



**RESULTS DECLARATION SPEECH BY MEC CHAIRMAN,
JUSTICE DR CHIFUNDO KACHALE**

**FOR 29 JUNE 2021 FRESH AND BY-ELECTIONS
NKHATABAY CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY
CHIKWEMBERE WARD
LALANJE WARD**

**Kamuzu University of Health Sciences Sports Complex,
Blantyre**

30th June 2021

- My Fellow Commissioners,
- The Acting Chief Elections Officer, Mr Harris Potani and all staff from the Commission
- Representatives of various political parties and independent candidates here present
- Representatives of various Civil Society Organizations
- Distinguished Invited Guests
- Members of the Press
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon

I am grateful to God, the Almighty for allowing us to meet today. On behalf of the Malawi Electoral Commission, I welcome you all to this significant moment, the declaration of the results of the fresh and by-elections, held yesterday 29th June, 2021 in the following areas:

1. Nkhatabay Central Constituency fresh election.
 2. Chikwembere Ward by-election in Blantyre North Constituency.
- And.
3. Lalanje Ward by-election in Nsanje Lalanje Constituency.

The Commission has met since close of polls doing three things:

1. Reviewing the complaints submitted to it regarding polling
2. Reviewing null and void votes brought to the main tally centre by the Returning Officers; and
3. Determining on the results brought to the main tally centre by the Returning Officers, please allow me to give a brief background of the process.

Background to the vacancies

Ladies and gentlemen, the two wards fell vacant due to deaths and these are:

1. Chikwembere Ward and;
2. Lalanje Ward;

Nkhatabay Central constituency fell vacant because of a court ruling on 21st April, 2021 nullifying the 2019 parliament election results and ordered fresh elections.

In accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court, section 63(2)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, section 32(2) of the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act and section 23(2) of the Local Government Elections Act, the Commission had to organise fresh parliamentary and local government by-elections to fill these vacancies so that people in the constituency and the two wards have representation in Parliament and the councils, respectively.

The Commission launched the fresh and by-elections on 21st May 2021 through a televised address and also held stakeholders' meetings on 22nd May 2021 in the constituency and the two wards.

Inspection of voters' register and registration of voters

The Commission opened centres for 14 days for registration and inspection of the voter's register from 26th May to 8th June, 2021 in all the three areas. Those who registered for the 2019 elections in these areas were asked to go and verify their details or get replacement voter certificates if they had lost their original voter certificates. Registration of new voters took place only in the two wards that fell vacant because of death. During this period, the Commission registered a total of 1, 228 new voters of whom 489 were males while 739 were females. The breakdown for each area is as follows:

Ward	New registered voters		
	Male	Female	Total
Chikwembere Ward	136	267	403
Lalanje Ward	353	472	825
Total new registered voters	489	739	1228

Nomination of candidates

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, according to the direction of the court, there was no nomination of new candidates in Nkhatabay Central constituency fresh parliamentary election. The candidates contesting in the elections were

those who stood in 2019. In the two wards, the Commission made available nomination papers from 22nd May, 2021 for aspiring candidates to collect.

On 12th June, 2021, the Commission received nomination papers from the candidates. The Commission met on 14th June, 2021 to review the nomination papers received and subsequently approved all the candidates who had presented the nomination papers.

In the course of the preparations, the Commission was served with notices of withdrawals by the following candidates:

- 1. Justin Prince BANDA, Nkhatabay Central Constituency UTM**
- 2. Helen Getrude MWALE, Nkhatabay Central Constituency TPM**
- 3. Jolly Deraley NYIMBA, Nkhatabay Central Constituency MCP**
- 4. Hussein Miraji Maunde, JAFFALI Lalanje Ward Independent**

These withdrawals did not affect the process of printing ballot papers as they were submitted before the printing started.

Official campaign period

The official campaign period started on 24th May, 2021. As per requirement of the law, campaign ended at 06.00AM on 27th June, 2021 which was 48 hours to the polling day.

The Commission wishes to commend the people in all the areas for maintaining law, order, peace, and calm during the entire campaign period. We did not receive any official complaint in relation to issues of violence and intimidation.

Polling, counting and results determination.

Polling took place on the 29th of June, 2021. Most polling stations opened on time and ran uninterrupted. Counting of results began immediately after close of the polls in the polling stations where polling took place. Results from the polling stations were taken to the Returning Officer where they were collated by constituency and ward. The Returning Officers in turn brought the results here in Blantyre where MEC set the Main Tally Centre. The Commission wishes to thank all political parties and candidates who sent their representatives to polling and tally centres to monitor the counting process.

Their presence enhanced the transparency and credibility of the process. And would like to appreciate the presence of all MEC Commissioners and staff in facilitating the entire process.

