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MALAWI DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE FACT SHEET

OVERVIEW

Malawi's landmark 2020 election and peaceful transition of power created enormous optimism for Malawi's democracy and development. The realities of poverty, weak governance, and entrenched corruption, however, did not disappear with the election, and Malawian citizens continue to struggle to access public services and meet basic needs. The United States works alongside the Government of Malawi and civil society to strengthen accountability and effectiveness in the public sector so that democracy delivers for Malawians. This means providing high-quality public services, efficiently using limited public resources, preventing and penalizing corruption, and safeguarding human rights. We partner with Malawian institutions to strengthen democratic processes such as elections and legislation, and tackle governance issues that affect sustainable development in the health, education, agriculture, and natural resource management sectors.

APPROACH

Malawi's efforts to build a vibrant democracy are challenged by slow economic growth, limited educational opportunities, and basic concerns such as health and food security that prevent citizens from effectively engaging with the government. USAID works with national and local government institutions, Parliament, and independent agencies to identify cost-effective and evidence-based approaches to

strengthen democracy, protect human rights, and support local governance. Our assistance builds professional skills and introduces advanced techniques among officials in public administration, law enforcement, and other governance-related fields, while emphasizing transparency and accountability. USAID also supports Malawian civil society organizations to advocate for policy reforms, monitor government performance more effectively, and enhance citizen agency and contribution. As corruption erodes public trust and exacerbates resource scarcity, USAID supports Malawian institutions to prevent and combat such abuses.

- USAID partners with the UK to support Malawian law enforcement to investigate and prosecute complex financial crimes and return illicitly obtained resources to Malawian citizens.
- USAID supports Parliament to strengthen the ability of key committees to legislate and conduct oversight, and to constructively engage with independent oversight agencies and the public to increase accountability and fight corruption.
- USAID partners with government institutions and communities to address bottlenecks to effective service delivery, focusing on human resource management, public financial management, and policy implementation.
- USAID supports Malawian civil society organizations to counter trafficking in persons, develop the capacity of local organizations, engage citizens in community development, and confront early child marriage.

KEY RESULTS

- USAID's partners have trained more than **80** Malawian civil society organizations in the past five years, enhancing their ability to effectively drive change in their communities and expanding opportunities for new partnerships. Following USAID's support, local partners have mobilized more than **\$29 million** for their respective initiatives.
- During the 2020 tripartite elections, USAID partnered with the European Union to deploy more than **6,000** observers across the country and trained **250** political party master trainers that fielded thousands of election monitors. These robust observation efforts strengthened confidence in the process and fostered widespread acceptance of the results.
- USAID and UK partners have advised Malawian law enforcement in developing a coordinated strategy and establishing an Asset Forfeiture Unit. This has facilitated the seizure of **\$150,000** from illicit gains and the freezing of more than **\$3 million** of property from suspected graft.
- USAID's support has helped Malawian counterparts to advance more than **120** laws, policies, regulations, and administrative procedures that strengthen the integrity of the electoral system and parliamentary oversight, foster openness and transparency, improve accountability in the public service, tighten financial reporting requirements, and devolve responsibilities to local authorities.
- USAID's support has enabled local authorities to nullify more than **200** child marriages—allowing children to return to school—and supported **44** human trafficking court cases that freed **277** survivors and led to **29** convictions.