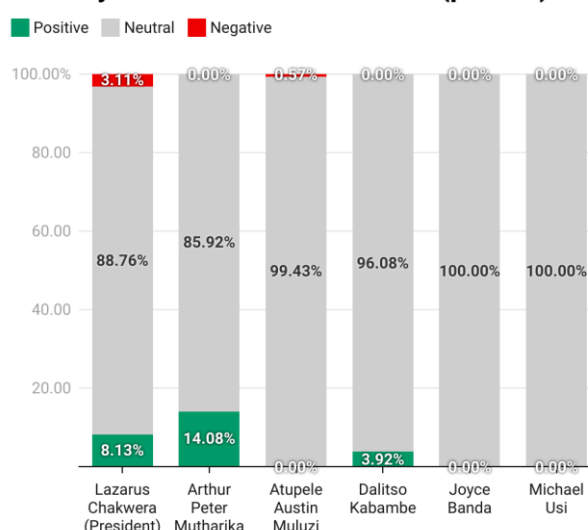
1 Arthur Peter Mutharika/DPP-Aford

Base Airtime: Times Radio 33:58:50

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 15

### Tone by candidate - Times Radio (private)

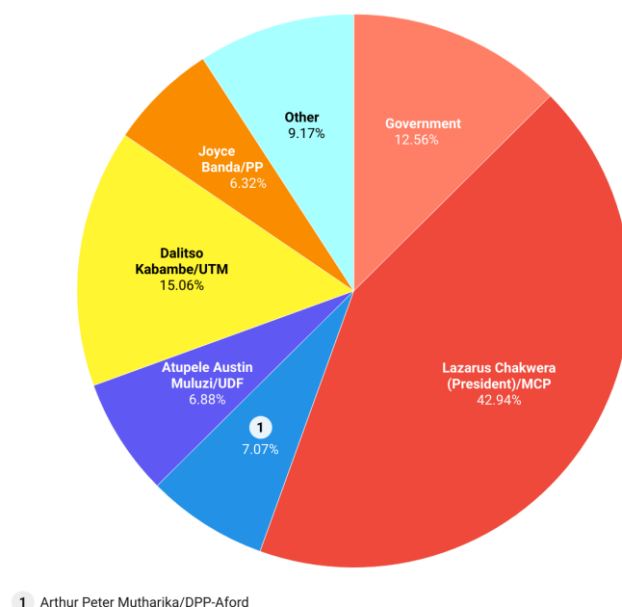


Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 06:37:34, Arthur Peter Mutharika 00:36:20, Atupele Austin Muluzi 03:08:20, Dalitso Kabambe 07:37:37, Joyce Banda 01:18:11, Michael Usi 02:15:04

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 16

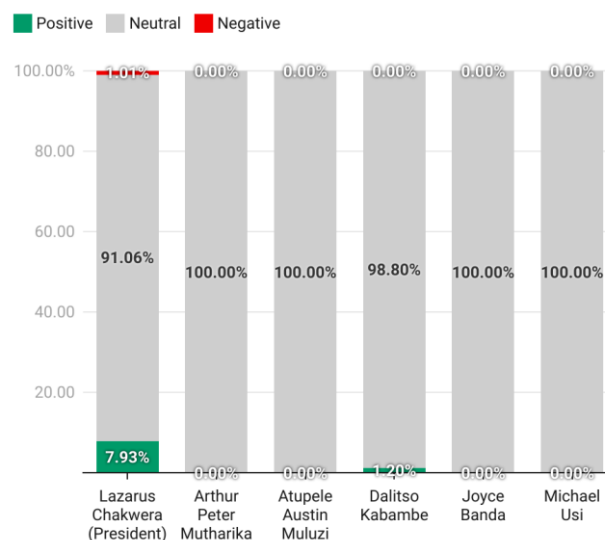
Share of airtime Times TV (private) - Total coverage



Base Airtime: Times TV 43:45:15

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Tone by candidate - Times TV (private)

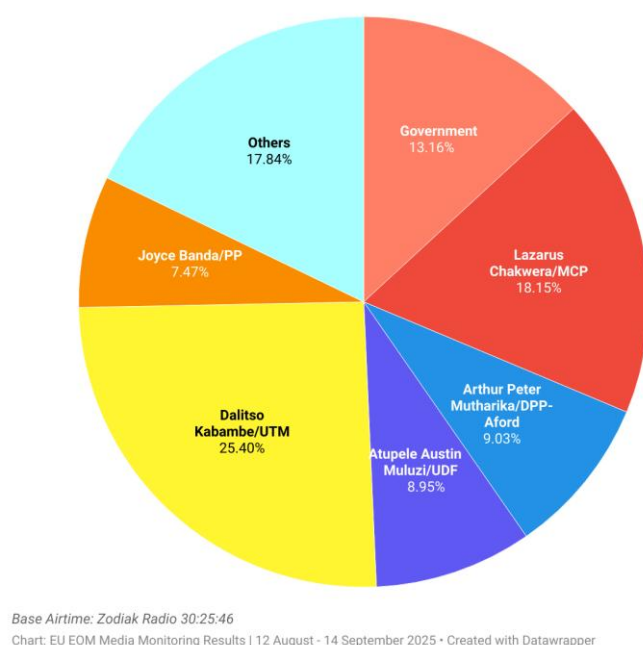


Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 16:39:49, Arthur Peter Mutharika 00:51:19, Atupele Austin Muluzi 02:30:13, Dalitso Kabambe 04:34:16, Joyce Banda 01:18:35, Michael Usi 00:12:16

