



**GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI
PRESS STATEMENT**

COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE AS OF 16TH DECEMBER 2021

In the past 24 hours, Malawi has registered 475 new COVID-19 cases, 40 new recoveries and one new death. 458 of the new cases are locally transmitted; 205 from Lilongwe, 130 from Blantyre, 55 from Mzimba North, 16 from Salima, 10 from Zomba, eight from Mzimba South, seven from Rumphu, four from Neno, three each from Dowa, Nkhata Bay and Thyolo, two each from Balaka, Mangochi, Mchinji, and Nkhotakota, and one each from Dedza, Karonga, Machinga, Mulanje, Mwanza and Phalombe districts. 17 of the new cases are imported; 12 identified at Mwanza border and their destination districts are still under investigation, three from Lilongwe, and two from Machinga districts. The new death is from Blantyre and was not vaccinated.

Cumulatively, Malawi has recorded 63,408 cases including 2,311 deaths (Case Fatality Rate is at 3.64%). Of these cases, 2,759 are imported infections and 60,649 are locally transmitted. Cumulatively, 59,040 cases have now recovered (recovery rate of 93.11%) and 232 were lost to follow-up. This brings the total number of active cases to 1,825. In the past 24 hours, there were two new admissions and six new discharges in the treatment units. Currently, 12 active cases are currently hospitalised; four from Blantyre, three in Lilongwe, two in Mzimba North, and one each in Zomba and Phalombe districts. The new admissions are not vaccinated.

On testing, in the past 24 hours, 1,773 COVID-19 tests were conducted. Of these, 1,040 tests were through SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Diagnostic test while the rest were through RT-PCR test. The positive cases out of the total number tested (past 24 hours) translates to a positivity rate of 26.79% and the weekly positivity rate (seven days moving average) is at 15.2%. Cumulatively, 456,392 tests have been conducted in the country so far. On COVID-19 vaccination, a total of 1,600,509 vaccine doses have been administered in the country so far. Cumulatively 956,800 and 359,868 people have received the first dose and second dose of AstraZeneca vaccine respectively whilst 283,841 have received Johnson and Johnson. Over the past 24 hours, 10,109 and 2,913 people have received first dose and second of AstraZeneca vaccine respectively. Cumulatively, 643,709 people are fully vaccinated.

Let me now inform fellow Malawians that due to the progressive increase of cases observed in the country, the Presidential Task Force on Coronavirus, in collaboration with the Emergency Operation Centre on COVID-19 (EOC) has now indicated that the country is now in Level 2 of the pandemic. This calls for stepping up the recommended preventive measures including use of face masks in open places, observance of social distance, frequent washing of hands and use of sanitizers. And as we are going into the Christmas festive season where different groups gather to share some quality moments, the Presidential Task Force has also revised guidelines for public gatherings as follows:

- All religious, recreational and wedding gatherings should not exceed 100 people indoors, and 250 people outdoors subject to the social distancing requirements of at least one meter between persons.
- For sporting activities, the maximum number of 100 or 250 people indoors and outdoors respectively should include players, officiating personnel, officials of participating teams and spectators whilst observing COVID-19 preventive measures.
- All bars and entertainment centres should close by 10pm.
- Night vigils for funerals are not permitted, and indoor attendance should not exceed ten persons at a time.
- Political party meetings are allowed subject to observing the 100 or 250 people rule whilst indoors or outdoors respectively.
- Mobile markets should be held once a week

Please take note that where necessary, an enforcement officer may order a gathering to disperse and may use reasonable force to cause the gathering to disperse. May I call upon all Malawians to adhere to the guidelines on public gatherings to reduce and stop the current rapid transmission of the virus within our communities.

No one is safe until everyone else is safe. Get Fully Vaccinated! Wear Face Mask! Protect yourself. Protect your loved ones. Protect everyone.



**Hon. Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, MP
MINISTER OF HEALTH
CO-CHAIRPERSON – PRESIDENTIAL TASKFORCE**