

# Malawi



## Introduction Malawi

**Background:** Established in 1891, the British protectorate of Nyasaland became the independent nation of Malawi in 1964. After three decades of one-party rule under President Hastings Kamuzu BANDA the country held multiparty elections in

1994, under a provisional constitution which came into full effect the following year. Current President Bingu wa MUTHARIKA, elected in May 2004 after a failed attempt by the previous president to amend the constitution to permit another term, has struggled to assert his authority against his predecessor, who still leads their shared political party. MUTHARIKA's anti-corruption efforts have led to several high-level arrests and one prominent conviction. Increasing corruption, population growth, increasing pressure on agricultural lands, and the spread of HIV/AIDS pose major problems for the country.

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| <b>Geography</b> | <b>Malawi</b> |
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**Location:** Southern Africa, east of Zambia

**Geographic coordinates:** 13 30 S, 34 00 E

**Map references:** Africa

**Area:** *total:* 118,480 sq km  
*land:* 94,080 sq km  
*water:* 24,400 sq km

**Area - comparative:** slightly smaller than Pennsylvania

**Land boundaries:** *total:* 2,881 km  
*border countries:* Mozambique 1,569 km, Tanzania 475 km, Zambia 837 km

**Coastline:** 0 km (landlocked)

**Maritime claims:** none (landlocked)

**Climate:** sub-tropical; rainy season (November to May); dry season (May to November)

**Terrain:** narrow elongated plateau with rolling plains, rounded hills, some mountains

**Elevation extremes:** *lowest point:* junction of the Shire River and international boundary with Mozambique 37 m  
*highest point:* Sapitwa (Mount Mlanje) 3,002 m

**Natural resources:** limestone, arable land, hydropower, unexploited deposits of uranium, coal, and bauxite

**Land use:** *arable land:* 20.68%  
*permanent crops:* 1.18%  
*other:* 78.14% (2005)

**Irrigated land:** 560 sq km (2003)

**Natural hazards:** NA

**Environment - current issues:** deforestation; land degradation; water pollution from agricultural runoff, sewage, industrial wastes; siltation of spawning grounds endangers fish populations

**Environment international agreements:** *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands  
*signed, but not ratified:* Law of the Sea

**Geography - note:** landlocked; Lake Nyasa, some 580 km long, is the country's most prominent physical feature

| People | Malawi |
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**Population:** 13,013,926  
*note:* estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2006 est.)

**Age structure:** *0-14 years:* 46.5% (male 3,056,522/female 3,000,493)  
*15-64 years:* 50.8% (male 3,277,573/female 3,332,907)  
*65 years and over:* 2.7% (male 139,953/female 206,478) (2006 est.)

**Median age:** *total:* 16.5 years  
*male:* 16.2 years  
*female:* 16.8 years (2006 est.)

**Population growth rate:** 2.38% (2006 est.)

**Birth rate:** 43.13 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

**Death rate:** 19.33 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

**Net migration rate:** 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006 est.)

**Sex ratio:** *at birth:* 1.03 male(s)/female  
*under 15 years:* 1.02 male(s)/female  
*15-64 years:* 0.98 male(s)/female  
*65 years and over:* 0.68 male(s)/female

*total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2006 est.)*

**Infant mortality rate:** *total: 94.37 deaths/1,000 live births  
male: 98.66 deaths/1,000 live births  
female: 89.96 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)*

**Life expectancy at birth:** *total population: 41.7 years  
male: 41.93 years  
female: 41.45 years (2006 est.)*

**Total fertility rate:** 5.92 children born/woman (2006 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:** 14.2% (2003 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:** 900,000 (2003 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:** 84,000 (2003 est.)

**Major infectious diseases:** *degree of risk: very high  
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever  
vectorborne diseases: malaria and plague are high risks in some locations  
water contact disease: schistosomiasis (2005)*

**Nationality:** *noun: Malawian(s)  
adjective: Malawian*

**Ethnic groups:** Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuka, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde, Asian, European

**Religions:** Christian 79.9%, Muslim 12.8%, other 3%, none 4.3% (1998 census)

**Languages:** Chichewa 57.2% (official), Chinyanja 12.8%, Chiyao 10.1%, Chitumbuka 9.5%, Chisena 2.7%, Chilomwe 2.4%, Chitonga 1.7%, other 3.6% (1998 census)

**Literacy:** *definition: age 15 and over can read and write  
total population: 62.7%  
male: 76.1%  
female: 49.8% (2003 est.)*

**Government** Malawi

**Country name:** *conventional long form: Republic of Malawi*

*conventional short form:* Malawi  
*local long form:* Dziko la Malawi  
*local short form:* Malawi  
*former:* British Central African Protectorate, Nyasaland Protectorate, Nyasaland

**Government type:** multiparty democracy

**Capital:** *name:* Lilongwe  
*geographic coordinates:* 13 59 S, 33 44 E  
*time difference:* UTC+2 (7 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:** 27 districts; Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Chitipa, Dedza, Dowa, Karonga, Kasungu, Likoma, Lilongwe, Machinga (Kasupe), Mangochi, Mchinji, Mulanje, Mwanza, Mzimba, Ntcheu, Nkhata Bay, Nkhatakota, Nsanje, Ntchisi, Phalombe, Rumphu, Salima, Thyolo, Zomba