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 17

Share of airtime Zodiak Radio (private) - Total coverage

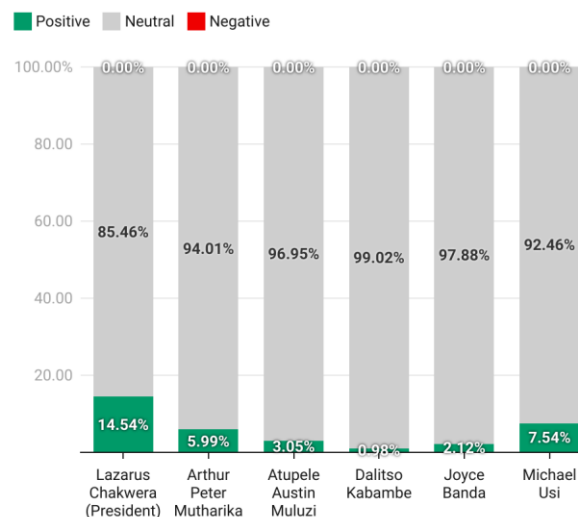


Base Airtime: Zodiak Radio 30:25:46

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 19

Tone by candidate - Zodiak Radio (private)



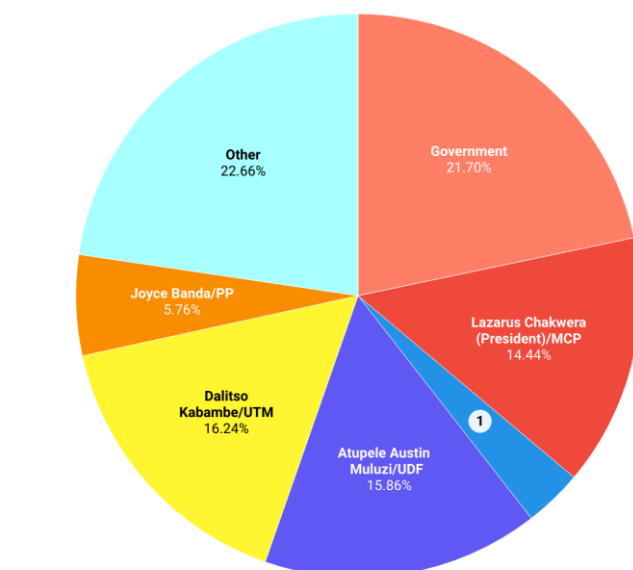
Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 04:17:22, Arthur Peter Mutharika 00:53:09, Atupele Austin Muluzi 02:29:12, Dalitso Kabambe 06:18:33, Joyce Banda 02:03:33, Michael Usi 00:54:10

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 20



Share of airtime Zodiak TV (private) - Total coverage



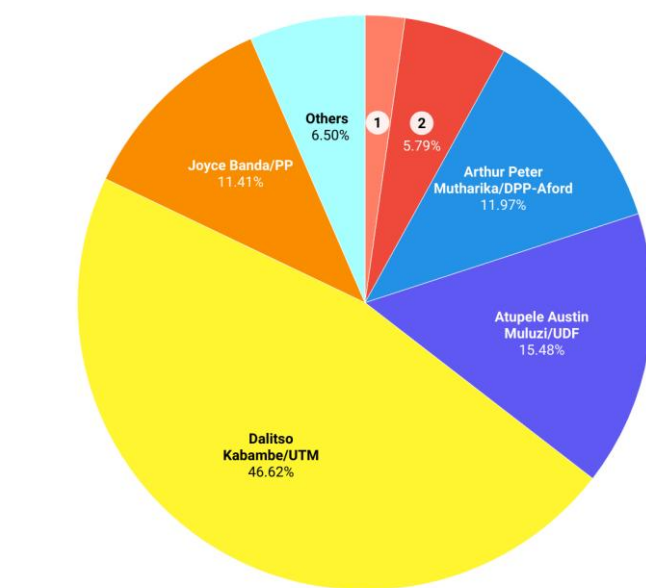
1 Arthur Peter Mutharika/DPP-Aford

Base Airtime: Zodiak TV 63:58:37

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 21

Share of airtime Capital FM (private) - Total coverage



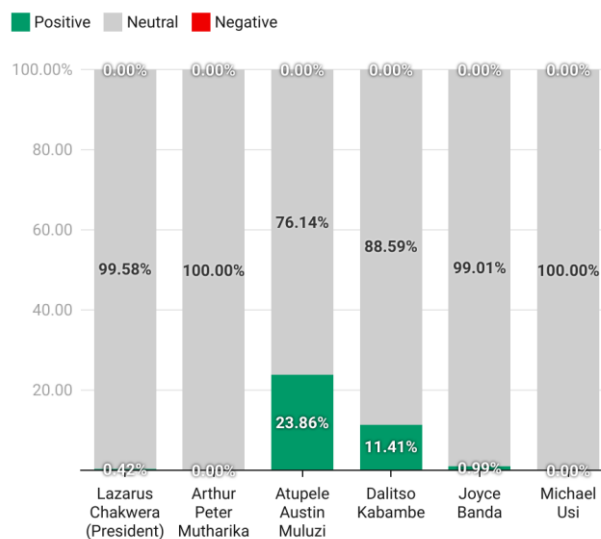
1 Government 2 Lazarus Chakwera/MCP

Base Airtime: Capital FM 29:13:24

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 23

Tone by candidate - Zodiak TV (private)

