



**GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI  
PRESS STATEMENT**

**COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE AS OF 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020**

In the past 24 hours, Malawi has registered **103 new COVID-19 cases, 40 new recoveries, and five new deaths**. Four of the new deaths are from Blantyre and one is from Kasungu. Let me convey my deepest condolences to the bereaved families. May their souls rest in peace.

Of the new cases, 81 are contacts of confirmed cases and 22 are imported. Of the locally transmitted infections, six are healthcare workers (three from Mzuzu, two from Neno and one Lilongwe), 24 from Blantyre, 20 from Lilongwe, 12 from Mzuzu, five each from Nkhata Bay and Dowa, three each from Neno and Mangochi, two from Kasungu and one each from Chikwawa, Dedza and Mwanza. Of the imported cases, 12 were identified through routine screening at Mwanza border and the other 10 were among 96 Malawians returning from South Africa by bus.

Cumulatively, Malawi has recorded 2364 cases including 38 deaths. Of these cases, 808 are imported infections and 1556 are locally transmitted. Cumulatively, 557 cases have now recovered bringing the total number of active cases to 1769. The average age of the cases is 34.7 years, the youngest case is aged 1 month, the oldest is 82 years and 66.3% are male. The country has so far conducted 20657 COVID-19 tests in 39 COVID-19 testing sites.

Lastly, we would like to clarify few issues on COVID-19 laboratory testing (diagnosis). We have received reports that some private hospitals and pharmacies are providing/selling rapid antibody tests for COVID-19 as a way of diagnosing COVID-19 disease. The Ministry of Health wishes to remind suppliers and service providers that it is discouraging the use of rapid antibody tests as a diagnostic tool for COVID-19. This was communicated to the public in a press release two weeks ago. Currently, there is no approved rapid antibody test for the diagnosis of COVID-19 in Malawi. Rapid antibody tests are used to detect past infection of the virus as opposed to molecular tests (PCR and GeneXpert technologies) that detect presence of coronavirus during the early and active phase of the infection. The Ministry has established 43 testing centres across the country.

**Dr John Phuka**

**Co-Chairperson – Presidential Taskforce**