**Independence:** 6 July 1964 (from UK)

**National holiday:** Independence Day (Republic Day), 6 July (1964)

**Constitution:** 18 May 1994

**Legal system:** based on English common law and customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court of Appeal; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

**Suffrage:** 18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:** *chief of state:* President Bingu wa MUTHARIKA (since 24 May 2004); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government  
*head of government:* President Bingu wa MUTHARIKA (since 24 May 2004); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government  
*cabinet:* 46-member Cabinet named by the president  
*elections:* president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held 20 May 2004 (next to be held May 2009)  
*election results:* Bingu wa MUTHARIKA elected president; percent of vote - Bingu wa MUTHARIKA (UDF) 35.9%, John TEMBO (MCP) 27.1%, Gwandaguluwe CHAKUAMBA (MC) 25.7%, Brown MPINGANJIRA (NDA) 8.7%, Justin MALEWEZI (independent) 2.5%

**Legislative** unicameral National Assembly (193 seats; members

**branch:** elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)  
*elections:* last held 20 May 2004 (next to be held May 2009)  
*election results:* percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - UDF 74, MCP 60, Independents 24, RP 16, others 18, vacancies 1

**Judicial branch:** Supreme Court of Appeal; High Court (chief justice appointed by the president, puisne judges appointed on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission); magistrate's courts

**Political parties and leaders:** Alliance for Democracy or AFORD [Chakufwa CHIHANA]; Congress for National Unity or CONU; Democratic Progressive Party or DPP [Bingu wa MUTHARIKA]; Malawi Congress Party or MCP [John TEMBO]; Malawi Democratic Party or MDP [Kampelo KALUA]; Malawi Forum for Unity and Development or MAFUNDE [George MNESA]; Mgwirizano Coalition or MC [Gwandaguluwe CHAKUAMBA] (coalition of MAFUNDE, MDP, MGODE, NUP, PETRA, PPM, RP); Movement for Genuine Democratic Change or MGODE [Sam Kandodo BANDA]; National Democratic Alliance or NDA [Brown MPINGANJIRA]; National Unity Party or NUP [Harry CHIUME]; People's Progressive Movement or PPM [Aleke BANDA]; People's Transformation Movement or PETRA [Kamuzu CHIBAMBO]; Republican Party or RP [Gwandaguluwe CHAKUAMBA]; United Democratic Front or UDF

**Political pressure groups and leaders:** NA

**International organization participation:** ACP, AfDB, AU, C, COMESA, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICt, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO (correspondent), ITU, ITUC, MIGA, MONUC, NAM, ONUB, OPCW, SADC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIL, UNMIS, UNWTO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

**Diplomatic representation in the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador Bernard Herbert SANDE  
*chancery:* 1156 15th Street, NW, Suite 320, Washington, DC 20005  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 721-0270  
*FAX:* [1] (202) 721-0288

**Diplomatic representation from the US:** *chief of mission:* Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires David GILMOUR  
*embassy:* Area 40, Plot 24, Kenyatta Road

*mailing address:* P. O. Box 30016, Lilongwe 3, Malawi  
*telephone:* [265] (1) 773 166  
*FAX:* [265] (1) 770 471

**Flag description:** three equal horizontal bands of black (top), red, and green with a radiant, rising, red sun centered in the black band

**Government - note:** the executive exerts considerable influence over the legislature

| Economy | Malawi |
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**Economy - overview:** Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural, with about 90% of the population living in rural areas. Agriculture accounted for nearly 36% of GDP and 80% of export revenues in 2005. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for over 60% of exports. The economy depends on substantial inflows of economic assistance from the IMF, the World Bank, and individual donor nations. In late 2000, Malawi was approved for relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program. The government faces strong challenges, including developing a market economy, improving educational facilities, facing up to environmental problems, dealing with the rapidly growing problem of HIV/AIDS, and satisfying foreign donors that fiscal discipline is being tightened. In 2005, President MUTHARIKA championed an anticorruption campaign. Malawi's recent fiscal policy performance has been very strong, but a serious drought in 2005 and 2006 heightened pressure on the government to increase spending.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):** \$8.038 billion (2006 est.)

**GDP (official exchange rate):** \$2.172 billion (2006 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:** 7% (2006 est.)

**GDP - per capita (PPP):** \$600 (2006 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:** *agriculture:* 35.4%  
*industry:* 17.6%  
*services:* 47% (2006 est.)

**Labor force:** 4.5 million (2001 est.)

**Labor force - by occupation:** *agriculture:* 90%  
*industry and services:* 10% (2003 est.)

**Unemployment rate:** NA%

**Population below poverty line:** 55% (2004 est.)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:** *lowest 10%:* NA%  
*highest 10%:* NA%

**Distribution of family income - Gini index:** 50.3 (1997)

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):** 15.1% (2006 est.)