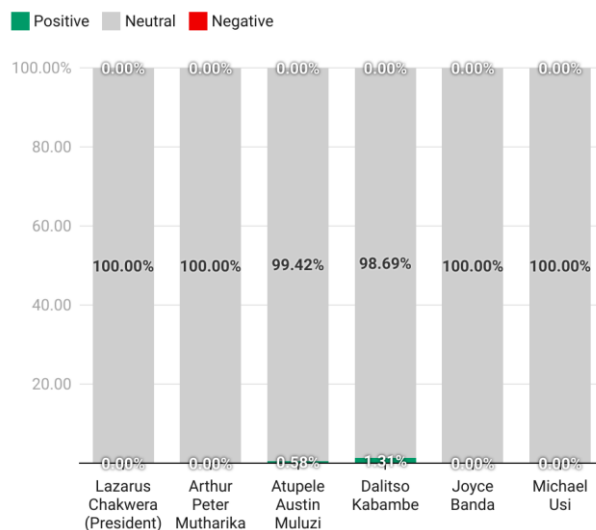


Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 08:21:16, Arthur Peter Mutharika 00:59:51, Atupele Austin Muluzi 09:23:36, Dalitso Kabambe 08:44:55, Joyce Banda 03:36:41, Michael Uzi 01:51:13

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 22

Tone by candidate - Capital FM (private)

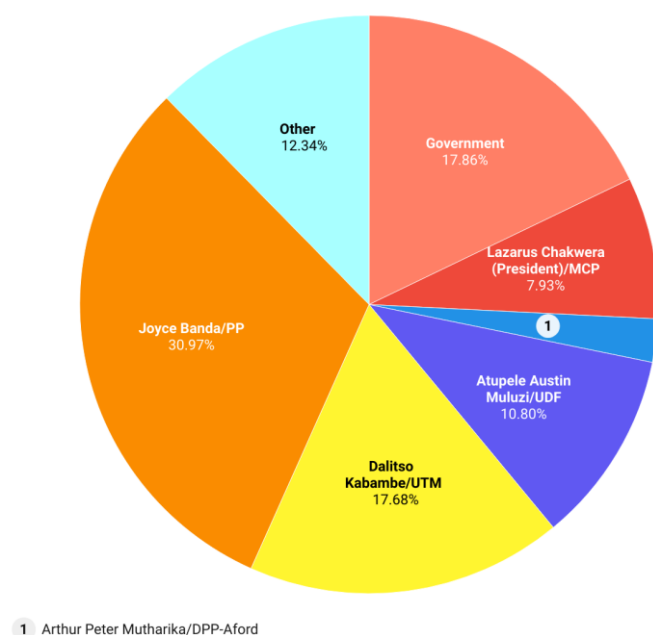


Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 01:02:05, Arthur Peter Mutharika 00:48:46, Atupele Austin Muluzi 04:07:39, Dalitso Kabambe 07:56:53, Joyce Banda 03:02:29, Michael Uzi 00:40:09

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 24

Share of airtime Mibawa TV (private) - Total coverage

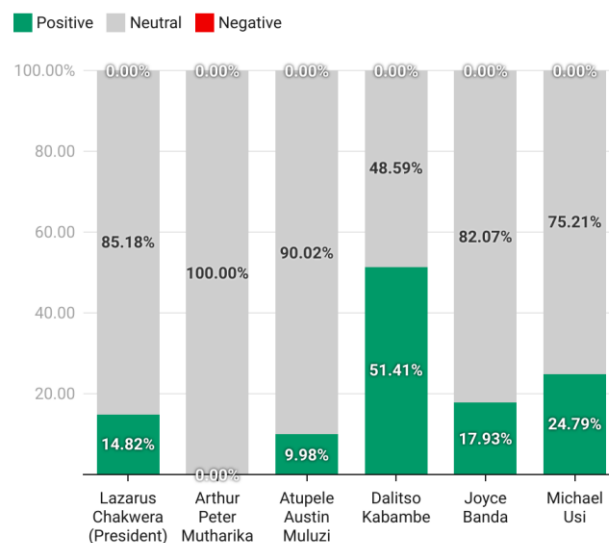


Base Airtime: Times TV 50:28:12

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 25

Tone by candidate - Mibawa TV (private)



Base Airtime: Lazarus Chakwera (President) 03:46:20, Arthur Peter Mutharika 00:17:28, Atupele Austin Muluzi 03:54:28, Dalitso Kabambe 08:08:15, Joyce Banda 11:52:40, Michael Usi 02:55:45

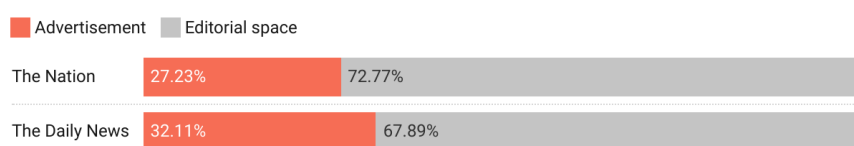
Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 12 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 26

## 5. Daily newspapers

Charts 27 and 28 show the prevalence of advertisement space dedicated to political and electoral content in the dailies The Nation and The Daily Times, from 13 August till 14 September, as well as the dominance of advertisement from the President in the newspapers. Charts 29 and 30 show the proportional distribution of editorial space among political actors by the print media.

