REPORT ON THE FRESH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT NON-PARTISAN ELECTION OBSERVING UNIT OF PROFESSIONALS



Submitted to The Malawi Electoral Commission

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1. Executive Summary

On the 3rd of February 2020, the High Court sitting as a Constitutional Court of Malawi's Judiciary delivered the long awaited ruling on the disputed Presidential Elections Results of the 21st May, 2019 General Elections that were held in the country. In their ruling, the court nullified the presidential polls citing massive irregularities as one of the key basis for their conclusion. The Fresh Presidential polls was to be held 150 days from the day of the ruling and that the MEC will use the 50 plus 1 electoral system to determine the results as opposed to the previous 'first past the Post' system. The Malawi Electoral Commission appealed to the Supreme Court on the ruling; however, the upper court upheld the ruling of the lower court and further ordered the Parliament to come up with an election date and that only the people who voted in the May 2019. Parliament settled for the 23rd of June 2020 and the competing candidates were Arthur Peter Mutharika for the DPP/UDF Alliance, Dr Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP for the Tonse Alliance and Peter Kuwani of the Mbakuwaku Party. Under new leadership in Justice Dr Chifundo Kachale who replaced Justice Dr Jane Ansah who had proceeded on her leave pending her retirement, the commission had close to three weeks to run the election. A lot of odds apart from time and resources were against the Commission, and coupled with effects of COVID-19 pandemic which made it impossible for international observers to come for the elections, the task ahead seemed impossible, and yet they exuded progress with absolute precision. Justice Kachale truly presented himself as an able member of the bench, a distinct leader, a determined worker and most likely eager to creditably succeed on the assignment just a few days after he took oath of office. He provided critical updates almost on a daily basis in measured tones assuring the nation that all things were under control while acknowledging the challenges his team was facing fully aware that he was addressing an unbelieving nation which felt cheated in the previous election in one way or the other. It was highly unsurprising therefore, that he won the confidence of the people in no time and his personality, disposition and humility all made for easy acceptance of the man. On 19th of June 2020, the ballots arrived from Dubai and were received by all party officials, the MEC and other stakeholders. The nation was agog with excitement which could clearly be felt as people exchanged images of trucks destined for various districts across the country. In less than 48 hours therefore,

the ballots had arrived in every district. Having applied to the Electoral Commission to observe the elections as professionals, our team was also ready for the task. Nearly **300** professionals in various sectors in all the 28 districts across the country expressed interest to observe the elections, but due to logistical and communication challenges, only 115 actually did observe the election in in the following districts: Mulanje (4), Ntcheu (5), Mwanza (3), Balaka (5), Lilongwe (70), Likoma and Chizumulu Islands (8), Nkhotakota (8), Dowa (10), Mangochi (2). Only 10 observers from the 70 in Lilongwe were given the roving status and their accreditations were thus processed by the MEC headquarters. Over 70% of our observers were young people aged between 20 to 25 and it was interesting to see the interest of the youth in civic responsibilities that go beyond voting; they were also eager to ensure that their vote was counted. We observed the elections in our personal capacities, as bonafide citizens of the republic of Malawi and not necessarily backing any candidate. We intended to ensure that we upheld the tenets of democracy and ensure that the elections were indeed free and fair and a true reflection of the will of the people. All in all, this was a process not without significance as we watched the electoral process from the front line. The following is a summary account of the key issues that were observed:

a. Arrival of Officials

- Officials in almost all polling centers arrived an hour ahead of schedule except in one center where a Presiding Officer never showed up and had to be replaced by his deputy.
- All our observers arrived at their designated polling centers at 5:00am, one hour ahead of schedule so that they could start observing from the beginning to the end

b. Opening of Polling Centre

- Most polling centers apart from one or two opened between 6:00am and 6:30. One center in Mitundu, Lilongwe opened two hours behind schedule because some polling materials had delayed and the Presiding Officer was not available

- Some delays were due to some inefficiencies of the officials themselves otherwise in all center voters started arriving from 5:30am and some even earlier especially in densely populated areas in urban communities
- From the beginning, it was manifestly clear that this election would not be marred by voter apathy as most voters turned up to cast their votes in large numbers and this was the decisive factor of the success of the elections in our opinion
- Further, the motive power to go out and vote was fueled by the court ruling which stated that ***ONLY*** those who voted in the previous election were the ones eligible to vote this time around

c. Availability of Polling materials

- Polling materials were present in all polling centers
- However, due to some logistical challenges that affected the supply and delivery of some materials by the MEC, the polling booths which were used for these elections were made of paperboard and thus needed support to stand otherwise they kept falling. For those centers which were located at a school, polling clerks placed two or more plastic chairs inside the booth to make it stand
- It was observed that in other stations, these booths were not even present or that they only had one and so voters used their hands to mark their preferred candidate and then proceed to cast their vote accordingly
- Further in most centers, it was observed that the actual ballot boxes were places on the flow and voters had to bend down to cast their vote therein making it a bit challenging for anyone to see clearly what a particular voter was up to once they got there. The A5 ballot paper was small enough to secrete on a person's body without being noticed
- The MEC had endeavored to supply lamps especially in polling centers that did not have access to electricity to facilitate vote counting and tallying

d. Eligibility of Voters

- Only those voters with T19 voter registration card numbers were allowed to vote
- No child below the age of 18 was seen voting at the polling centers

