



A health worker at Mchinji Emergency Treatment Unit attending to a Covid-19 patient © UNICEF Malawi/2020/Govati Nyirenda.

MALAWI COVID-19 Situation Report



Situation in numbers as of 13 January 2021

9,991 confirmed cases
5,852 recoveries
134 Cases lost to follow up
76 Cases still under investigation
275 deaths
97,424 tested samples
3,642 active cases

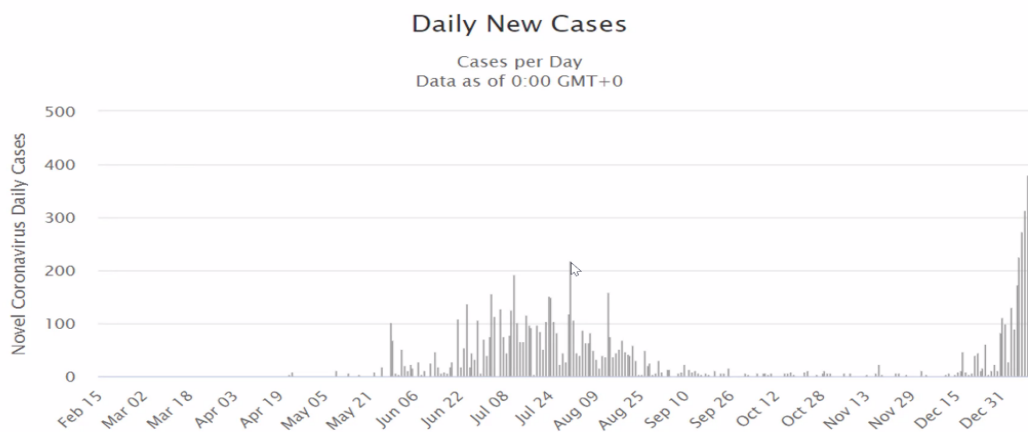
Source: <https://covid19.health.gov.mw/>

Reporting Period: 01-13 January 2021

Highlights

- During the reporting period, the country has experienced a second wave with drastically increased infections. In response the President has declared a state of disaster and UNICEF has stepped up its efforts in public health response with continuity of health, education, WASH, nutrition and protection services.
- UNICEF is supporting the revision of the national response plan in light of the COVID-19 second wave.
- Covid-19 Test Kits Chlorhexidine, Mobile Kits and other supplies valued at USD 629,000, procured by UNICEF on behalf of MOH for the COVID-19 response have arrived in the country. These supplies are pending allocation and distribution to COVID-19 centres.
- UNICEF stepped up efforts in supporting surveillance at all Points of Entry (POEs) including working with government to review the returnee strategy.
- Vaccine deployment plan is well under way with support from WHO, UNICEF and partners. Plans to provide 20% of population (Health Workers, Social workers, over 60 years of age and people with Co morbidities), tentatively to start in April 2021.

Malawi New Cases Epidemic Curve



Situation Overview

As of 13 January 2021, Malawi has registered **9,991** cases of COVID-19 including 275 deaths. Of these cases, 1,844 are imported infections and 8,147 are locally transmitted. 13 January 2021 recorded the highest number of cases (591) in this second wave, with the number of active cases surpassing the 3,000 mark within the past three weeks and the total number of patients admitted at a record high of 138. Cumulatively, 5,852 cases have now recovered, 134 were lost to follow-up, and 76 are still being investigated to ascertain their outcome. This brings the total number of active cases to 3,642.

In the past weeks, there has been a high positivity rate of COVID-19 tests (~15%), with increased admission of COVID-19 cases, even of patients without co-morbidities with the three cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu being the most affected. Two of the largest central hospitals KCH (Lilongwe) and QECH (Blantyre) are already at full capacity and beds are likely to run out in ETUs as well. Health workers infection increased by 15% to 754 (from 642). There is therefore an urgent need to reinforce adherence to preventive protocols.

With the new COVID-19 variant strain, the country currently has no capacity to confirm if there is the South African strain of COVID-19. However, MOH is working on the assumption that some of this strain is circulating in Malawi and samples have been sent to South Africa for gene sequencing.