Political and electoral content - Share of advertisement



Base space: The Nation 81,345 cm<sup>2</sup>, The Daily News 108,446 cm<sup>2</sup>

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 13 August - 14 September 2025

Chart 27



## Share of advertisement by candidate

Lazarus Chakwera (President) and MCP   Arthur Peter Mutharika and DPP   Michael Usi and OZAM  
Other

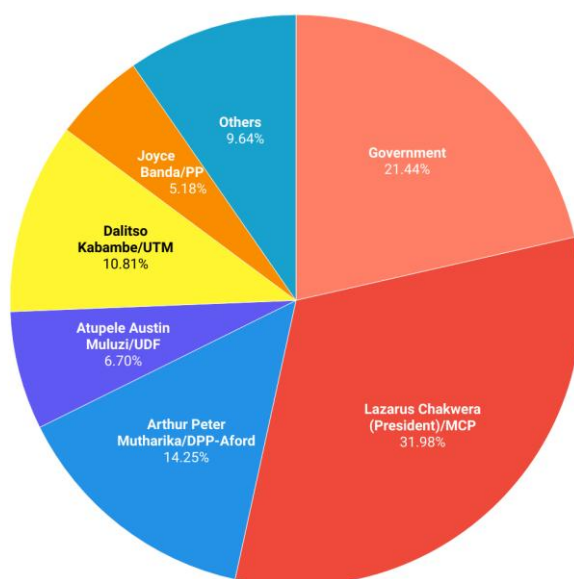


*The Nation* - Lazarus Chakwera (President) and MCP 19,452; Arthur Peter Mutharika and DPP 1,075; other 1,626  
*The Daily News* - Lazarus Chakwera (President) and MCP 28,761; Arthur Peter Mutharika and DPP 491; Michael Usi and OZAM 3,058; other 1,841

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 13 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 28

## Share of editorial space The Nation

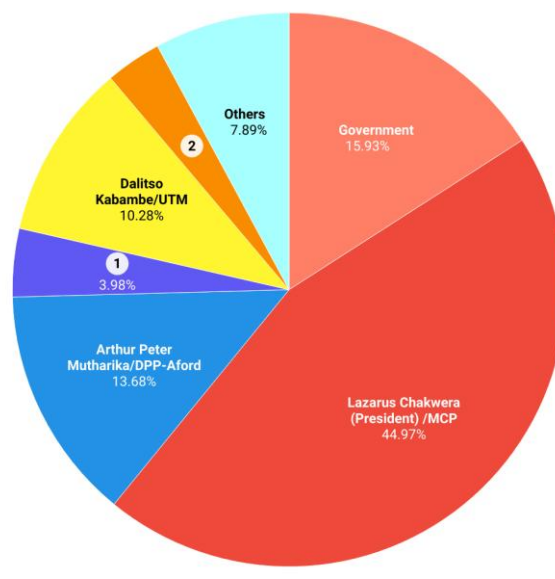


Base space: *The Nation* 65,048 cm<sup>2</sup>

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 13 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 29

## Share of editorial space The Daily News



1 Atupele Austin Muluzi/UDF   2 Joyce Banda/PP

Base space: *The Daily News* 71,300 cm<sup>2</sup>

Chart: EU EOM Media Monitoring Results | 13 August - 14 September 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Chart 30

## ANNEX 3 – SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS

### Methodology of Monitoring

The Social Media Monitoring Unit (SMMU) employed a mixed-method approach to analyse online platforms and capture election-related content. This approach combined quantitative methods, measuring defined variables such as post frequency and engagement, with qualitative methods, which focused on appreciating general social media narratives, including the extent of gender based narratives against female candidates and journalists.

The SMMU identified and mapped key accounts for monitoring, including those of presidential candidates and their running mates, political parties, media houses, social media influencers, state actors, proxy party pages, female candidates, and parliamentary candidates. To organise the monitoring process effectively, a total of eight dedicated projects were created in SentiOne, each reflecting a specific subset of the target audience.