e. Polling Centre Management

- Each polling center had a Polling Centre Operations Officer who was running administrative and logistical issues. Each polling center also had polling stations, and each station had a designated Presiding Officer, Ushers and Polling Clerks.
- The standard practice was that each station would tally its own result and submit these to the district tally center
- Direction to the specific polling station was in alphabetical order; presiding officers therefore had to clearly mark the alphabet letters and it was the duty of the clerks to point people to where they needed to go depending on the first letter of their surname
- Voters needed to verify their names in the register, dip their hand in the indelible ink, collect the ballot paper, go to the polling booth to cast their vote and then throw the same into the ballot box and leave

f. Security at the Polling centers

- Security personnel from either the Malawi Defense Forces and the Malawi Police were present to all polling stations; others had both, and others had one of the two
- We established that the MDF only deployed their officers to areas that were deemed, 'hotspots' or likely to be chaotic during the voting exercise
- Some voters refused to cast their vote for fear that it would be stolen as they did not trust the police
- Police Officers deployed to polling centers did not have any identification, this caused a lot of trouble for them as voters

demanded to see their identification before they could be allowed to provide security. It had earlier on been rumored that the Democratic Progressive Party had deployed some civilians and provided them with police and MDF uniforms and deployed them in polling centers to assist in a vote rigging scheme

- Without a gun and ammunition, most police officers were subdued and overpowered by voters and Presiding officers and MEC officials had to vouch for the officers on their authenticity
- Some presiding officers refused the security personnel to vote while others used their discretion and allowed them to vote on the polling center to which they were posted
- Other centers had a designated Presiding Officer who handled all voters who had transferred from other centers and some security personnel

g. Assistance to the elderly, physically challenged and the sick

- All senior citizens, the physically challenged and those who were unwell were assisted swiftly
- For those voters who needed assistance on voting but not necessarily help on which candidate to vote for, polling clerks assisted these accordingly

h. Citizens Vigilance, Fake News and Rumor mongering

- As with any other elections, there were various rumors of rigging plans coming from various angles
- These rumors facilitated for suspicions and unhealthy vigilance among voters, and coupled with what was being said during the campaign period by the Tonse Alliance running mate Dr Saulos Klaus Chilima that voters needed to come back after voting to protect their votes, the voters brutalized this direction and exerted various ills among innocent people including some from our team.

- Some voters never really went home, some obeyed the 100 meters stipulated by the law, but others stayed as close to the center as possible. Some voters were seen drinking alcohol, getting drunk and causing mayhem among polling officials at the centers
- Voters suspected anyone, and searched every vehicle coming into the polling center. A deputy headmaster was harassed at Kamkodola Primary school in Mtandire, Lilongwe as he was being suspected of keeping already marked ballot papers in favor of the incumbent President Prof Arthur Mutharika
- Luckily, our team members had identification cards from the MEC and all were advised to steer clear of violent groupings at a polling center

i. COVID-19 measures

- Handwashing facilities were placed in almost all polling centers as a preventive measure for COVID-19 pandemic
- However, enforcement of the handwashing exercise was a bit chaotic as most voters never did wash their hands upon arrival
- It was also observed that some party monitors were discouraging people from using sanitizers or handwashing facilities for fear that the indelible ink will be removed from their ink and thus be able to come back to cast their vote over and over
- All polling staff were provided with medical masks and those officials who were handling the indelible ink were given gloves
- However, no social distancing was observed in ***ALL*** polling centers by both polling officials and voters alike
- Not necessarily related to COVID-19, but it was observed that only a few centers had Red cross personnel and that most centers did not even have a First Aid Kit

j. Vote Counting, Tallying and Delivery to District Tally Centre

- Upon closure of the polling center, all ballot boxes were sealed in the presence of all monitors and observers and the seal numbers were duly recorded
- The ballot boxes were then transferred to another place within the center for counting
- All votes were counted at the tally center. Each providing officer was responsible for vote counting of the ballots for their stations and these were tallied to find totals for the center
- No monitors were allowed to participate in the vote counting, it was only polling clerks, presiding officers, and MEC officials present at the center. However, the party monitors and observers were present during the counting and saw everything and even endorsed the same by appending their signature onto the result sheets
- After all votes were counted and tallied, all null and void votes were agreed upon by all personnel including party monitors and these were duly recorded
- There were no cases of recount as votes tallied with number of registered votes at the centers
- The result sheets were then placed in envelopes and sealed and a copy of the same was pasted on the wall for voters to see. In some centers, especially those at a school, the results were written on a board in a classroom.
- The party monitors, observers and the polling center officials were then required to escort the results to the district tally centers where they were duly recorded as part of the district votes

k. Logistical support for the task

- All members of the team were recruited on voluntary basis; it was made clear from the beginning that this was not a job and that we were all trying to play our part to contribute towards having credible elections

- This is why all members had to be professionals preferably those who had something going for them in terms of income generation
- As time went by it was made apparent that be that as it may, the observers needed to be supported financially especially those who would rove around their communities moving from one center to another
- To support this therefore, a resource mobilization campaign was launched, people of good will were approached, promised were made but none of them materialized. The core team therefore had to contribute personal resources to provide at least meals and transport form the observers amounting to **MK5000** each for the 105 and **MK10, 000** each for the roving ones.

