INTRODUCTION
From the late 15th to the 18th centuries, a prosperous Kingdom of Maravi - from which the name Malawi derives - extended its reach into what are now areas of Zambia and Mozambique. In 1889, a British Central African Protectorate was established, which was renamed Nyasaland in 1907, and which became the independent nation of Malawi in 1964.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Lazarus CHAKWERA
Head of Government
President Lazarus CHAKWERA
Government Type
presidential republic
Capital
Lilongwe
Legislature
unicameral National Assembly (193 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 118,484 sq km
Land: 94,080 sq km
Water: 24,404 sq km
Climate
sub-tropical; rainy season (November to May); dry season (May to November)
Natural Resources
limestone, arable land, hydropower, unexploited deposits of uranium, coal, and bauxite

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
low-income East African economy; primarily agrarian; investing in human capital; urban poverty increasing due to COVID-19; high public debt; endemic corruption and poor property rights; poor hydroelectric grid; localized pharmaceutical industry
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $28.44 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $1,500 (2020 est.)
Industries - tobacco, tea, sugar, sawmill products, cement, consumer goods
Agricultural products - sweet potatoes, cassava, sugarcane, maize, mangoes/guavas, potatoes, tomatoes, pigeon peas
Exports $10.72 billion (2019 est.)
tobacco, tea, raw sugar, beans, soybean products, clothing/apparel (2019)
partners: Belgium 16%, US 8%, Egypt 7%, South Africa 6%, Germany 6%, Kenya 5%, UAE 5% (2019)
Imports $12.82 billion (2019 est.)
postage stamps, refined petroleum, packaged medicines, fertilizers, office machinery/parts (2019)
partners: South Africa 17%, China 16%, UAE 9%, India 9%, UK 8% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
20.3 million (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
2.39% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
Chewa 34.3%, Lomwe 18.8%, Yao 13.2%, Ngoni 10.4%, Tumbuka 9.2%, Sena 3.8%, Mang'anja 3.2%, Tonga 1.8%, Nyanja 1.8%, Nkhonde 1%, other 2.2%, foreign 0.3% (2018 est.)
Language
English (official), Chewa (common), Lambya, Lomwe, Ngoni, Nkhonde, Nyakyusa, Nyanja, Sena, Tonga, Tumbuka, Yao
Religion
Protestant 33.5%, Roman Catholic 17.2%, other Christian 26.6%, Muslim 13.8%, traditionalist 1.1%, other 5.6%, none 2.1% (2018 est.)