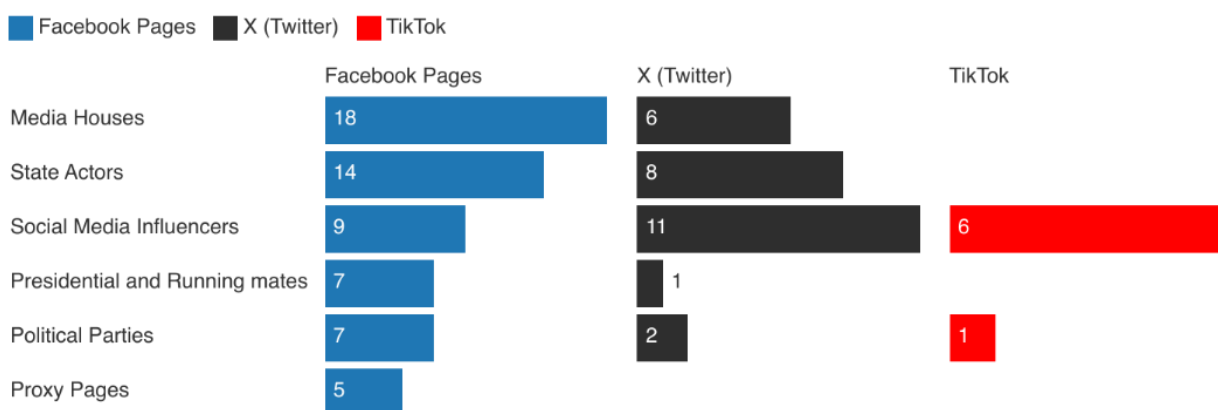
The SMMU distinguished between official pages (public accounts), which are public and viewable, and personal profiles, which are private and therefore not accessible. In line with Meta's data policy, only official Facebook pages and other publicly available accounts were configured in SentiOne for monitoring.

Between August 15 and September 20, 2025, the SMMU consistently monitored these accounts to capture key election-related content, covering both the official campaign period (July 14 – September 14, 2025) and the immediate post-voting period (September 16 – 20, 2025).

The table below summarises the number of social media accounts created and monitored in SentiOne. Data downloaded from the platform was subsequently reviewed and enriched by trained analysts to include variables outside SentiOne's automated scope, such as tone of posts, post type, topic, inflammatory language, and disinformation classification. The mission also documented instances of disinformation, hate speech, and online gender-based violence, providing a more comprehensive assessment of the digital campaign environment.

### Monitored social media accounts

This graph shows the number of unique accounts monitored on each of the social media platforms.



Source: EU EOM Mission 2025. X, Facebook, TikTok

The social media monitoring process focused on analysing the nature of shared content, its alignment with party manifestos, the type and tone of posts, and the presence of disinformation, inflammatory language, or sarcasm. The analysis covered 95 unique accounts, drawn primarily from Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok. Data extracted from SentiOne was further

manually coded by trained social media officers to capture additional variables not readily available through the platform's automated tools.

## Social Media Monitoring Results

Internet access in Malawi remains low, with just 18.4 per cent of the population online. Facebook dominates the digital space, making up most of 8.2 per cent of active social media users. There are high connectivity costs and weak infrastructure that continue to limit access, especially in rural areas.

## Social Media Penetration

This graph illustrates internet penetration in Malawi and the proportion of that population actively using social media. It also provides a breakdown of the user distribution across different social media platforms.

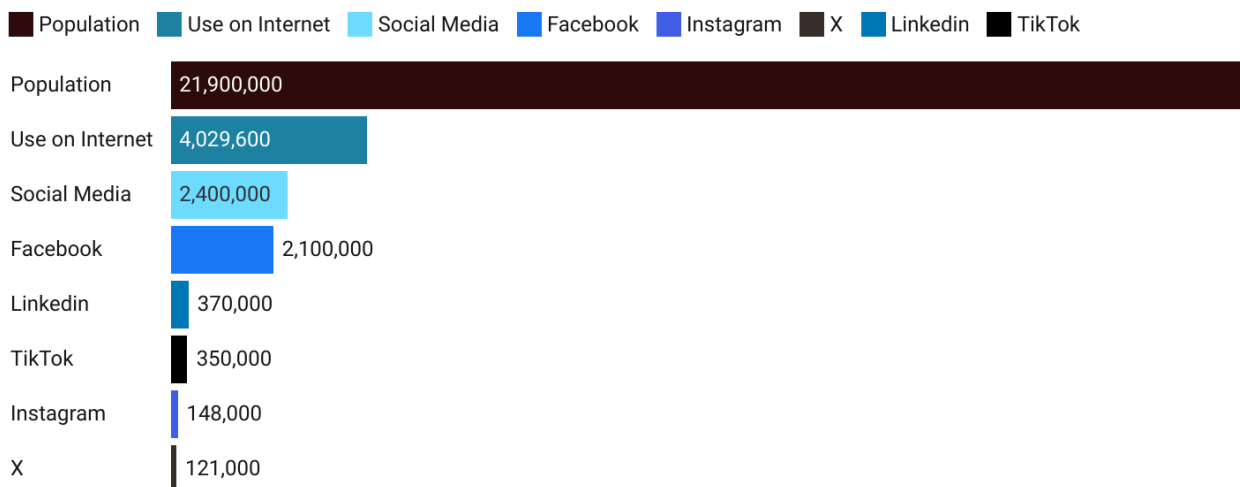
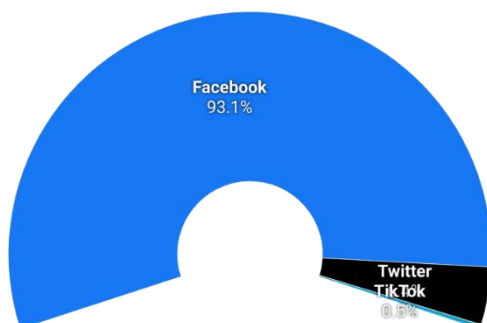