2. Introduction and Background

A closer look at the Constitutional and Supreme Court's ruling reveals that the MEC among other things allowed the use of result sheets that were altered with tippex (correction fluid) and some that did not have signatures from all party monitors. The court observed that parties involved could not really be faulted as the responsibility to monitor elections rests with MEC and not the parties even though they are a key stakeholder in the same. Additionally, the court also observed that MEC went ahead and announced results which were not vetted by the BDO who were the approved auditors in those elections. The BDO was contracted by UNDP as part of their support to the MEC on the 21st May 2019 Elections.

Election monitors go through some resemblance of training largely facilitated by the parties themselves as well as MEC and other stakeholders. MEC provides them with some identification which allows them to have access to the polling centers, constituency tally centers or even the national tally center. Of late however, parties engage volunteers to monitor the elections. There is no set criteria on how these are selected other than the fact that they are available and have shown interest to participate. During the day of the elections, they arrive at the polling centers at least 2 hours before the same are opened and they are not expected to leave up until the last vote has been counted. Polling centers close at 6pm. Now imagine that a person has arrived at 4am at a polling center, and they are there for the next 14 hours to when the center closes. After 6pm it is when the real begins, opening of ballot boxes, sorting them out and then counting and recording.

Most monitors have ever complained their parties neglect them by not giving them food, transportation, or general care and yet they are given a mammoth task of deciding the fate of thousands of people running for office including that of the President. Other polling centers are located in the remote areas in villages which do not have electricity and the monitors are thus required to use alternative lighting sources, and so were even using the lights from the phone torches. Imagine working in those conditions, on an empty stomach, deprived of sleep and being bitten by mosquitoes. A lot can go wrong in this set up, and as we have noted in the just ended election, things did go wrong.

A country however needs more than an effective electoral body to run credible elections; ordinary citizens must actively participate in the electoral process to create an enabling environment in which people choose their leaders of choice. It is therefore on this basis that we as professionals in various sectors and bonafide citizens of this nation wrote the MEC on 28th February 2020 to request permission to mobilize a group of non-partisan professionals situated nationally across the country to volunteer to monitor the Fresh Presidential Elections. On 9th March 2020, the MEC through their Chief Executive Officer Mr Sam Alufandika granted this request and further stated that our service would enhance elections credibility as long as we did our job within the precincts of the law. The MEC further advised that all our observers in the districts will be accredited at the District Councils and that only roving observers will be processed at their headquarters.

2.1 Aim

The aim of the process was to legitimize the voting process as well as the results management process (which was one of the key shortcomings of the previous elections) to ensure that all irregularities from the polling and constituency tally centers are eliminated or reduced significantly

2.2 Vision

We had envisaged that the Fresh Presidential Elections should be credible with legitimate winners.

2.3 Specific Objectives

Specifically, we intended to achieve the following:

2.3.1 To mobilize non-partisan professional across Malawi and inspire them to sign up for volunteer election observing

2.3.2 To provide training to the professionals on effective election observing as stipulated in the PPEA

2.3.3 To motivate and inspire professionals to take part in matters that have a direct bearing on matters of national concern

2.3.4 To create a platform /space where professionals can participate in the country's development agenda without showing allegiance or being prejudiced towards a particular party or politician

2.3.5 To regain the confidence of Malawi's citizenry in the electoral process

3.0 The Election Observing Process

3.1 Lilongwe

Our observers arrived 1 hour ahead of schedule in all our centers and they recounted that at most polling centers, all was set by 5:10am so much so that voters started voting at exactly 6:00 setting this center apart from the rest. Lilongwe observer s collectively observed the following centers:

- Mighty casiphia
- Chilinde L.E.A school
- Msambeta L.E.A school
- Chifuniro L.E.A School
- Mlodza L.E.A School
- Mitundu Primary School
- Mitundu CDSS
- Kamkodola Primary School
- Karonga Primary School
- Kalambo Primary School
- Kabwabwa Primary School
- Mvunguti Primary School
- City Assembly site Office Area 25
- Lilongwe Demonstration School
- Mgona Polling Ground
- Tsokankanasi Primary School
- Patsankhondo Primary School
- Chankhandwe Primary School
- Livimbo Primary School
- Lilongwe Technical College
- M'buka Primary School

- Lilongwe Primary School
- Chimwala Primary School
- St Johns Primary School
- Chinkhuti Primary School
- Phwetekere ward
- Buluzi Primary School
- Area 18 Anglican Church
- Chimutu Primary School
- Works Training Center at Ngwenya
- Chinsapo 1 and 2
- Chatuwa
- Chimutu Primary School
- Chigoneka Primary School
- Nkhwichi CDSS
- Bambino Private School
- Mphungu Primary School
- Lilongwe Civic Centre
- Chiuzimba primary school
- Malembe Primary school
- Kabwabwa primary school
- Lilongwe Demonstration school
- Mgona ground polling center
- Dzenza mission school
- Chiuzimba Primary School
- Dzenza secondary school

In all the centers people started arriving early and in large numbers and were assisted accordingly. People with physical disabilities, the elderly and expectant mothers were the first to be given priority and the Presiding Officers made sure that all people were advised on how to vote.

