



**GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI  
PRESS STATEMENT**

**COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE AS OF 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021**

In the past 24 hours, Malawi has registered 992 new COVID-19 cases, 78 new recoveries, 17 new deaths. Of the new cases 985 are locally transmitted infections: 212 from Lilongwe, 124 from Zomba, 123 from Mzimba North, 117 from Blantyre, 76 from Mangochi, 44 from Balaka, 42 from Neno, 40 from Dowa, 32 from Kasungu, 23 from Mchinji, 20 from Nkhata Bay, 15 from Mulanje, 14 from Mzimba South, 13 from Karonga, 12 from Nkhotakota, 11 from Chitipa, nine from Salima, eight each from Likoma, Ntcheu, and Rumphu, seven each from Dedza and Phalombe, five each from Chikwawa and Machinga, four from Mwanza, three from Ntchisi, two from Nsanje, and one from Tyholo districts while seven of the new cases are imported infections and all are from Blantyre district. In yesterday's update, 21 cases from Salima were mistakenly counted as new cases but these were previously confirmed cases and were being retested as they were planning to travel. Therefore, the total number of new cases registered yesterday was 832. Seven of the new deaths are from Lilongwe, three each from Blantyre, two from Chiradzulu, and one each from Zomba, Dowa, Thyolo, Mchinji, and Chitipa districts. Our hearts go out to families that have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. May you find peace, hope and love during this difficult times. May the departed souls rest in peace.

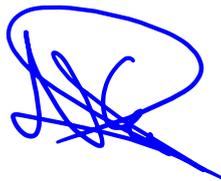
Cumulatively, Malawi has recorded 14,851 cases including 353 deaths (Case Fatality Rate is at 2.4%). Of these cases, 1,865 are imported infections and 12,986 are locally transmitted. Cumulatively, 6,206 cases have now recovered, 134 were lost to follow-up, and 76 are still being investigated to ascertain their outcome. This brings the total number of active cases to 8,082. **Of the active cases 233 are currently admitted:** 80 in Lilongwe, 79 in Blantyre at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, 15 in Mzimba North, seven in Zomba, six in Mulanje, five each in Chikwawa, Balaka, and Machinga, four each in Karonga, and Kasungu, three each from Mangochi, Dowa, Salima and Nsanje, two each in Mzimba South, Nkhotakota, Chitipa, and Dedza, and one each from Thyolo, Rumphu, and Chiradzulu. **In the past 24 hours, our treatment units recorded 62 new admissions and 19 in-patients were discharged from the treatment units.** On testing, in the past 24 hours, 2,588 COVID-19 tests were conducted, 1386 of the new tests were through SARS-COV-2 Antigen Rapid Diagnostic test while the rest were through RT-PCR translating to a positivity rate of 38.3% and cumulatively, 115,367 tests, have been conducted in the country so far.

Today we have recorded the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases within 24 hours at 992 and the admissions are also at a record high at 228. The active cases have surpassed the 8,000 mark. **We have noticed there is general late seeking behavior among us whereby patients are arriving in our treatment units while in severe state or pronounced dead on**

arrival. We need to report early for good treatment outcomes. For those that have severe form of the disease, please do not treat yourselves at home. Care for COVID-19 severe cases requires specialized high attention approaches that are almost unattainable in home settings. It is also important to have normal balanced diet when infected by COVID-19 and avoid large consumption of herbal concoctions that contain a mix of chemicals like alkaloids. These herbs stress important organs like the liver and the kidneys as well as increasing demand of sugar or disrupting sugar control. These stresses on your systems are dangerous as organ failure resulting from these stresses may cause death. Therefore, keep your diet simple enough to meet you daily needs and meet increased demand of energy due to the disease as well as maintaining good rehydration by drinking water. This allows the body to focus on fight and clearing the virus form your body with minimal disruption. Likewise avoid self-medication or moving from one pharmacy to the other searching for an approved drugs. Similar herbs unregulated drug consumption may lead to liver and or kidney failure that may have same consequences as the herbs.

I would like to request the public to promptly inform the health authorities by calling toll-free number 54747 (Airtel) or 929 (TNM) whenever one is experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms **such as fever, cough, flu, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell and tiredness.** COVID-19 is preventable and we can effectively reduce and stop the spread of the disease. This calls for a collective effort to contain the pandemic by comprehensively following all the preventive and containment measures. The following preventive measures should be our daily routine regardless of status: **frequent handwashing with soap, proper wearing of mask, avoiding over- crowded places, practicing cough and sneeze etiquette, staying home if you have flu like symptoms and decontaminating commonly touched surfaces.**

**Watch your distance! Wash your hands! Wear your mask! Seek for care early upon development of symptoms of COVID-19.**



Dr John Phuka

Co-Chairperson – Presidential Taskforce