Chart: EU EOM Malawi 2025. • Source: MACRA IT Survey 2023, Datareportal 2025

The EU EOM social media monitoring unit tracked a wide range of online content throughout the electoral period. In total, 10,530 posts belonging to political parties, presidential candidates, media institutions, and proxies were reviewed and, out of this number, 6,264 posts (59 per cent) were classified as political and related to the elections. Posts through Facebook accounted for 93 per cent, with a small proportion emerging through X (Twitter) and TikTok. This suggests that, in Malawi, Facebook is the primary channel for political parties' online presence. In some instances, the team observed an overlap of platforms, as some outlets or individuals run active

## Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

This graph shows the most commonly used social media platform.



Source: EU EOM Malawi 2025. Facebook, X, TikTok

pages on both Facebook and X (Twitter) while others concentrate their activity on a single channel.

Although social media penetration in Malawi remains relatively low compared to regional averages, the online environment nonetheless shaped narratives around the election as seen through social media interactions.

Digital campaigning was modest compared to traditional outreach. Out of 34 presidential candidates

(including running mates), only seven actively posted during the campaign period. President Chakwera of the MCP stood out, with 153 posts, accounting for around one third of all candidate activity. He was followed by Dalitso Kabambe of the United Transformation Movement (UTM), who posted 52 times, while former President Mutharika of the DPP, posted the least, at only 22 posts. Overall, the incumbent demonstrated an organised social presence, averaging two Facebook posts per day consistently throughout the campaign period. In contrast, some other candidates, including presidential running mates, maintained no official online activity at all.

Among parliamentary candidates, the online footprint was even more slight. Out of 1,480 parliamentary contestants, just one in three maintained a Facebook presence, with most relying on personal profiles that could not be systematically monitored due to privacy restrictions. Only 62 candidates (representing four per cent of the total) maintained official Facebook pages, leading the mission to conclude that parliamentary-level social media activity was insufficient for meaningful campaign observation.

The campaign content from both political parties and candidates could be classified as more general. In a few instances, political parties and the candidates focused on issues mentioned in their party manifestos. The MCP focused predominantly on infrastructure development and agriculture, at 33 per cent and 20 per cent respectively, while the DPP and the UTM focused on campaign content that promoted economic growth. While political party campaign narratives did not narrowly focus on their manifesto promises, the other themes that emerged with minimal prominence during the campaign included education, corruption, employment and entrepreneurship.

### Online Campaigning by Political Parties and Candidates

#### Top-Posting Presidential Candidates

This graph shows the frequency of posting by the top presidential contenders.

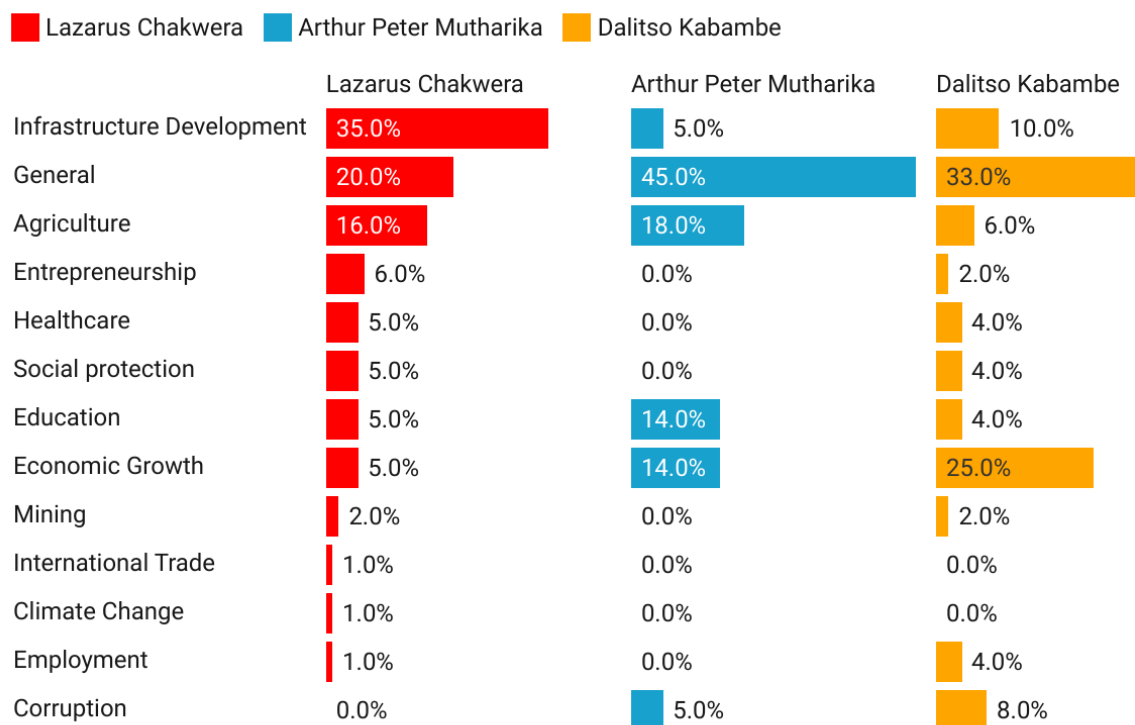
■ Lazarus Chakwera ■ Dalitso Kabambe ■ Authur Peter Mutharika



Source: EU EDM Malawi 2025, Facebook, X, TikTok

## Presidential Candidates' Campaign Focus Areas as Captured on Facebook Posts (14 July to 14 September 2024).

Party manifestos were analysed to identify crosscutting themes. This table presents the extent to which candidates spoke on a particular theme.