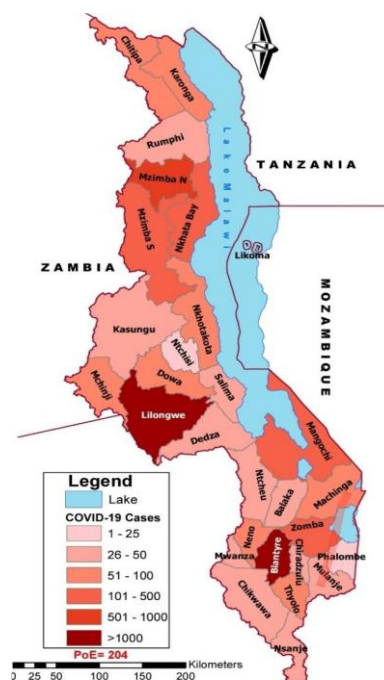


Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing distribution of COVID-19 cases

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF Malawi is working in the following areas of strategic priority against COVID-19:

- Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality
- Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services
- Assessing and responding to the immediate secondary impact of COVID-19
- Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

UNICEF maintains critical preparedness and response operations, including operational humanitarian access corridors and delivery of services in Health, Education, Child and Social Protection, WASH, Nutrition and Communication for Development (C4D). This is being done to prevent and control infections, ensure continuity of education, promote positive behaviours, prevent transmission and ensure the protection of children rights, especially of the most vulnerable ones.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

- Clusters have stepped up meetings with the recent surge in COVID-19 cases for timely and continued response coordination. A [calendar of meetings](#); information [repository](#); [5W](#) interactive dashboard; [financial tracking tool](#) are available to support the coordination efforts.

- The National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee continues to meet regularly to review recommendations from the cluster system.
- UNICEF is the co-lead agency for the Education, Nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Protection Clusters, while also playing a key role in the Health Cluster.
- UNICEF participates in Humanitarian Country Team which continues to provide a platform for cross-sectoral coordination.

Malawi COVID-19 Supply Chain

- Procurement of various COVID-19 response supplies valued at USD 26,000 was conducted in December 2020. The supplies included soap, buckets, sprayers, barrier mesh fence and PPEs (gloves and boots) for frontline workers. Distribution will be organized once the final plan is ready.
- Covid-19 Test Kits Chlorhexidine, Mobile Kits and other supplies valued at USD 629,000, procured by UNICEF on behalf of MOH for the COVID-19 response have arrived in the country. These supplies are pending allocation and distribution to COVID-19 centres.
- On behalf of MOH, UNICEF facilitated the distribution of 9,500 boxes of Sodium Chloride and 4,500 boxes of Dextrose Glucose (500ml bottles) to 666 Health facilities.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality

With the second wave, UNICEF continues to strengthen its on-going technical support to Cluster Coordination including Health, Protection and Social Support, WASH and Public Communication clusters. To enhance district level support and enable local governance structures, UNICEF continues to work with district councils to promote local and district level planning and response. A multisectoral approach has been enhanced for returnees with WASH and Child Protection providing the necessary support. The team is working to update C4D messages/reviews and intensify message dissemination and community engagement.

UNICEF is working with Ministry of Health and other partners to prepare for the introduction of COVAX facility under Gavi Partnership Framework Agreement (PFA). Malawi approved for GAVI Covax facility with preparatory activities and planning underway. UNICEF is part of the planning task force. The type of vaccine for use in Malawi is yet to be determined and the country anticipates having doses of 3.8million. A National Vaccine Deployment Plan is now in place with legal consultation on liabilities for COVID vaccination cleared by the Office of Attorney General. Vaccine deployment plan is well under way with support from WHO, UNICEF and partners. Plans to provide 20% of population (Health Workers, Social workers, over 60 years of age and people with Co morbidities), tentatively to start in 2nd Quarter of 2021.

