



**UPDATE 01: OPENING AND PROGRESS OF THE POLLS
BY MEC CHAIRMAN, JUSTICE DR CHIFUNDO KACHALE
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My fellow Malawians

It gives me great pleasure to address you on this important day which we all have been waiting for. A day on which Malawians are once again exercising one of their right to vote for a state president.

Polling started this morning at 6 am across the entire country and is expected to take place in 9,271 polling stations with a total of 6,859,570 registered voters. Almost all polling stations have opened and voting is in progress. As you are aware that one centre can have more than one polling stations, the Commission has set up a mobile phone facility that will help voters to know their line to queue. By dialing *720# and following instruction, will be able to know the polling station number to queue.

In the centres that I and my fellow Commisioners and MEC staff have personally visited, voting is progressing well. It is expected that voting will continue undisturbed until polling closes at 6 pm this evening

except for polling centres that have been opened later than 6 am. These centres will remain open to compensate the late opening.

As polling progresses I wish to appeal to the nation to maintain peace and calm. The Commission is managing everything to ensure that all Malawians who registered as voters have cast their vote.

Today being a normal working day, the Commission is appealing to employers to give an opportunity to their employees to go and vote. The Commission wishes to remind all employers that voting is a fundamental right and employers have a responsibility to uphold that. The Commission is strongly appealing to employers to release their staff to go and vote now.

As polling progresses the Commission is assuring all Malawians that every vote cast will be counted and its integrity withheld to reflect the interest of the voter. Therefore, I urge everyone to go and vote at the centre where he or she registered or transferred to.

The Commission is also emphasizing the need for voters and polling staff to protect themselves from the Covid-19 pandemic. They should wash hands at the centre, queue, observe physical distance when queueing and sanitise hand frequently.

The Commission will be coming again to give an update later in the day.

Thank you