3.1.1 Key Observations from Lilongwe both Urban and Rural Centers

- There was high security at all polling centers provided by either the MDF or the police. It was observed that in some centers, even prison officers were used as well
- Most of the voters were women and the youth
- Before voting commenced, presiding officers raised the ballot boxes in the air to show voters that they were empty after which they were sealed before voting started.
- In places where voting was delayed for one thing or the others, voters became impatient and started shouting to out the officers under pressure
- In all the centers, there were hand sensitizers and buckets of water and soap as preventive materials against COVID-19
- However, social distancing was not observed in all centers and 98% of the voters did not wear masks
- The ushers were made sure that everyone was washing their hands with soap although some people were refusing to do so.
- There was adequate available of polling materials
- All staff working at the centers were provided with medical masks
- Participation of the party monitors was excellent
- People did not practice social distancing nor did they wear protective masks
- In all the centers in this community, there were no noticeable misunderstandings or commotions; people evidently very peaceful.
- Counting of votes mostly started after 6pm when most centers were closed, the actual time of starting depended on the time the center opened; by law, the voting is expected to be conducted within 12 hours
- Some delays were noticed in most centers especially when people went to verify their names in the register
- When the counting started all the monitors from different party, observers and security were available, all identified ballot papers were separated in a correct manner and all null and void ballot were also separated and recorded.
- The MEC officials were trained hence they understood the tabulation process very well and thus guided the other officials and party monitor present

- All the monitors signed a result sheet confirming the results as a true reflection of how people had voted at that center
- In all of the centers, elderly people, those with physical challenges, pregnant women and those who were unwell were assisted adequately and speedily so that they could go home early
- At Livimbo Primary school particularly, the Red Cross officials were present as this center is right in the heart of the Lilongwe city and was thus considered by the MEC as a hotspot. MDF officials were also present there. However, the presence of Red Cross officials was not universal
- One of the male monitors for DPP at M'buka center in Area 36 whose name is Chamu was suspected to be a foreigner and MCP monitors had to report him to the Malawi Defense Force. It was not clear how this matter was resolved but the monitor was duly withdrawn and his replacement, a female, came in at 16:40 pm.
- There were also two missing ballot papers at M'buka center whose whereabouts were not explained
- At Lilongwe Primary center, a voter left the ballot paper on the voting booth instead of casting it inside the ballot box. By the time the ballot paper was discovered the person had already gone. The ballot paper was taken by the presiding officer but he did not put it in the ballot box
- There were disagreements among party monitors on the qualification of a vote as null and void during counting
- At chimwala polling center instead of casting votes on their polling station some voters casted votes on another station without monitors noticing thus 3 votes went missing from station code 1329/03. This resulted in 3 more votes being added to the polling station 3.
- At St Johns center 2 votes went missing at station 1 and at station 8, one vote went missing. At station 9 one ballot paper was not cast in the box and at station 4 an extra vote was discovered during counting
- Counting of the votes ended between 10pm to midnight, and some centers spilled over to the early hours of the next day. The end time for vote counting was largely dependent on the experience of the officials, the time the center opened for voting as well as the number of voters at the center

- At Chinkhuti Primary school in Lumbadzi, two observers allegedly from Malawi Human Rights Commission visited the center around 17:30, almost half an hour before the center closed. They requested to stay on and observe the vote counting process, but this did not go down well with party monitors who suspected that the two may have been sent by someone to try and manipulate the results. The fact that they were using a Government vehicle registration number MG623AL also worked against them. The situation remained tense until one of the party monitors reported the matter to her seniors who came to the center and later the issue was resolved amicably but the two were still not allowed to remain at the center.
- The turnout of voters was good in all centers, except for Lilongwe technical College, people came in a bit slowly there
- IT was observed that while all parties had monitors in polling centers, only Mbakuwaku had no monitors
- St Johns Primary School Center had a challenge that involved contractual issues with the MEC, but this matter was later resolved by MEC officials
- During vote counting, a challenge arose on who would claim a vote that was assumed to be null and void. MCP and DPP officials were seen tussling and claiming the votes to be theirs, this brought a bit of confusion and Presiding Officers were called upon to settle the matter
- The indelible ink was taking time to dry as some ink clerks were not adequately cleaning the excess from the voter's fingers and thus voters would go to the polling booth with a wet finger full of ink and thus smear of the ballot with various marks. Such ballots raised a number of issues during counting
- More youths participated in this election especially males ones.
- Party Monitors and some observers did not have identification cards and this caused chaos among the voters who were so eager to ensure that their votes were not stolen.
- Most of the polling centers/ station were closed in relation to the time they started casting votes. The latest time for the closure of the casting votes in most of the polling centers was 6:20 pm.
- It was observed that in some centers, extra polling materials arrived way after voting had already commenced; for instance, there were no lamps at

Dzenza mission polling center in the early morning of the voting day which led exercise starting almost 20 behind schedule.

- Chiuzimba polling center had no crowd control tapes as well as glue stick.

