

MALAWI

Date of Elections: May 24, 1976

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the popularly chosen members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Malawi, the National Assembly, is composed of 85 members with 5-year terms of office. Of this total, 70 members are elected and 15 are appointed by the President of the Republic in order to enhance the representative character of the Assembly, or to represent particular minority or other special interests in the Republic.

Electoral System

All citizens at least 21 years of age who have resided in Malawi for a continuous period of two years and who are ordinarily resident in a constituency, or were born, are employed, or carry on a business there, may vote in this same constituency for members of the National Assembly, if registered. The insane, persons under sentence of death and those convicted of offences connected with elections are disqualified for registration as voters.

Electoral registers are drawn up on the constituency level. Voting is not compulsory.

Citizens having attained the age of 25 years who are able to speak and read the English language well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly, are registered electors, and are members of the Malawi Congress Party are qualified to be elected as members of the National Assembly. Undischarged bankrupts, persons under sentence of death or imprisonment and persons under allegiance to a foreign State are disqualified from membership.

To be nominated, a candidate must be supported by at least two voters registered in his constituency. There is a limit of five candidates per constituency. District conferences of the Party prepare the lists of candidates. Whoever receives the most votes in each one of the 70 single-member constituencies is declared elected.

A by-election is held to fill any elective seats of the National Assembly falling vacant between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On March 9, 1976, President of the Republic Banda announced that Parliament would be dissolved on April 17. In the same speech, he pointed out that, for the fourth successive year, Malawi had a surplus State budget.

In accordance with past practice, all the candidates for the National Assembly proposed by the people were submitted for consideration by the President. The latter then selected one candidate per constituency; each belonged to the Malawi Congress Party, the country's sole political organization, founded in 1959. All Party candidates for election were therefore returned unopposed. President Banda appointed a new Cabinet on May 31.

Statistics

1. Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

T. tuj i „ Political Group	Number of seats
Malawi Congress Party.	85