



**REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**SPECIAL ADDRESS BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY**

**DR. LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

**DELIVERED**

**AT KAMUZU PALACE**

**ON**

**12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2021**

**Fellow Malawians,**

**We presently find ourselves in one of the darkest hours in our nation's history. Since the start of this new year 11 days ago, the number of people confirmed to be newly infected has exceeded 2500, pushing the total number of confirmed cases past 9000, of which more than 7000 have been local transmissions.**

**While we thank the mercy of God and the efforts of our health workers for the recovery of close to 6000 people so far, we nonetheless and understandably mourn the deaths of over 235 of our compatriots. The fact that over 20 percent of these deaths, approaching 50 in number, have occurred in the eleven days of this new year alone is not only devastating, but an indication that we have entered the eye of this pandemic's storm. In fact, this new wave of the coronavirus has resulted in**

**death among us every day of this year except one. This morning alone, Covid-19's crusade of death claimed the lives of two high-ranking government officials, Honorables Lingson Belekanyama and Muhammad Sidik Mia, who were serving in my Cabinet as Ministers of Local Government and Transport respectively. We all feel this as an incalculable loss and our grief and devastation in the wake of these deaths cannot be measured. May I ask that we all stand and observe a moment of silence.**

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**May their souls rest in peace.**

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**Fellow Malawians,**

**In view of the souls we have lost to Covid-19 and the rising tide of the pandemic's rampage against all of us, I have issued a number of directives in exercise of powers bestowed upon me by the Constitution of Malawi:**

**1. I have directed the Secretary to the President and Cabinet to ensure that all national flags fly at half-mast across the country in observance of a three-day period of national mourning for the government officials and citizens we have lost to this pandemic.**

**2. In accordance with Section 32(1) of the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (1991), I declare a state of national disaster in respect of all the districts of the country with effect from today, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021. I, therefore, appeal for more assistance from the international community, relevant United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector for uncommon contributions towards the resources needed to meet the present challenge of the pandemic. Such donations in cash or in-kind should be sent to the Commissioner of Disaster**

**Management Affairs in my office, on Private Bag 336,  
Lilongwe 3.**

**This declaration of a state of national disaster is but a first step towards a possible declaration of a state of emergency subject to consultation with and approval from the Defense and Security Committee of the National Assembly as stipulated in Section 45 of the Constitution.**

- 3. I have called for an emergency meeting of the Presidential Taskforce on Covid-19, which has thus far done a commendable job of providing expert guidance on our fight against the spread of this virus. The emergency meeting will explore additional measures to be effected immediately in view of my declaration of a state of national disaster across the country. Additionally, that meeting will establish a method for**

**measuring and declaring the shifting severity of the pandemic by the use of numerical levels, with preventive and curative measures stipulated for each level to guide public awareness and behavior. I want to assure you all that the full weight and authority of my office will be brought to bear on the Taskforce's interventions and regular public updates on what has been done, what is being done, and what is yet to be done in our fight against this invisible enemy. This taskforce has my full support and participation, and I expect that it will have the full cooperation of all citizens.**

**4. I have directed the Ministers of Health, Homeland Security, Education, Civic Education, Local Government, Justice, and Information to work together with the Vice-President in reviewing our Covid-19 guidelines for curbing the spread of the virus and recommend to the Covid-19 Taskforce under my**

**command any amendments to be made to those guidelines and the enforcement of the same.**

**Fellow Malawians,**

**I know that you feel dismayed by this evil. I know that together, we are a nation in mourning. I know that you are frightened. I know that you feel helpless and under siege. I know that this pandemic has touched all of you with levels of pain and anguish too deep to describe.**

**But I want you to know that we as a people have what it takes to not just survive this, but to defeat it. It is no accident that of all the nations in the world, it is this nation that God chose to be our home. It is no accident that God chose us to be Malawians on this side of heaven. We were born in this nation for such a time as this, and we must rise together as one army to fight off this enemy. We must rise together to do what the**

**health experts have been telling us to in order to stay this tide. We can do it and we must do it.**

**Each one of us must care for the health of his neighbor.**

**Each one of us must wear a mask in public, must wash**

**hands before entering any building, must keep a**

**distance from others to avoid infection, and must avoid**

**crowded places at all cost. None of us is safe, so that**

**means each of us must be vigilant. We cannot afford to**

**have even one person, or one household, or one village,**

**or one city, or one boarder, relax the new measures. We**

**are fighting for our very lives and for the future of our**

**nation and its economy. It is a fight we must win, for**

**to be Malawian is to be a fighter until victory is**

**secured.**

**I promise you, my people, as long as there is breath in**

**my lungs and strength in my body, I will see to it that**



**we rise from these ashes with new strength. Come what  
may, we shall overcome.**

**May God bless you and God bless Malawi.**