- Most of the monitors, presiding officers and security team had no voter certificates to cast their votes as they were told and advised by MEC officials that they would vote at the station where they will be placed. Presiding Officers had a tough time allowing these to vote and this brought a few hitches during vote counting as the numbers could not tally
- In most polling centers, the commotions were minimal. But for Dzenza mission polling center there was a commotion which involved an F20 voter registration certificate holder insisting to cast his vote and threatening that he will not leave the place without exercising his right to vote. But later, the issue was resolved after one of the presiding officers and ushers explained to him thoroughly as to why he was not eligible to vote
- One of our observers was nearly stoned and manhandled at Kamkodola polling station in Mtandire, Lilongwe. She was in the company of a Ministry of Gender official who is also part of the 50/50 campaign team. The duo was being suspected of carrying already marked ballots, their vehicle was searched, their IDs verified and were later on allowed to enter into the polling center
- At Dzenza secondary polling center, the commotion erupted after one of the voter's name was missing in the register. He started shouting to an extent of using profanity at the officers. This brought so much tension at the center as he was speaking on top of his voice while cursing and threatening everybody. After sometime, the presiding officer tried her level best to check in the transfers book and other referral registers, and his name was found and he later casted his vote.
- Some insensitive men/boys tried to underestimate and insult female presiding officers calling them failures and that they were '***tools used to frustrate/manipulate the ballot papers just to please their bosses'***. They went further to compare them to Justice Jane Ansah, former MEC chairperson. This was observed at the Lilongwe Demonstration School, Dzenza Secondary and Kalambo primary.
- At Chiuzimba Primary, a group of young people came back at the polling center in the evening around 9:15pm arguing that they had come to secure their votes. The MDF officers and police officers consulted all observers and

monitors on how best to handle the matter and thus went and addressed the men that they had nothing to worry about as their votes would be secure

- With the tight security that was deployed in almost all polling centers, there was no any attempt to manipulate nor tamper with the counting process.
- One ballot paper was found outside the room of one of the stations where voting booths was placed during the time counting of votes was in the process. This brought confusion to the team as to how the ballot paper was found outside instead of being inside the ballot box. Later, the matter was resolved and the ballot was treated as a null and void vote
- The coordination amongst the monitors, security team, observers and presiding officers was very good in all polling centers. All concerns and issues were being resolved to everyone's satisfaction
- Some of the USHERS did not carry out their duties as instructed. They seemed not to be aware of what their roles and duties were at the polling center. It was our understanding that one of their responsibilities was to ensure that voters queued correctly so that they could save time. It was common to see voters who had queued for a long time on one station only to be told that they needed to be at another station

3.2 Mulanje District

3.2.1 Key Issues Observed In Mulanje

- The voting process was a bit tough in the morning since people were coming in large number to cast their votes in all polling stations.
- This put so much pressure on polling staff as they were overwhelmed and outnumbered, but slowly, as the numbers went down and time went, the situation became calmer
- All COVID-19 safety measures were put in place. These included: handwashing buckets, social distancing and masks for polling staff
- In the afternoon voters were coming slowly, as most of them has risen up early to cast their vote as early as possible
- There was nothing suspicious in the way things were handled at various centers

- Due to network challenges there was poor communication among observers in the district but each worked till midnight up to the time the results sheets were being transferred to the district tally center
- One act of violence was registered at Mulanje South East Constituency - Chigombe polling Station where people suspected to be DPP Cadets attacked a member of Tonse Alliance who came to pay allowances to party monitors. The incident occurred around 2 pm but the MDF intervened and the situation was well managed.
- The above incident however affected the voting process and voting had to be halted for close to half an hour as the MDF try to calm the situation

3.3 Likoma District

3.3.1 Key issues Observed in Likoma

- Throughout electoral process, the district had registered no form of political violence.
- All centers were opened between 6 am and 6:05 am but queues in some centres started as earlier as 5:30 am especially at Likoma Community Hall, Yofu, Same, Fisheries and Mocho.
- On COVID 19, registered voters were encouraged to follow prevention measures by washing hands upon arrival at the centre and observing one meter social distance.
- The general environments at polling stations was peaceful; in addition, all political parties (DPP/UDF and MCP/UTM), others institutions like NICE, PAC and EAM had placed monitors and observers in all polling centers.
- Turnout was 4,730 out of 7,050 eligible voters representing a 67.09% turn out.
- Null and void votes were 22
- Counting of the ballot papers was done in a transparent manner and was performed at polling stations soon after the close of the polling exercise.
- All party monitors from political parties and other organizations were present throughout the counting.

- Announcements of results was done at polling stations and these were posted on public places within polling stations; all monitors were given signed results sheets.
- Results from polling centres and stations were taken to the district tally center at Community hall and escorted by 2 Malawi Defense Force officers and 2 Police officers.
- All electoral officials from all centres in the district performed their roles and responsibilities in a transparent, professional and non-partisan manner.
- All polling centres were characterised by peacefulness, orderliness and calmness which are critical success factors for credible elections.
- MEC was accommodative to difference views on this voting process evidenced by the positioning of polling booths and provision of tents at the community hall centre
- It must be recognised that MEC did its best to put officials and enough security at all centres.
- All people who required assistance to cast their votes were assisted in a respectful manner
- Most of the political monitors who were deployed to the centres played a big role with monitoring skills.
- MEC did well to provide training to stakeholders as well as clerks and Presiding Officers.

