



MIGRANTS REFUGEES

Migration Profile

MALAWI

A. Executive Summary

Malawi is a landlocked country located in Southeastern Africa, along the eastern part of the Great Rift Valley of Africa. The country gained its independence from the British Empire in 1964, but became a multiparty democracy only in 1994, with the president as the head of state. The country is divided into three areas: the densely populated southern part, the central one which consists of fertile plains and is well-populated, and the northern region which is sparsely populated. Malawi has the third-largest lake in Africa, Lake Malawi. Agriculture accounts for 30% of its GDP and about 80% of its export revenues; it is also the leading activity for foreign exchange. The agricultural sector includes arable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, and the most important export products are tobacco, tea, and sugar.

Despite significant economic and structural reforms to support their financial growth, Malawians struggle to have access to local services. Agriculture remains the main earning sector, employing 64% of the country's working population, but it is an activity vulnerable to external issues, like climate changes and natural disasters. In 2020, the Human Development Index (HDI) for Malawi stood at 0.483, and the country was ranked 174 out of 188, with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of US \$1,035. The Malawian economy has worsened because of the COVID-19 outbreak, by slowing down work and activities all over the country. Therefore, the projected estimated growth of 4.8% in 2020 fell, instead, to 1.0%.

In addition to its multi-pronged challenges and vulnerability to external shocks such as weather, health, the fast-growing population, economic degradation, and low infrastructural development, corruption remains the biggest problem in the country. In 2020, Transparency International ranked Malawi as the 129th economy out of 180 countries. This bleak economic situation certainly increases in Malawians the desire to emigrate; in fact, almost 45% of them consider emigrating a real need and make preparations to leave their country. Two-thirds (65%) of potential emigrants think that their best option is moving to South Africa.

B. Country Profile

I. Basic Information

Previously known as a British protectorate called Nyasaland, Malawi is a landlocked country, stretched in Southeastern Africa in the Great Rift Valley on the western shore of

Lake Nyasa, commonly referred to as Lake Malawi. It is bordered by Tanzania to the north and north east, Zambia to the west, and Mozambique to the east, south, and south east. The country covers an area of 118,484 sq. km, with an estimated dense population of 18.6 million people I would add the year for the estimate. The nation is divided into three main regions: Northern, Central, and Southern. English and Nyanja are its official languages, and its capital city is Lilongwe. Malawi is a multi-ethnic country, made up of many groups, like Chewa, Yawo, Tumbuka, Lhomwe, Tonga, Nkhonde, Ngoni, Sena, Asians, and Europeans. Malawi's economy is based predominantly on subsistence farming and small-scale fisheries. Most of the people are Protestant (55%), followed by Roman Catholic (20%), Muslim (20%), indigenous beliefs (3%), and others (2%).

II. International and Internal Migrants

Malawi is considered one of the least urbanised countries in Africa, even though it currently has the highest growth of urban population. Many Malawians (84%) still live in rural areas, and even internal migrants prefer moving into other rural areas. However, internal rural-to-urban migration, especially for economic reasons, has been increasing steadily at 4.1% per annum. Because of economic activities in the South like large fisheries and fish farms in the Southern shores of Lake Malawi, and the massive agricultural investment policy launched by the National Government, the Southern District represents the most attractive destination for internal migrants. Even in the North, there is also a growing number of internal migrants. Demographically, internal migrants are equally balanced between men and women; but while most men are moving for work, most women do it because of marriage. Actually, there is a growing number of marriage-related migrants.

By mid-year 2020, the international migration stock for Malawi stood at 1% of the whole population (191,400), while the total number of emigrants stood at 311,100, culminating in a net migration of -80.3 thousand. The percentage of female migrants in the international stock was 51.1%, indicating an increase in the feminisation of migration in Malawi.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

In 1990, half of all Malawian emigrants lived in Zimbabwe, followed by Zambia (14%), and South Africa (11%). However, because of the subsequent adverse economic situation in Zimbabwe and the end of hostilities in Mozambique, by 2015 the share of Malawian immigrants in Mozambique rose from 2% to 25% (77,488). In the same year, the share of Malawians living in other African countries was as follows: Zimbabwe 102,849, South Africa 76,605, Zambia 11,258, Tanzania 6,907, and Botswana 4,596. Outside Africa, Europe hosts about 19,557 Malawians, mostly in the UK (17,871), while Canada and Australia are home to 981 and 1,266 Malawians respectively.

