



### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Towards Peaceful Polls: Malawi Insider Mediators Trained Ahead of September Elections**

**Mangochi, 21 July 2025** – As Malawi prepares for the September 2025 elections, the Malawi Peace and Unity Commission (MPUC) and the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) are leading efforts to strengthen national mechanisms for peace and dialogue. This week, convened an intensive insider mediation training for selected Commissioners and key stakeholders from across the country. The programme, supported by the United Nations in Malawi through the Peacebuilding Fund and implemented by UNDP, UN Women, and UNFPA, aims to bolster homegrown capacity to prevent and manage political conflict before, during, and after the polls.

Held from 21 to 24 July in Mangochi, the training brought together a diverse group of MPUC Commissioners, PAC leadership, and respected figures from religious, traditional, academic, business, and women's networks. These individuals have now been nominated to form a pool of experts who can be swiftly deployed to address electoral tensions and disputes during the upcoming September 2025 elections.

Opening the training, the UN Resident Coordinator in Malawi, Ms. Rebecca Adda-Dontoh, underscored the critical role of neutrality and integrity among mediators during electoral periods: “As we begin this training, let us recommit ourselves to the values that make peace possible — not just in what we say, but in how we live. Because in the end, peace is not only built through dialogue — it is built through example.”

She reminded mediators of the responsibility that lies before them: “This is not merely a hope — it is a responsibility. And you are at the heart of fulfilling it.”

PAC Chairperson, Monsignor Dr. Patrick Thawale, joined the UN Resident Coordinator in urging participants to continue being guided by the key principles of mediation and dialogue facilitation in their work, including mutual trust, accountability, respect, transparency, non-partisanship, integrity and respect for law and order. He also underscored the important role that PAC has played in mediation since its inception, applauded the UN for its commitment to promoting peace and security in Malawi, and expressed his appreciation for the organisation's efforts. "PAC has done so much since its inception in the field and has learnt various lessons. We have also burnt our fingers in some cases, fallen down, and then recovered to maintain our dialogue facilitative role."

MPUC Vice Chairperson, Reverend Dr. Zacc Kawalala, commended the UN for supporting the training, observing that "it will enhance the capacity of insider mediators and everyone involved in elections dispute resolution as we go into the 2025 elections."

This latest initiative builds on previous UN support, through UNDP, for insider mediation training in the lead-up to Malawi's past electoral cycles, including the 2019 general elections. Notably, this year's cohort includes participants nominated by MPUC, which now has a statutory mandate under Section 29 of the Peace and Unity Act (2022) to maintain a roster of expert mediators for peacebuilding assignments, particularly in the prevention of electoral violence and dispute resolution.

After the training, PAC and MPUC will jointly assemble a core team of mediators who will be ready to be deployed to intervene in electoral-related conflict situations, should the need arise.

This initiative is a timely and strategic investment in sustaining peace and conflict prevention and a powerful reminder that Malawians are best placed to safeguard their stability and democracy.

*The Insider Mediation training is part of broader initiatives to strengthen the national peace architectures funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Other key activities include conflict mitigation support, peace pledge campaigns by political leaders, enhancing accountability and human rights oversight, engaging young people in conflict prevention and early warning systems and addressing election-related gender-based violence by creating safe spaces and supporting referral pathways. The project is coordinated under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator and implemented by UNDP as the convening agency, in collaboration with UN Women and UNFPA.*

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