Conducts	Action taken
1. It was reported on 21st and 22nd June, 2020 that DPP governor-Mr. Chinkhanda and Mr. Farai Hollad were collecting National IDs from eligible voters, this also observed in Chizumulu where DPP monitors were led by Mr. Jacob Chiunda and Mr. Ndalama on the ID collection.	- Victims were advised to report the matter to Police. - Investigation established that they did not collect IDs but asked people to meet them while in possession of National IDs so that they could be shortlisted for MEDEF loans
2. Those registered in 2020 were coming to centres to vote, this happened at Fisheries, Nkhwazi, Community Hall and Same F. P. School	- These were not allowed to vote
3. DPP and MCP monitors at Mtengula J.P. were writing names of voters in their note books.	- Our observers reported the matter to MEC team leader, a Mr. Mwapwelemwe who instructed those monitors to stop writing names.
4. DPP district governor-Mr. Chinkhanda brought 3 young people at Fisheries polling centres forcing the Presiding officer to allow them to vote though they had registered in 2020.	- The Presiding Officer returned them and the three did not vote
5. Two female eligible voters were denied to vote because their names were transferred to Chiteko without their knowledge and consent even though they had both voters' certificate and national IDs. This was recorded at Community hall and Fisheries.	- Our Observer reported the incident to District Elections Clerk who also reported to MEC officials for guidance; the final decision was that two were not allowed to vote.

In Likoma, all Political parties and CSOs deployed monitors in all polling centres and 100% of monitors performed in a professional and adhering to electoral laws, this was a result of the capacity building initiative facilitated by MEC on effective election monitoring and observing. Below is the list of the institutions who observed the elections in Likoma:

NO	NAME OF ORGANIZATION	NUMBER OF MONITORS
1	Independent Professional Observers (IPO)	1 Observer per centre and 1 roving Observer who also Observed at the District Tally Centre
2	National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE)	1 Observer per centre, 3 roving monitors and 2 at District tally centre
3	Public Affairs Committee	1 Observer per centre and 1 at district tally centre
4	Evangelical Association of Malawi	1 Observer per centre and 1 at District tally centre

Political Party's monitors were deployed as below:

NO	POLITICAL PARTY	NUMBER OF MONITOR
1	DPP	2 monitors per station
2	MCP	2 monitors per station
3	Mbakuwaku	0 monitors per station

A. Assistance to Voters and Secrecy of the Ballot

In all centers, presiding officers were supporting the elderly, expectant mothers and people with various physical disabilities. People with vision impairments used tactile ballot papers to cast their votes.

No intimidation was observed and recorded; all polling booths were placed in a position where nobody could see what whom a voter was voting for. MEC officials played their role in an independent and professional manner e.g. those needed assistance were guided accordingly.

B. Polling Materials and Equipment

All polling materials and equipment were available in all centres, these electoral materials arrived in the district on 20th June, 2020 around 12 midnight by 2 warships belonging to the Malawi Defense Force and were welcomed by District Electoral Support team (DEST), Multi-Party Liaison Committee members, security personnel's (Police and Army officers) and political party monitors. Thereafter, the materials were kept at St Peters TDC under heavy security by 5 Malawi Police Officers and 7 Malawi Defense Officers. All materials and key staffs were deployed to centres on 21st June, 2020 including Chizumulu centres and were guarded by 2 police officers and 2 MDF officials.

C. Adherence to Polling Procedures

Generally, polling procedures were adhered to by voters except on one incident at Community hall-Station 2 where instead of casting the vote into the ballot box, a vote was found on the floor and was therefore cancelled.

D. Adherence to COVID 19 Prevention measures

MEC has to be recommended for providing prevention measures throughout the process. These included hand sanitizers, hand washing buckets, soap and face mask. All voters were requested to wash hands before queuing and observing 1 metre social distance.

E. General Atmosphere on Polling Day

The polling exercise in the district was characterized as peaceful and orderly with tight security

F. Vote Counting

All stations and centers started the counting process soon after closing time, this process started with sorting the ballots for each candidate and then counting commended as follows:

a. Sorting: All votes were sorted out with an officer shouting in an audible manner when counting each vote. All observers and local monitors witnessed the counting.
b. Counting: Sorted votes were counted one by one in loud voice by presiding officers in the presence of local monitors and observers

G. Announcement of Poll Results

After votes were counted, all results were announced before displaying at polling centres and all monitors were given signed results sheets by all monitors. Presiding officers from polling centres brought results to the District Tally Centre at Likoma Community Hall where they were also checked and verified by party monitors before sending them to the national tally center in Blantyre by the District Commissioner in a sealed envelope.

The results for the district were as follows:

1. **President**

NO	NAMES	PARTY	VOTES
1	DR LAZARUS CHAKWERA	MCP	2,981
2	MR. PETER KUWANI	MMD	37
3	PROF. PETER MUNTHARIKA	DPP	1,690
NULL AND VOID			22
TOTAL VOTES			4,730
% NULL AND VOID			0.47%
VOTERS TURNOUT			67.09%

RESULTS SUMMARY

ELIGIBLE VOTERS	VOTERS TURNOUT	NULL AND VOID	TURNOUT %	% NULL AND VOID
7,050	4,730	22	67.09%	0.47%

H. Observation of the Polling exercise

The polling exercise generally went well due to the following reasons:

- The Malawi Electoral Commission was able to move into most of the polling centers to monitor the voting process.
- All equipment/materials were readily available in all centres
- Turn up of voters at the centers as early as 5:30 am was impressive. Isolated cases were noted where party monitors at Mocho, Yofu and Same school demanding Presiding Officers to stop assisting elderly and physically challenged people who needed assistant in the voting process for unknown reasons.