**Investment (gross fixed):** 9.2% of GDP (2006 est.)

**Budget:** *revenues:* \$818.4 million  
*expenditures:* \$895.9 million; including capital expenditures of \$NA (2006 est.)

**Public debt:** 68.4% of GDP (2006 est.)

**Agriculture - products:** tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, tea, corn, potatoes, cassava (tapioca), sorghum, pulses, groundnuts, Macadamia nuts; cattle, goats

**Industries:** tobacco, tea, sugar, sawmill products, cement, consumer goods

**Industrial production growth rate:** 6.4% (2006 est.)

**Electricity - production:** 1.293 billion kWh (2004)

**Electricity - production by source:** *fossil fuel:* 3.3%  
*hydro:* 96.7%  
*nuclear:* 0%  
*other:* 0% (2001)

**Electricity - consumption:** 1.202 billion kWh (2004)

**Electricity -** 0 kWh (2004)

**exports:**

**Electricity -** 0 kWh (2004)

**imports:**

**Oil -** 0 bbl/day (2004 est.)

**production:**

**Oil -** 5,500 bbl/day (2004 est.)

**consumption:**

**Oil - exports:** NA bbl/day (2001)

**Oil - imports:** NA bbl/day (2001)

**Natural gas -** 0 cu m (2004 est.)

**production:**

**Natural gas -** 0 cu m (2004 est.)

**consumption:**

**Current account balance:** \$-186 million (2006 est.)

**Exports:** \$513.1 million f.o.b. (2006 est.)

**Exports - commodities:** tobacco 60%, tea, sugar, cotton, coffee, peanuts, wood products, apparel

**Exports - partners:** US 17.9%, South Africa 11.2%, Egypt 7.6%, Germany 7%, Netherlands 6.9%, Japan 4.8%, Russia 4.6%, Mozambique 4.3%, UK 4.2% (2005)

**Imports:** \$767.9 million f.o.b. (2006 est.)

**Imports - commodities:** food, petroleum products, semimanufactures, consumer goods, transportation equipment

**Imports - partners:** South Africa 36.9%, Zambia 9.2%, Zimbabwe 7.7%, Mozambique 7.1%, India 6.8%, Tanzania 4.9%, US 4% (2005)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:** \$175.5 million (2006 est.)

**Debt - external:** \$982.4 million (2006 est.)

**Economic aid - recipient:** \$401.5 million (2001)

**Currency (code):** Malawian kwacha (MWK)

**Currency code:** MWK

**Exchange rates:** Malawian kwachas per US dollar - 139.786 (2006), 108.894 (2005), 108.898 (2004), 97.433 (2003), 76.687 (2002)

**Fiscal year:** 1 July - 30 June

## Communications Malawi

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 102,700 (2005)

**Telephones - mobile cellular:** 429,300 (2005)

**Telephone system:** *general assessment:* NA  
*domestic:* system employs open-wire lines, microwave radio relay links, and radiotelephone communications stations  
*international:* country code - 265; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean and 1 Atlantic Ocean)

**Radio broadcast stations:** AM 9, FM 5 (plus 15 repeater stations), shortwave 2 (plus a third station held in standby status) (2001)

**Radios:** 2.6 million (1997)

**Television broadcast stations:** 1 (2001)

**Televisions:** NA

**Internet country code:** .mw

**Internet hosts:** 377 (2006)

**Internet Service Providers (ISPs):** 3 (2002)

**Internet users:** 52,500 (2005)

## Transportation Malawi

**Airports:** 42 (2006)

**Airports - total:** 6  
**with paved runways:** over 3,047 m: 1  
 1,524 to 2,437 m: 1  
 914 to 1,523 m: 4 (2006)

**Airports - total:** 36  
**with paved runways:** 1,524 to 2,437 m: 1  
 914 to 1,523 m: 15  
**unpaved runways:** under 914 m: 20 (2006)

**Railways:** total: 797 km  
 narrow gauge: 797 km 1.067-m gauge (2005)

**Roadways:** total: 15,451 km  
 paved: 6,956 km  
 unpaved: 8,495 km (2003)

**Waterways:** 700 km (on Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi) and Shire River)  
 (2006)

**Ports and terminals:** Chipoka, Monkey Bay, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Chilumba

| Military  | Malawi  |
|---|---|
| <b>Military branches:</b>                       | Malawi Armed Forces: Army (includes Air Wing and Naval Detachment), Police (includes Mobile Force Unit) |
| <b>Military service age and obligation:</b>     | 18 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2001)                                  |
| <b>Manpower available for military service:</b> | males age 18-49: 2,430,514 (2005 est.)  |
| <b>Manpower fit for military service:</b>       | males age 18-49: 1,226,802 (2005 est.)  |
| <b>Military expenditures - dollar figure:</b>   | \$15.81 million (2005 est.)   |
| <b>Military expenditures - percent of GDP:</b>  | 0.8% (2005 est.)  |

| Transnational Issues | Malawi |
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**Disputes - international:** disputes with Tanzania over the boundary in Lake Nyasa (Lake Malawi) and the meandering Songwe River remain dormant