Civic and Voter Education

In order to fulfil its mandate of conducting civic and voter education, the Commission produced and distributed civic and voter education materials such as posters, brochures and voter information letters to all chiefs and religious leaders in the concerned areas. The Commission also conducted voter education meetings with religious and traditional leaders mobilizing them to register and inspect the voters' register and also meetings on polling procedures and other related matters. The expectation was that when they go back, the message would trickle down to their subjects and congregations.

The Commission bought airtime on radio and television stations with which they aired mobilization jingles.

In addition, the Commission deployed loudhailer vehicles to conduct voter awareness and mobilise voters to patronize registration centres during registration and inspection of the register and the polling stations on the polling day.

However, the Commission has noted the continued absence of CSOs during by-elections. It should be stated that the law makes voter education continuous. Therefore, it is our expectation that all CSOs and their Development Partners migrate to the electoral cycle philosophy and conduct civic and voter education throughout the electoral cycle instead of when general elections are happening.

Appreciation to stakeholders

The Commission wishes to extend its appreciation to Government through the Ministry of Finance for timely release of funds to conduct the fresh parliamentary and local government by-elections. The by-elections operations have run without any logistical challenges and uninterrupted because funding was provided according to the budget.

The Commission conducted these elections when the world is experiencing third wave of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Commission is therefore proud that despite the Covid 19 pandemic, voters went to the polls with their safety guaranteed as a result of the stringent safety protocols put in place by the Commission. These included distribution of face masks courtesy of the Presidential Taskforce on covid 19 and availability of hand washing water facilities.

Further, the Commission appreciates the efforts by the faith-based organizations and religious leaders who helped in voter education by reading to their congregations the letters that the Commission sent to them with various voter information details.

To our media partners, we say thank you. We greatly recognize the vital role that the media played in sensitizing the public on these elections and publishing accurate and correct information. You have been dear to the citizenry and have helped to bring the Commission to the doorstep of the citizens. We could not have achieved our mandate of disseminating information without you.

The Police should be commended for providing security throughout the entire electoral process. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) should also be commended for supporting training of political party representatives from Nkhatabay Central Constituency where MEC was invited to facilitate the trainings.

The Commission recognizes and appreciates the District Commissioners and other officials from the councils that were engaged as Returning Officers, for a job well done. The Commission also acknowledges members of the District Election Supervisory Teams who managed the elections on the ground. We would also like to thank the Multiparty Liaison Committees, and various political party leaders for the collaboration we had in the preparation and conduct of these elections. The Commission also commends International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) for supporting meetings of Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLC) to address issues of violence.

In a special way, the Commission commends the entire staff who worked behind the scenes to achieve the results we witness today. Our mantra was that while the nation is experiencing the Covid 19 pandemic, as a Commission, we had to keep moving forward to achieve the daunting task ahead of us. And so distinguished ladies and gentlemen, here we are today, the results are evident for all to see. Indeed, the hard work, determination and focus of all the staff coupled with God's grace has paid off.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen it is important to emphasize that we have achieved our successes as a result of the collective effort of the entire team of Commissioners and Secretariat staff.

Finally, the Commission expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all registered voters in the constituency and two wards for turning up for voting. That is the ultimate duty a citizen can perform in a democratic dispensation.

Complaints and Offences

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a requirement that before beginning the determination of the results of an election the Commission must resolve all matters that have been subject of complaints. Complaints to be lodged with the Commission must be in relation to irregularities at any stage of the electoral process. In accordance with section 113 of the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act and section 96 of the Local Government Elections Act only complaints that have not been satisfactorily resolved at the lower level of authority are the ones that must be determined upon by the Commission.

Complaints alleging irregularities and reports of electoral offences must be differentiated to eliminate the impression that the Commission has the capacity to resolve and make determination on each and every complaint that is lodged with it. The Commission has not received unresolved complaints.

Examination of null and void votes

The Commission, having examined the null and void votes, in accordance with section 97 of the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections Act and section 81 of the Local Government Elections Act, the Commission has confirmed all the votes as indeed being null and void.

Declaration of Results

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Commission, I will now proceed to declare the results. The Commission monitored the voting that took place on the 29th June, 2021. We are satisfied that it was conducted in an environment where the electorate were free to elect candidates of their choice without fear and intimidation. We are also confident that the results we are about to announce do reflect the will of the voters.

The Commission, therefore, declares these elections as a credible one that has met legal requirements and international best practices generally in as far as free and fair elections are concerned. The results are as follows:

• Nkhatabay Central Constituency

Nkhatabay Central Constituency had three candidates. With a total of 17, 684 registered voters, a total of **10,648** voters turned up for polling. This represents **60.21** percent voter turnout. There were **41** null and void votes. This

represents **0.39** percent of the total votes cast. The results of the voting are as follows:

1. Gabriel Phillips CHIRWA (M) United Democratic Front (UDF) got **22** votes
2. Symon Vuwa KAUNDA (M) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), got **5,422** votes;
3. Raphael Joseph MHONE (M) Peoples Party (PP) got **5,163** votes.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission declares Symon Vuwa Kaunda who contested as a DPP candidate the winner in the Nkhatabay Central Constituency fresh parliamentary election.