Picture below is showing voters observing one of Covid 19 prevention measure by washing hands



3.4 Nkhotakota District

3.4.1 Key Issues from Nkhotakota

- At Linga Primary School Polling Centre, the center opened at 6:05am but voting started at 6:13 when the first voter had arrived. This was highly unprecedented as in most centers, people started arriving half an hour or an hour ahead of time
- The voting exercise started really well. By 4:19, voters were coming in slowly but picked up again towards the end
- Voters were given full support from the team in a very transparent manner; especially those who has some physical challenges.

- There was nothing suspicious in the way the exercise was carried out throughout the process even though a few days before the voting, there was mayhem in the districts when it was rumored that DPP officials had deployed some ex-military officers to help in vote rigging.
- The situation was ably contained by police, the MDF and party officials

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Our sincere gratitude goes to the Malawi Electoral Commission for allowing our team to independently observe the June 2020 Fresh Presidential Election. From our experience, we hereby make the following conclusions and recommendations for future elections:

4.1 Conclusions:

We hereby make the following conclusions:

- That except for a few hitches here and there, the Fresh Presidential Elections was free and fair
- That the MEC, realizing citizens' rights and their own capacity gaps created an enabling environment for the operation, engagement and participation of observers from various stakeholders without interference. This provided ease of access into polling centers and enabled independent observation of the electoral process. We were thus under obligation to render the entire process high levels of respectability and the seriousness it deserves
- The MEC had changed the modus operandi of polling centers, and while it took a bit of time for voters to get accustoms to the new way of doing things, the process went on smoothly as MEC had adequately invested in the capacity of its officials at the centers
- The fresh presidential elections have made clear that Malawians, as a people, no longer lack diligence on electoral matters, are no longer fearful and neither do we wish to be spectators in matters that decide our future; this was evidenced by the voter turnout and the willingness from people in various sectors to take part in election monitoring and observing or simply

'vote protection' as it was commonly known. Volunteers from faith based organizations, professionals, public and private sector came in their large numbers to offer their expertise in a bid to ensure that we delivered free and credible elections

- The contagious brilliance displayed by the MEC chairperson in the run up to the elections did a lot to crush doubts in people's minds regarding the authenticity and impartiality of the Commission which was pivotal in how people were going to accept the election results
- Unlike the May 2019 elections, all results sheets were not altered by correction fluid (tippex) and Presiding Officers were very keen to ensure that all party monitors signed off on the results sheets before these were submitted at the district tally centers
- The abolition of roving monitors, though it was faulted by parties turned out to be a good idea after all; with the tensions that were there in all polling centers among voters, there was going to be a lot of chaos as people would have suspected these to be conduits for vote rigging
- The presence of Malawi Defense Force officials working alongside Malawi Police and Prison Officers was at times overwhelming but at the same time, these fears were adequately disabused when it became apparent that their presence actually meant that the people's will shall truly be respected at the end of the day
- In the absence of International Observers, some stakeholders felt that it would be difficult to legitimize the electoral process, but what Malawians what have managed to achieve in these elections is not only impeccable and admirable, but largely sets the tone for other nations not only in Africa, but the entire world as well that it is ACTUALLY very possible

4.2 Recommendation

Based on the above conclusions, we hereby make the following recommendations:

- That MEC must sort our transfer issues before polling date; these caused a lot of confusion for many voters and the explanation given by officials was misinterpreted to mean that they were being denied their right to vote

- The alphabet system that was used by MEC on the ques was hard to follow especially in rural areas where most voters could not read and write. Voters thus ended up spending a lot of time on a wrong line only to be told that they had to start the process all over again on another line
- The MEC failed to provide training to our observers and so we took it upon ourselves to ensure that we engaged with some elections stakeholders at district level so that we could get some skills that we could impart to their entire team; while this was highly inadequate and did little to build our capacity, the entire process provided 'on the job training' but it is still important that MEC provides this training
- MEC to process observers IDs earlier. The MEC district offices either produced less IDs or no IDs at all, observers thus had challenges when they presented themselves at their preferred polling centers and obviously their presence raised a lot of suspicions among voters thus compromising on their security
- MEC cannot do everything, their focus in on the electoral process; they must therefore ensure that they work with other stakeholders to provide services in which they are not savvy, like medical services. While Red Cross officials were present in other centers, they were not present in most centers especially those classified as 'hotspots' by the MEC
- Presiding Officers must be furnished with a list of all observers and monitors well in advance to avoid disrupting the voter process once it commences
- It was observed in a number of centers that polling materials came late while in others that the materials were inadequate, MEC must ensure that it liaises with its district offices to avoid this from ever happening
- MEC must leverage on the goodwill of the people of Malawi (especially the youth) and their willingness to get actively engaged in the electoral process and must thus call for volunteer observers/monitors way in advance, provide them with the necessary training and deploy them accordingly without waiting for the same to apply to MEC for accreditation. MEC may even wish to have a database of volunteer monitors upon whom they can call from time to time when the need arises
- As a matter of principle, MEC must ensure that all candidates provide monitors at each polling centers; we observed that Mbakuwaku had no monitors at all

- Last but not least, Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera emerged the winner of these elections after amassing 58.57% of the votes cast thereby leaving no room for a run off. The professional independent Observers team congratulates him and the vice President Dr Saulos Klaus Chilima and further urges the DPP/UDF members to be defiant as they try to regroup ahead of the 2025 elections; it is extremely important that you pump up the morale of your supporters in readiness for those elections.