With the health system overstretched including the rapid response team, UNICEF has identified priority areas that require more work and strengthening. These include: Support to the presidential declaration and respond to the president's plea for support; POE issues particularly challenges around security as well as review the returnee strategy; Revising national response plan fit for second wave; Scale up testing and service delivery including oxygen capacity in Mzuzu; Logistical support to surveillance, airtime, transport, disinfectants and PPEs.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

RCCE Sub-committee under MoH has stepped up plans to continue and sustain positive behaviours amidst the increase of cases. A draft plan of action for the second wave is currently under review by partners. Further, the Public Communication cluster co-chaired by the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Health is set to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the current surge of cases and agree on the way forward. Additionally, UN C4D Coordination group continues to leverage existing interventions to promote engagement with communities and stakeholders.

Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services

Education

Primary and secondary schools in the country reopened as planned on 4 January 2021. Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations that were cancelled in 2020 are currently being re-administered from 5-29 January 2021.

A special Education Cluster meeting was held to discuss the school reopening and the Ministry of Education raised the concern about inadequate classrooms to maintain social distance for learners. The Ministry has requested 1,300 tents for 650 primary schools (2 tents for each school) and 100 tents for 50 secondary schools (2 tents for each secondary school). UNICEF, in collaboration with education cluster members, is supporting the Ministry in mobilizing resources to decongest the classrooms to protect learners. There is however significant pressure from the public and other stakeholders for schools to close considering the recent surge of cases in one secondary school in Lilongwe.

Child Protection

UNICEF also continues to support the provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to affected populations. Around 23,500 people in 7 districts (Blantyre, Machinga, Dowa, Dedza, Mchinji, Zomba, Mulanje) have been reached with community-based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) by District Social Welfare Offices (DSWOs) This includes 484 people reached during the reporting period in Blantyre district. UNICEF has also partnered with Nkhoma Synod, which is one of Malawi's largest faith-based organisations to provide MHPSS. To date, Nkhoma Synod has provided community based MHPSS to more than 1,350 people through 160 pastors and pastors' wives trained on Psychosocial First Aid (PFA).

As co-lead of Protection Cluster, UNICEF continues supporting the government, especially to respond to the increased concerns of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, including facilitating the technical working group, and finalising the resource mapping to identify the funding gap and immediate areas to be invested.

WASH

As a co-lead of the WASH cluster, UNICEF is coordinating a multisectoral approach in collaboration with the Child Protection cluster that is working on addressing the immediate challenges faced with returnees. UNICEF is also in the process of updating C4D key messages with the goal of intensifying message dissemination and facilitating community engagement. Furthermore, UNICEF is currently reviewing IPC/WASH supply requirements and the current status of supplies in the warehouse.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

During the reporting period, UNICEF reached an average of 37,333 people with Covid-19 messages on Facebook and made 21,600 impressions, had 833 profile visits on twitter and UNICEF Malawi was mentioned 36 times in other tweets. Since the posts were relevant to the current situation, this led to more meaningful conversations with the audience which saw UNICEF responding to 11 questions on Covid-19 from the followers. Below is one example of a Top Tweet captured during the reporting period.

Top Tweet earned 2,328 impressions

Before you get out of the house today, check if you have your mask on. Wearing a mask will protect you and others from **#Covid19**.

#StaySafe #COVID19isReal

pic.twitter.com/CNizKsFHIk



Next SitRep: 27 January 2021

UNICEF Malawi COVID-19 website page: <https://www.unicef.org/malawi/coronavirus-disease-19>

Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Target	Total results as of 16 Dec. 2020
Health		
Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	400	800
Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases	400	719
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with PPEs	2,500	4,760
Number of children and women receiving essential healthcare, including prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, essential new-born care, immunization, treatment of childhood illnesses and HIV care through UNICEF supported community health workers and health facilities.	500,000	168,499
WASH		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	5000	6,909

C4D		
Number of people reached with COVID-19 messages on prevention and access to services	8,000,000	12,000,000
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	300,000	1,239,635
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	5,000	16,253
Nutrition		
Number of caregivers to children aged 0-23 months reached with messages aiming to promote breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19 through national communication campaigns	500,000	313,284
Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)"	8,000	11,058
Child Protection		
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	21,000	29,894
Number of children without parental or family care provided with alternative care arrangements	350	1,669
Education		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	2,139,311	1,423,396
Social Protection		
Number of households benefitting from new or additional social assistance measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support	457,000	0