



**NATIONAL ADDRESS BY MEC CHAIRMAN JUSTICE DR CHIFUNDO
KACHALE ON THE LAUNCH OF THE NOVEMBER 2020 PARLIAMENTARY
BY-ELECTIONS**

MANGOCHI WEST,

MANGOCHI NORTH EAST AND

PHALOMBE NORTH CONSTITUENCIES

20th November 2020, Umodzi Park

Salutations

- My Fellow Commissioners
- MEC Chief Elections Officer, Mr. Sam Alfandika
- Management and staff from MEC
- Members of the Press
- Ladies and gentlemen

Greetings,

This MORNING The Commission met to finalize the calendar of the by-elections. This afternoon, the Commission is releasing the remaining part of the by-elections calendar after a postponement that occurred as a result of court processes.

The Commission is now prepared to hold by-elections in Mangochi West, Mangochi North East and Phalombe North Constituencies on 15th December 2020. Before I give full details, let me explain the background to the vacancies and the electoral activities.

Background to the vacancies

The three constituencies fell vacant because the court nullified their 2019 Parliamentary election results as follows:

1. Mangochi West fell vacant on 20th December, 2019
2. Mangochi North East fell vacant on 8th June, 2020
3. Phalombe North fell vacant on 22nd June, 2020

Having done all the preparatory work, I am pleased to announce that the processes leading to the conduct of the by-elections in these areas will be as follows:

Voter Verification and Registration

The Commission had initially planned to conduct voter registration in all these three areas to allow all those that had attained voting age or failed to register in the past election, to register this time around. The process started on 14 September, 2020 and was supposed to run up to 27 September, 2020. However, on 18th September, 2020, the Commission was served with an order of injunction restraining it from registering new voters in Mangochi North East Constituency. The matter went for a full hearing and on 7th October 2020 the Court decided that only those that registered for the 2019 elections are entitled to vote in the upcoming by-elections.

In accordance with this judgment there will be no voter registration in those constituencies this time. The implication of this is that all those that registered as voters in preparation for the Fresh Presidential Elections (whose certificates start with F20) and all those that registered in preparation for these by-elections from 14 to 27 September, 2020 (whose certificates begin with B20) will not be allowed to vote. Their names have not been added to the voters' register.

And regarding voter verification, the Commission will not re-open the centres because this activity already run from 14 to 27th September, 2020 in all the three constituencies. The order of injunction only restrained the Commission from registering new voters in Mangochi North East but the verification exercise continued during that period. It is the belief of the Commission that all eligible voters had the opportunity to go and verify their details.

From the voter registration of the 2019 elections, the registered voters per constituency are as follows:

NO	Constituency	Female	Male	Total
1	Mangochi West,	15,285	11,905	27,190
2	Mangochi North East	20,359	11,142	31,501
3	Phalombe North	16,757	11,913	28,670

Nomination of candidates

The position taken by the Commission regarding candidates remain as communicated to all stakeholders in the Press Statement dated 12th October 2020 and, in the letter, dated 30th October 2020 to individual candidates who participated in the 21st May 2019 Parliamentary Elections.

Let me reiterate that the Commission will maintain the candidates who contested in the 21st May 2019 parliamentary elections together with statuses and party affiliations as ordered by the Courts. New candidates are not eligible to contest. This is because these are by-elections. In cases where a candidate has withdrawn his or her nomination, the withdrawal will be dealt with in accordance with the law and there will be no substitution of the candidates.

In a matter of days, the Commission will be formally publishing the names of the candidates who will be participating in these elections. The Commission will also issue a notice that there should be polls.

The following is the list of the candidates that will be contesting in these respective constituencies:

Mangochi West Constituency

NO.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	SEX	AFFILIATION
1	<i>Gomani BANDA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT</i>
2	<i>Joyce Moses CHIKUMBA</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT</i>
3	<i>Geoffrey Meleka-Mark CHIWONDO</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>DPP</i>
4	<i>Simeon HARRISON</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT</i>
5	<i>Reuben KANYAMA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT</i>
6	<i>Beatrice Ireen Lwanda NGAUNJE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>MCP</i>
7	<i>Stanly Jubeck PHIRI</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>UTM</i>

Mangochi North East Constituency

NO.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	SEX	AFFILIATION
1	Duncan Mannah CASSIM	M	UTM
2	Idi KALOSI	M	UDF
3	Martin S. Chikati Nyengo	M	INDEPENDENT

Phalombe North Constituency

NO.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	SEX	AFFILIATION
1	Mavuto BOKOSI	M	INDEPENDENT
2	Esther Wadi KAZEMBE	F	MCP
3	Wilfred Goodwin LIPITA	M	INDEPENDENT
4	Justin Samuel MOKOWA	M	UTM
5	Promise SALIMA	F	INDEPENDENT

The following 2019 candidates have informed the Commission that they have withdrawn their nominations and will not be contesting in the by-elections:

1. Hon. Anna Kachikho, candidate for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Phalombe North
2. Mr. Patrick Million, an independent candidate for Phalombe North.