Our sincere gratitude goes to all the 115 Observers who are listed below who took part in this exercise and made this report possible. Your service to your country will surely never go unnoticed. You stood up for democracy and Malawi won!!!!!!!!!!

Our Observers List:

Mwayiwawo Chitsamba	Lilongwe
Mary Marissa Mkandawire	Lilongwe
Patience Mkandawire	Lilongwe
Nancy Chingwenembe	Lilongwe
Maurice Chinthiti	Lilongwe
Lisa Banda	Lilongwe
Grace Mkangama	Lilongwe
Magadalene Memory Lungu	Lilongwe
Vera Kamtukule	Lilongwe
Cornelious Munyonga	Lilongwe
Charles Makalani	Lilongwe
Joan Chingwenembe	Lilongwe
Nixon Jamu	Lilongwe
Ibrahim Mpombera	Lilongwe
Tendai Blandina Kalibwanji	Lilongwe
Eliza Reilah Kalibwanji	Lilongwe
Nevas Chirwa	Lilongwe
George A Chinagwa	Lilongwe
Andrew Mbuliro	Lilongwe
Lyton Phiri	Lilongwe
Chikondi Butawo	Lilongwe
Bickton Chimungu	Lilongwe
Comfort Mkango	Lilongwe
Emmauel Tsokwe	Lilongwe
Chimwemwe Kankhande	Lilongwe
Jacqueline Tchongwe	Lilongwe

Malango Kaira	Lilongwe
Grant Kankhulungo	Lilongwe
Chifundo James Kalindawayo	Lilongwe
Ketrina Machira	Lilongwe
Atusaye Mwakhwawa	Lilongwe
Edward Msiska	Lilongwe
Sydney Chitsonga	Lilongwe
Chikondi Kamvakazi	Lilongwe
Daniel Francis Antonio	Lilongwe
Lyte Nkosi	Lilongwe
Grolia Tolani	Lilongwe
Emmanuel Kasanga	Lilongwe
Mathews Kamtambo	Lilongwe
Ratio Chitimbe	Lilongwe
Billiat Mchambo	Lilongwe
Grace Nyirongo	Lilongwe
Wilfred Charles Munta Jr	Lilongwe
Francesca Chimbe	Lilongwe
Chifundo Damison Mchecheta	Lilongwe

Elizabeth Mlundira	Lilongwe
Emmanuel Kachere	Lilongwe
Mcould Henry Nkhoma	Lilongwe
Sotchangani Lusungu Gausi	Lilongwe
Florence T Gausi	Lilongwe
Anastanzia Banda	Lilongwe
Malumbo Banda	Lilongwe
Mildred Phiri	Lilongwe
Samson Mkandawire	Lilongwe
Kingsley Mvula	Lilongwe
Prisca Harawa	Lilongwe
Kondwani Chirombo	Lilongwe
Talandira Chakakal	Lilongwe
Smith Majoni	Lilongwe
Isaac Solomon Malunga	Lilongwe
Emmerenciana Ester Lonje	Lilongwe
Florence Katunga	Lilongwe
Joana Chunga	Lilongwe
Patrick Manja	Lilongwe
Tamanda Makato	Lilongwe
Tadala Ester Makato	Lilongwe
Stella Nkhonya	Lilongwe
Gift Mkwanda	Balaka
Noel Mkata	Balaka
Prisca Makalani	Balaka

Getrude Zenengeya	Balaka
Benedict Kajojo	Balaka
Dan Eddie Nthala	Khotakota
Mtambuzeni Zidana	Khotakota
Mavuto Jawado	Khotakota
Norman Chitenje	Khotakota
Agness Manda	Khotakota
James Wilson Chimbiya	Khotakota
Rodick Phiri	Khotakota
Lyson Mtndiwa	Khotakota
Brendab Mwale	Dowa
Happy Mtambo	Dowa
Sylvester Chiwezi	Dowa
Angella Makalani	Dowa
Pemphero Makalani	Dowa
Chisomo Maliwa	Dowa
Mwayi Jossam	Dowa
Leonard Mthuzi	Dowa
Prescot Mthuzi	Dowa
Jolly Chadzuka	Likoma Island
Devoter Adams	Likoma Island
Aswell Tembo	Likoma Island
Madalitso Mkuyamba	Likoma Island
Jones Zowan	Likoma Island
Moses Mhango	Chizumulu Island
Emmamuel Banda	Chizumulu Island
Alice Ndeule	Chizumulu Island
Vincent Dovico	Mwanza
David Samikwa	Mwanza
Cathy Namate	Mwanza
Innocent Chipenya	Ntcheu
Magret Mtumodzi	Ntcheu
Simplex Chingata	Ntcheu
Memory Chasweka	Ntcheu
George Maliyana	Ntcheu
Anita Mwafulirwa	Mulanje
Horace Chipembere	Mulanje
Joshua Samikwa	Mulanje
Witness Mthyola	Mulanje
Mayeso Harawa	Mangochi
Chikondi Njaya	Mangochi