



**UPDATE 03: RECEIVING OF RESULTS AT THE NATIONAL TALLY
CENTRE AND MANAGEMENT OF UNOFFICIAL RESULTS
BY MEC CHAIRMAN, JUSTICE DR CHIFUNDO KACHALE**

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My Fellow Commissioners

The MEC Chief Elections Officer, Mr Sam Alfandika

Members of the Press

Staff from Malawi Electoral Commission

My fellow Malawians

Today we continue with the results counting and processes in all councils across the country. We are now in day one of the eight days the Commission has for it to receive and determine results for the Fresh Presidential Election held on Tuesday, 23 June, 2020.

Update on receiving of result at the National Tally Centre

As of 9 Am this morning, the Commission had not received any results from the councils. The reason is that there is a change in transmission of results to the National Tally Centre. While in previous elections, results have been received as per completed polling centre, this year there is a change. The Returning Officers, who are mostly District Commissioners, as announced before, will bring the

results physically to the National Tally Centre. The Returning Officer has to ensure that he or she has all results for the entire district. The Returning Officer cannot bring partial results and go back to get the remaining results even if it was just one polling station remaining out of several hundreds. The implication of this process is that the unofficial results will have already been known by the public hours before the Commission gets to receive them. Therefore, I appeal to stakeholders to exercise calm if they do not seem to see much activity at the main tally centre. On the same, I would want to emphasise that MEC is not transmitting results through any electronic system or network. Therefore, no one should wake up and raise allegations of hacking or infiltration of the results.

At the same time the Commission is not in a position to estimate when the first results will be received at the National Tally Centre. Suffice to say that the Commission will be updating the nation when the first results have been received.

The Commission has allowed all contesting political parties to place up to 10 representatives at the main tally centre. The Commission will be sharing the results from the councils with them for crosschecking. It is an honest expectation of the Commission that the party representatives at the National Tally Centre are ready and equipped for this role. Once the results from the councils are in, the Commission will immediately make copies for each party. The party representatives will be given up to 15 minutes to crosscheck or verify with what their colleagues had on the ground. Should they notice

any irregularity they have the obligation to raise the issue with the Electoral Commission using appropriate channels that have been set. In the absence of any query, the Commission will proceed to finalise the result and display it.

Handling and management unofficial results

Since yesterday, unofficial results have been broadcast on radio and also circulating on social media. While the unofficial results have a potential of shaping the public perception on expected outcome of the election, the Commission wishes to affirm its position that it is the only body that has the legal mandate to announce and declare a winner in an election. Therefore, those that are spreading unofficial results, especially media houses, should always not forget to put a disclaimer that “what they are sharing are unofficial results and that the final results will be declared by the Commission”. The public is being reminded that when determining the results the Commission does not just look at the figures, but is also considers complaints and issues that have been brought alongside that particular result. At the same time the Commission is reminding all stakeholders to be on the look out for fake news and false information. With social media it is possible for anyone to come up with their own results and distribute them. All stakeholders taking an action basing on unofficial results should be extremely cautious.

The Commission wishes to remind the public that a candidate wins an election when all votes are tallied and not that in a particular district or region or constituency. Therefore, all stakeholders are

advised to keep their eyes on the national tally that will be released by the Commission.

Security of polls workers

The Commission is strongly warning the general public not to conduct themselves in a manner that poses a security threat to polling staff, their property and smooth process of vote counting. The security officers accompanying poll workers and guarding tally centres have the mandate to protect them and any such threat, intimidation or misconduct will not be tolerated. It will be met with full resistance of security officers according to their professional training.

Update on complaints received

Since the last briefing yesterday, the Commission has only received one formal written complaint. The Complaint is from Mr. Peter Dominico Sinosi Driver Kuwani, candidate for Mbakuwaku Movement for Development. The Complaint has been received through email sent to the Commission's complaints designated email address.

Briefly, Mr Kuwani has demanded that the Commission should disqualify the candidature of Prof. Aurthur Peter Mutharika and Dr. Lazurus McCarthy Chakwera. The ground of his demand for the disqualification is that in accordance with the Judgment of the Supreme Court of appeal, the candidates ought to have maintained the candidate-runningmate formations.

The Commission will sit to determine this complaint and the complainant will be advised of the decision that will be arrived at by the Commission.

Apart from this complaint, the Commission received and has resolved all the complaints that have been lodged directly to the National Tally Centre. In total the Commission has handled four complaints. Two lodged by or on behalf of MCP and two lodged by the DPP. All these complaints have been about allegations of violence, threats of violence and intimidation of party representatives. The Commission has relied on the security arrangements involving the Malawi Police and the Malawi Defence Force to resolve these complaints.

The Commission would like to commend the joint efforts of the Malawi Defence Force and the Police in putting up a vibrant security scheme within which the polls have been managed. The professionalism of these two institutions should be applauded by everyone.

Declaration of winner of an election

The Commission is again reiterating that it is its sole mandate to declare a winner in an election. So the nation should wait until the Commission has done its job. It will be unethical for any candidate or political leader to declare who has won the election. Such a statement also has the potential to disturb social order and peace.

The Commission is once again reminding all political leaders to use official channels to direct their grievances to the Commission before going to the media. As explained yesterday, the Commission has set up a complaints handling procedure to deal with any complaint in an expeditious way.

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

Thank you