*Please note: Candidates may have spoken on other themes before the official campaign launch which may not have been included in this analysis.*

Source: EU EOM Malawi 2025, Facebook • Created with Datawrapper

### Role of State Actors and Media Outlets

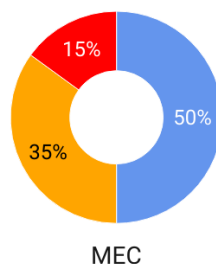
MCP's dominance in the online narrative was reinforced through state-linked and government social media accounts. Malawi Government Facebook pages promoted the MCP presidential candidate in 92 per cent of their content, blurring the line between official communication and campaign activity. Similarly, MBC Digital, the online platform of the state broadcaster, accounted for 40 per cent of all media house posts (659), with 81 per cent of its output dedicated to MCP. Across the broader media landscape, 62 per cent of all posts favoured the party.

This level of amplification, combined with the absence of robust regulatory oversight, resulted in an uneven playing field online, where the ruling party benefited from visibility disproportionate to its competitors. The blurring of state functions with campaign content on official pages raised concerns regarding the impartiality of digital communication during the electoral process.

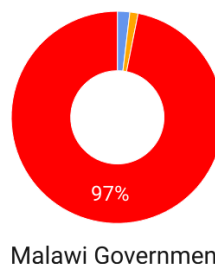
## Post amplification by State Actors

This graph shows how the state actors (Malawi Government and MBC Digital) demonstrated partisan politics in favor of MCP.

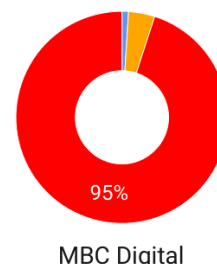
■ Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)  
■ United Transformation Movement (UTM)  
■ Malawi Congress Party (MCP)



MEC



Malawi Government



MBC Digital

*Note: Although MEC's posts showed a higher number of posts featuring the DPP, the content itself remained neutral and procedural. However, the uneven distribution of posts across candidates highlights the absence of a clear social media strategy to ensure balanced coverage.*

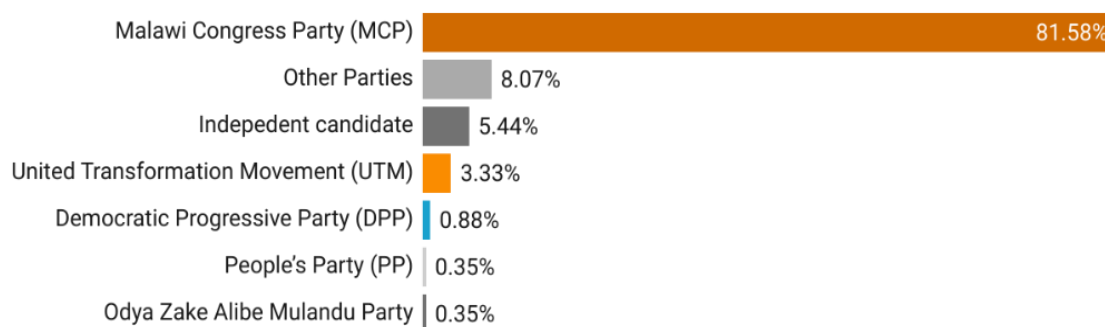
Source: EU EOM Malawi 2025. Facebook, X

The social media activity of state actors was highly uneven during the campaign period. A total of 11 state-funded institutions were monitored to assess the extent to which public resources were used to amplify or validate particular political parties. Collectively, these institutions generated 571 posts, with the MEC and the Malawi Government pages accounting for nearly 90 per cent of all content. MEC's posts were largely neutral, focusing on procedural updates such as the presentation of nomination papers. In contrast, 92 per cent of posts on the Malawi Government's Facebook pages promoted the MCP presidential candidate, raising concerns about the blurring of lines between official government communication and partisan campaign activity.<sup>62</sup>

Media houses played a pivotal role in amplifying and raising awareness of political party manifestos during the campaign period. However, the footprint of political parties and candidates on these platforms varied widely, with some parties receiving significantly more exposure than others depending on the media outlet. On MBC Digital for instance, 82 per cent of their posts favoured MCP.<sup>63</sup>

## MBC Digital Post Distribution

■ Malawi Congress Party (MCP) ■ Other Parties ■ Independent candidate ■ United Transformation Movement (UTM) ■ Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) ■ Odyza Zake Alibe Mulandu Party ■ People's Party (PP)



<sup>62</sup> 97 per cent when compared against DPP and UTM only.

<sup>63</sup> 95 per cent when compared against DPP and UTM only.