High population growth, large unemployment rate, and low salaries for professionals within the region make the emigration of skilled professionals particularly attractive for young people in Malawi. The country loses more nurses than the ones it trains, causing a strain on the local health system and hindering its chances to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals plan. Some estimates showed that Malawi trains 60 nurses a year, but loses at least 100 of them during the same period of time, and more than half of them go to the United Kingdom. The country at one point had vacancies in all nursing and clinical

cadres with a 75% vacancy rate, but only 48% of targeted clinical officers and 40% of targeted nurse-midwife cadres were filled. Until 1991, the Malawian doctors who emigrated were almost entirely those who stayed after training in OECD countries, because of lack of training facilities in Malawi. Even with the creation of the Malawian medical training schools, this phenomenon has not stopped. In 2002, 59% of the 493 doctors born or trained in Malawi were working abroad, causing a massive shortage of medical doctors, especially in rural hospitals. Although more than 80% of Malawians lived in rural areas, the disparity in staff distribution was huge between urban and rural areas. Half of the Malawian doctors worked in central hospitals, and out of 23 district hospitals 16 of them operated without a doctor, prompting the government in 2004 to declare a “human resource crisis” to put a stop to this problematic issue. Apart from medical practitioners emigrating, there is a growing number of academic professors and researchers leaving the country as well. Drawing from the administrative records of the Chancellor College University in Malawi, in 20 years from 2019 at least 67 members of the academic staff would have migrated. Despite the absence of reliable data of all skilled Malawians living abroad, the Afro Barometer in its analysis projects that, of the 45% of Malawians contemplating a relocation abroad, half of them with a post-secondary education would like to emigrate to Europe and/or North America.

IV. Forced Migrants (internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, and refugees, climate displaced people)

The most recent published data indicates that in 2019 there were 150 internally displaced persons in Malawi because of conflicts and violence, and in 2020 their number grew to 29,000 as a result of natural disasters. In 2018, a weather-related storm displaced 210 people in Mzimba, 2000 in the Southern Region (Chikwawa and Phalombe districts), and 530 of them in Mulanje. Floods also internally displaced 820 people in Karonga, 1,900 in Salima, Phalombe, and Karonga, 270 in Chikwawa and Lilongwe, 6,500 in Nkhotakota, 990 in Karonga, 74 in Nansenga, Chikundo, and Chipoka villages, and in addition heavy rains and flash floods displaced 110 people in Mzimba and 2,000 more in the Southern Region (Balaka, Mangochi). In 2019, the Riverine flood internally displaced 180 people in Lilongwe. Floods also pushed out of their area 5,100 people in Chikwawa in the Southern Region, 860 in the Central Southern Region, and landslides in Rumphi 8 people, while a storm in the Southern Region (Machinga) displaced 490 people. In 2020, flash floods internally displaced 260 people in the Central Region of the Ntcheu district, 900 in Mchinji, and 160 in the Southern Region of the Neno district. In the same year, floods internally displaced 1,600 people in the Southern Region (Chikwawa, Nsanje districts), 9,200 in the Northern Region (Karonga), 2 persons in Lilongwe, 9,500 in the South Region (Thyolo), and 5,000 in the Central one (Ntcheu district).

As of May 2021, there were 52,258 refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi, coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (31,551), Burundi (11,241), Rwanda (6,939), Mozambique (4), and 2,523 more from other nationalities. Malawi has an encampment policy, and all refugees and asylum seekers are hosted in the only existing camp, the Dzaleka refugee camp. This camp, initially designed for 10,000 people, now has more than 48,000 people, posing serious health risks. Malawi is also a transit route for migrants intending to reach South Africa, mainly young males. Some of the challenges refugees face in the Dzaleka refugee camp are lack of freedom of movement, poor sanitation, and congestion. Although

refugees experience some obstacles, the government of Malawi grants voting rights to foreigners, including refugees after seven years of residence.

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is an area of concern in Malawi, that was ranked a tier 2 country in the 2000 Trafficking in Person Report, as Malawi does not meet the minimum standard for the elimination of human trafficking activities. Malawi is considered a source, transit, and destination country for victims of human trafficking. In 2020, the government of Malawi identified 140 trafficking victims, of whom 65 were children and 75 adults. Traffickers usually exploit family members from the Southern part of the country to the Central and Northern Regions, forcing them to labour in agriculture, goat and cattle herding, begging, fishing, brickmaking, and recently others have been coerced into stealing. Exploitation outside the family involves fraudulent recruitment of people, connected often to physical or sexual abuse. Traffickers typically lure children in rural areas by offering employment opportunities, clothing, or lodging, for which they are sometimes charged exorbitant fees resulting in labour and sex trafficking coerced through debts. Malawian victims of trafficking have been identified in South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Criminal networks are active in the Dzaleka refugee camp, where vulnerable men, women, and children are being exploited for profits within the camp itself or trafficked into other countries in Southern Africa for forced labour and/or prostitution. The government launched the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the National Referral Mechanisms (NRM), referring all victims to non-governmental organisations where they receive counselling, medical care, food, and livelihood training.

VI. National Legal Framework

At the regional level, Malawi is a Member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), handling the movement of people within the region and ultimately removing obstacles to the free movement of goods and services, as well as of capital and labour. Malawi is also a member of the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) which adopted the Protocol of the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, and the Rights of Establishment and Residence.