• **Chikwembere Ward in Blantyre**

Chikwembere Ward had six candidates. With a total of 17,959 registered voters, a total of 3,675 voters turned up for polling. This represents **20.46%** percent voter turnout. There were **24** null and void votes. This represents **0.65%** percent of the total votes cast. The results of the voting are as follows:

1. Joyce CHIMKWITA (F) Independent got **177** votes;
2. Flossie Elizabeth HERA (F) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) got **1,681** votes.
3. Nelson KALUMBI (M) UTM got **454** votes;
4. Wyson Dominic MAKUNGWA (M) Malawi Congress Party (MCP) got **583** votes
5. Jacks NKHOMA (M) United Democratic Front (UDF) got **681** votes
6. Benny Samson (M) Independent got **75** votes.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission declares Flossie Elizabeth Hera who contested as a DPP candidate the winner in the Chikwembere Ward by-election.

• **Lalanje Ward in Nsanje**

Lalanje Ward had four candidates. With a total of 17,937 registered voters, a total of **6,935** voters turned up for polling. This represents **38.66%** percent voter turnout. There were **81** null and void votes. This represents **1.17%** percent of the total votes cast.

The results of the voting are as follows:

1. Abdulhakeem Annuary HASSAN (M) Malawi Congress Party (MCP) got **3,448** votes;
2. Fraction LAPOZO (M) Independent got **51** votes;
3. Gerald PAUL (M) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) got **2,756** votes
4. Henry Benford SEDA (M) Independent got **599** votes

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Commission declares Abdulhakeem Annuary HASSAN who contested as an MCP candidate the winner in the Lalanje Ward by-election.

Participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities

The Commission has always maintained a 50 percent discount on nomination fees for women and persons with disabilities and 75 percent for the youth as an incentive for them to participate in elections as candidates. For these elections there were 13 candidates in all the areas of which only two were women. Fortunately, one won.

There were no youths or persons with disabilities participating in the elections as candidates. On the contrary the Commission continues to encounter more women registering and showing up for voting than men. The Commission also observes active participation of the youths during campaign activities.

Political parties and stakeholders need to take some decisive actions to encourage more women, youths, and persons with disabilities to stand as candidates in elections.

Voter turnout during by-elections

The Commission has noted that every time there are by-elections there is generally low voter turnout but in the current case there has been an improvement. I can cite a few examples:

- **On December 22, 2015, the Commission held by-elections in Zomba Chisi and turnout was 36.56 percent**
- **On 1st November 2016 in Mchinji West Constituency and turnout was 28.85 percent**
- **On 17th October 2017, the Commission conducted by-elections in the following constituencies:**
 - **Lilongwe Msozi North turnout was 40.93% percent**
 - **Lilongwe City South East turnout was 18.06 percent**

- **Nsanje Lalanje turnout was 57.17 percent**
- **On 5th March thw Commission conducted by-elections in Liwawadzi Ward in Balaka and the turnout was 22.34 percent.**
- **On 5th November 2019, the Commission conducted by-elections in Matenje ward and the turnout was 19.60 percent**
- **On 30th January, the Commission conducted by-elections in Lilongwe South Constituency and turnout was 46.97 percent**
- **On 10th December 2020 the Commission conducted by-elections in three areas as follows:**
 - **Karonga Central Central Constituency turnout was 80.5% percent**
 - **Lilongwe North West turnout was 49.1 percent**
 - **Makhwira South Ward in Chikhwawa turnout was 33.9 percent**
- **On 30th March 2021 the Commission conducted by-elections in seven constituencies and two ward as follows:**
 - **Karonga North West Constituency turnout was 48.26 percent**
 - **Ntchisi North Constituencyand turnout was 47.40**
 - **Lilongwe Msinja South Constituency and turnout was 46.03 percent**
 - **Zomba Chungalume Constituency and turn out was 52.98 percent**
 - **Chikwawa East Constituency and turnout was 47.22 percent**
 - **Nsanje North Constituency and turnout was 56.33 percent**
 - **Nsanje Central constituency and turn out was 63.56**
 - **Liviridzi Ward and turnout was 25.75 percent**
 - **Chitakale Ward and turnout was 25.49**

Concluding remarks

Allow me on behalf of my fellow Commissioners to extend congratulations to the winners. Please go and deliver the promises made during the campaign period and please celebrate with responsibility. To those that have not made it I say, there will always be next time. Go, reflect, and plan on how to win next

time. I wish to thank everyone for participating in these by-elections and allow me to thank my colleagues in the Commission for all the hard work.

May God bless you.

Bless our land of Malawi.