

MALAWI

Dates of Elections: 26 and 27 June 1992

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Malawi, the National Assembly, is composed of 141 members elected for 5 years and any number (currently 10) of additional members 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 convicted of crime, undischarged bankrupts and persons owing allegiance to a foreign State are disqualified from registration as voters. Electoral registers are drawn up at 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, registered electors, and members of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) are qualified to be elected as members of the National Assembly. Persons holding public office and members of the armed forces may not stand for election.

To be nominated, a candidate must be supported by at least two voters registered in his constituency. Candidatures per constituency must range from three to five. District conferences of the Party propose names of candidates for approval of the President of the Republic. Whoever receives the largest number of votes in each of the 141 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.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 16 April 1992, President of the Republic (since 1966) Hastings Kamuzu Banda dissolved Parliament and announced that general elections would be held in May or June. There were altogether 275 candidates for the newly enlarged National Assembly's 141 constituency seats, all from the sole legal party since independence, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). The exiled Interim Committee for a Democratic Alliance, headed by Mr. Chakufwa Chihana, called for a boycott of the poll to back demands for political reforms. On election day, 45 MCP candidates were returned unopposed as an 80% voter turnout was officially reported. A total of 62 incumbents lost their seats.

Statistics

1. Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Political Group	Number of Seats*
Malawi Congress Party (MCP)	141

* Elective seats only.

2. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

Men.	129
Women.	17

** Plus five vacancies.