In 1965, Malawi ratified the 1949 ILO Migration for Employment Convention. In 1987, it also adhered to the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, the 1967 Refugee Protocol, and the 1975 ILO Migrants Worker Convention. The country ratified the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, through which the refugee definition of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention were incorporated into the country's 1989 Refugee Act. In 1991, the country ratified the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1990 UN Migrant Workers Convention. Malawi is also a signatory to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. In 2015 Malawi adopted the Trafficking in Persons Act, which criminalises sex and labour trafficking. In 2018, the Government of Malawi agreed to roll out the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (GRRF) under the 2016 New York Declaration which enhances the harmonious co-existence of refugees and asylum seekers with nationals. Despite its enrollment, the government is not implementing the five key

pledges made during the GRRF Submit, in order to achieve the goal of facilitating the integration of refugees and asylum seekers within communities through the policy frameworks.

VII. Main Actors

The State

The frontline national departments dealing with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and other categories of migrants in Malawi are the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Immigration Department, the Malawi Police Services, the Prison Services, the Ministry of Gender, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Through the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Immigration Department provides services to the general public in areas of border control, issuance of travel documents, residential and work permits, visas, and citizenship to eligible persons. The Malawi Police and Prison Services have records of migrants arrested and imprisoned for law infringement. The Ministry of Gender handles cases of minors who are separated, unaccompanied, smuggled, and vulnerable women migrants. The Foreign Affairs Ministry deals with the diaspora.

The Catholic Church

There are currently 8 dioceses in Malawi: 2 archdioceses in Blantyre and Lilongwe, and 6 dioceses in Chikwawa, Deza, Mangochi, Karonga, Mzuzu, and Zomba. The Catholic Church is committed to providing social services to all who live in Malawi, especially in educational institutions and hospitals. From a non-partisan perspective, the Malawian bishops played a pivotal role in ushering the democratic rules in the country, thanks to their pastoral letter "Living our Faith" to promote the development of a representative democracy that Malawi enjoys today.

Bishops have entrusted their pastoral services to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), which has been very active in the Dzaleka refugee camp. However, since 2019 the Commission has not done any specific activity on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Catholic Church runs several projects that cater to the needs of refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs in collaboration with various organisations, like the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), the Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM), and the Catholic Relief Service. In Malawi, JRS educates more than 5,000 children in the Dzaleka refugee camp in the pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools. JRS also offers pastoral and psychosocial programmes to refugees requiring support for mental traumas and other livelihood programmes for adults. In a move to empower refugee girls, increase their access and improve the quality of their education, security, and overall well-being, JRS Malawi launched the Naweza "I CAN" Project. In its educational drive, JRS and other partners also offered a digital training program in the Dzaleka refugee camp, allowing students to participate in online classes and ensuring the safety of partners and participants. In the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak in Malawi and because of the detection of cases in the camp, JRS has promoted awareness campaigns and, together with partners, has mounted water points and placed hand soaps in strategic areas of the camp.

Apart from JRS, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is also addressing the issue of environment and climate change. The Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development (JCED) in Malawi runs its programmes in Lilongwe and Kasungu. In these two places, Jesuits work with local communities and promote the protection of the natural environment, as well as the creation of sustainable livelihoods. Even though JCED does not work directly with the environment of refugees or displaced people, its projects aim to build resilient and sustainable communities. By doing so, JCED prevents people that depend on agriculture to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate breakdown. Thanks to its activities in the country, JCED won the 2020 Misesan Cara Climate Action Award.

Natural disasters, for example, the Tropical Cyclone Idai that ravaged parts of Malawi, caused the internal displacement of people, with subsequent food, water, and shelter shortages. CRS with other partners in Malawi worked quickly and provided necessary support to those being affected. Currently, CRS is offering food security programs in partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID), emergency response, water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) assessments, and capacity-building activities funded by public and private donors throughout the 8 Malawian dioceses.

Caritas was established in Malawi in 1984. It was renamed CADECOM (Catholic Development Commission) in 1999, changing its image from a relief organisation to a development agency; however it is still a member of Caritas Internationalis. Its mission is to create awareness and empower disadvantaged men, women, and the youth through a participatory development-driven approach. Its programs involve disaster risk reduction, integrated food security, water, and sanitation projects.

International Organisations and other organisations

The key international organisations dealing with migration-related issues include the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Since 2014, IOM has been very active in Malawi. It has contributed enormously to the government of Malawi's effort to manage migration through a large variety of projects and programs, which include, among other actions, helping the government to develop the first-ever migration profile, assisting in the voluntary return and reintegration of Malawians, refugee resettlement, migration and health, combating trafficking in persons and human smuggling. UNHCR supports the government in the refugee response plan. Some of the UNHCR's main activities assisting refugees in Malawi are in the areas of education, health, community empowerment, and self-reliance. Other migration-related United Nations agencies in Malawi include Plan International that advances children's rights and equality for girls including refugees, the World Food Programme (WFP) that works to achieve and maintain food security among refugees, transitioning from monthly food distribution to cash-based transfers, and the Moravian Church that is present in the Dzaleka refugee camp, providing, for example, food relief parcels.

'There is Hope' is a locally-based NGO, which through education scholarships, advocacy, social enterprise, leadership development, and vocational training provides assistance to refugees and members of their host communities to overcome poverty and become

self-reliant. Through advocacy and lobbying, civic education, training, capacity building, networking and research, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) creates a legally and socially accepting environment where minority groups like refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants have an improved livelihood in Malawi.

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