In accordance with the law, their nomination fees have been forfeited. In formal communication, the returning officer for the constituency will inform the voters of these withdrawals.

We would like to remind all electoral stakeholders, political parties and the electorate that it is an offence to force, induce or influence a candidate to withdraw from an election. Section 46 (5) of the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act says that a withdrawal of a candidate must be voluntary and must be under oath sworn by the candidate before a commissioner for oaths. As we go into these by-elections let everyone be aware of these provisions and avoid contravening them.

All the nomination fees that were paid for the fresh nomination that took place on 7th October, 2020 will have their fees refunded. The Commission will be contacting the candidates directly on this procedure.

Official Campaign period

The official campaign period started on the 10th of September 2020 and is still running. As per requirement of the law, campaign shall end at 06.00AM on 13th December, 2020. Any campaign activity conducted after this period is illegal and the Commission will not hesitate to take necessary measures against those who indulge in such violations.

During this campaign period, the Commission is urging all candidates, political parties and their followers to refrain from inflammatory language because that stirs violence and infringes on other people's rights to campaign freely. Candidates should practice issue-based campaign and express themselves within the precinct of the law. In the Commission, we believe that people will not vote for you because you used improper language during elections but for presenting a candid manifesto.

The Commission would also like to advise political parties and candidates to ensure that Covid-19 regulations as published in the *Government Gazette* are strictly adhered to. All people attending rallies are also reminded that it is their personal responsibility to ensure that they take precautionary measures to protect themselves by wearing face masks, observing social distance and washing their hands when attending campaign activities.

Printing of ballot papers

The Commission, through a competitive process, already identified Al Ghurair Printing and Publishing Company as the printer for the ballot papers. The Commission will advise if it will be possible to go and supervise the printing process in view of the Covid-19 travel restrictions. And if possible, parties and stakeholders will also be advised to send their representatives if they may wish to do so.

The Commission, as has always been the practice, will share the itinerary of the plane bringing the ballot papers and all will be invited to witness the receipt and distribution process in respect to the ballot papers.

The Commission will use the photos and symbols provided by the candidates in 2019. And, as such, where appropriate there will be expected to verify their photos and symbols, but otherwise, the Commission will use photos and symbols from the templates submitted in 2019.

Submission of names of party representatives and observers

All candidates, political parties and civil society organisations (CSOs) are advised that the deadline for submission of names of representatives and observers is 4th December, 2020.

All names should be submitted to the respective MEC district offices for accreditation. Political parties and independent candidates are allowed to place up to two representatives per polling station and also two representatives at the District Tally Centre. Political parties and candidates are also advised to place a maximum of six representatives at the National Tally Centre.

Pre-checking of polling materials

The Commission has included a date on the calendar for pre-checking of polling materials. For these by-elections this will be on the 14th December, 2020 from 9AM in all polling stations. On this date Presiding Officers will open and check all the election materials, including boxes for ballot papers, to ensure that they are correct and in right quantities. Representatives for all candidates and contesting parties are encouraged to be present during this important exercise as this is part of the Commission's efforts towards enhancing transparency in the electoral processes and ensuring that all materials are available before the actual polling day. However, it's important to state clearly here that this exercise shall proceed even in the absence of political party representatives should they fail or delay to show up.

Polling, vote counting and results announcement

Ladies and gentlemen, polling will take place on 15th December, 2020 starting from 6.00AM up to 6.00PM. When going for voting, voters should remember to take their voter certificate for easy identification. However, if they lost the certificate, they should still go to the centre where they registered and the presiding officer will assist them to vote.

Vote counting will start immediately after polling at each of the polling stations. Results for each polling station will be presented to the District Commissioner who will in the end deliver the results

physically to the Commission at the main tally centre to be set up in Blantyre. The Commission is expected to announce the results any day from the 16th December 2020 in Blantyre once the vote tallying has been concluded.

Special message on Covid-19

My fellow Malawians, the Covid-19 pandemic is still among us. Although the statistics are pointing to reduced incidents, we should not take chances, all measures must be followed as guided by the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19 and the Ministry of Health.

My appeal goes to political parties and candidates to ensure that they observe the Covid-19 regulations and put every measure to protect their followers and supporters. Please note that we are not safe from Covid-19 until everyone is safe.

And our special appeal from the Commission, therefore, goes to individual Malawians that will participate in these by-elections in whatever way. They should take measures to protect themselves from contracting or spreading the Corona virus.

Concluding remarks

The Commission is appealing to all registered voters in the three constituencies to take exercise their right to part in these by-elections. Remember, voting is an opportunity to exercise your democratic right. We would like people to come out in large

numbers to vote on 15th December, 2020 to choose who will represent them in parliament.

May God, the Almighty bless you

May He bless our nation.

Thank you.