The high posting frequency by MBC Digital effectively positioned it as the primary driver of the campaign narrative among media outlets. Notably, MBC Digital's coverage was disproportionately skewed, with 82 per cent of its campaign-related posts favouring the MCP presidential candidate, highlighting a significant imbalance in media representation compared to other political contenders.

### **Fact-Checking and Oversight**

Fact-checking initiatives such as iVerify, led by MISA Malawi with UNDP support, were active during the campaign. However, their work was largely reactive, focusing on verifying claims that had already circulated rather than proactively monitoring online content. In total, iVerify issued twelve corrections, often after rumours had been widely shared. This reactive posture limited their preventive impact, though their interventions did contribute to clarifying misinformation for some segments of the electorate.

### **Online Gender-based Violence**

The mission identified a small number of instances of online gender-based violence directed at female candidates and journalists. These appeared primarily in the comment sections of Facebook posts and were not traced to official party accounts. While the scale of online harassment remained low in this electoral cycle, interlocutors expressed concern about its chilling effect on women's participation in public life.

### **Election Day**

On election day, social media activity intensified, with proxies and influencers spreading competing narratives about turnout, incidents, and premature victory claims. Pro-MCP pages highlighted celebratory imagery of long queues and orderly voting, while pro-DPP outlets amplified unverified allegations of irregularities and questioned the impartiality of the MEC. Among the most prominent falsehoods was the circulation of claims that ballot papers pre-marked for the incumbent had been discovered in Lilongwe and Phalombe. Verification with the MEC and media outlets confirmed these allegations to be baseless, yet they spread widely before corrections could take hold.

### **Proxy Pages, Disinformation, and Narratives**

While official party and candidate accounts largely refrained from spreading disinformation, proxy pages and unaffiliated outlets became the primary vectors of misleading narratives. Approximately 130 posts, representing 16 per cent of total proxy content, were classified as disinformation of these, 64 per cent targeted the MCP, frequently alleging manipulation or irregularities in the voting process, while others reinforced partisan claims of victory by the DPP.

Overall, the political campaign was marked by minimal instances of disinformation from political parties and presidential candidates, reflecting a largely clean campaign. In contrast, however, proxy pages and certain influencers circulated unverified narratives targeting the incumbent presidential candidate and the MCP. These proxy pages predominantly published content in support of the DPP.

Examples included fabricated documents, premature announcements of results, and claims that ballot papers had been pre-marked. On election day, several proxies circulated victory declarations for the main opposition candidate before counting was complete, while others claimed disruptions at polling centres without verifiable evidence. These narratives risked undermining public trust in the electoral process, though their reach remained limited compared to mainstream media coverage.

Disinformation was also observed in the form of forged opinion polls, often posted on Facebook and TikTok, which presented implausible figures designed to bolster candidates. However, disinformation did not dominate the official digital spaces of political parties, and its spread was largely contained within proxy ecosystems.

## Examples of Disinformation and Information Manipulation

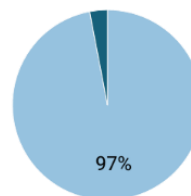
Manipulated content was a common technique, including edited images, misleading news headings and authentic material taken out of context to distort the meaning. Such practices risk undermining trust in institutions, political competitors and the electoral process itself.

The newspaper cover from *Malawi Focus* dated September 9, 2025, features the bold headline “*Chakwera Leads – Foreign Observers*” with a photo of President Lazarus Chakwera addressing a large crowd at Njamba Freedom Park. The message suggests strong support and international approval but lacks specific sources or evidence from foreign observers. This is an example of the techniques used by Proxy Pages to signal support from the international community.

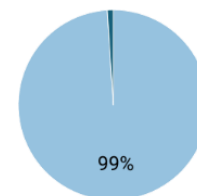
## Disinformation

This graph illustrates disinformation by different social media projects.

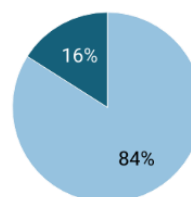
■ No ■ Yes



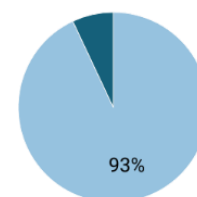
Political Party



Presidential Candidates



Proxy Pages



Influencers

Chart: EU EOM Malawi 2025 • Source: Facebook





The highlighted image from *Malawi Focus Newspaper* dated September 20, 2025, carries the headline “DPP Caught Thieving”. It accuses the opposition party of attempting to rig votes, supported by an unverified claim involving a returning officer’s suicide attempt. This was an approach used to reinforce negative perceptions, which would ultimately undermine the electoral process.

The second post in frame shows a similar tactic alleging a conspiracy involving foreign operatives brought in to rig the elections for the ruling MCP. It lists names, phone numbers and links individuals to countries like Ghana, Rwanda and Israel without offering concrete evidence. This is a classic fear-mongering tactic, designed to stir sentiment and cast doubt on the credibility of the electoral process.

The document presents what it claims is a leaked internal memo from Malawi Defence Force generals, warning the Army Commander against using the military to influence the elections. It names senior officers allegedly aligned with the MCP and accuses them of being placed in key command positions. The document’s authenticity was highlighted as not credible by the Malawi Defence Force through its public relations office, yet its intent is clear: to portray the military as compromised and politically captured.



