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# Insight Bulletin

For People Who Want to Know

NINETY-SEVENTH EDITION

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OCTOBER 2025



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## Editorial

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# WHEN CELEBRATION ENDS, WORK BEGINS



**M**alawi stands once again at the crossroads of hope and expectation. The dust of elections has barely settled, and the people have spoken decisively - removing the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) from the helm of power and ushering back Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika and his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). With that decision came renewed expectations, cautious optimism, and the unspoken question that now echoes across the nation: *Will this new administration truly deliver the change it promises?*

Barely days after his swearing-in, President Mutharika moved swiftly to form what he called a "partial cabinet," a structure that has already ignited political debate. The appointments include familiar faces and loyal allies, but also some notable surprises - such as the return of the Second Vice Presidency, now occupied by Enock Chihana, and the creation of a Minister of State position under Alfred Gangata, a young figure whose appointment the President described as an investment in the future generation of leadership.

The inclusion of ministries like Finance, Economic Planning and Development, and Foreign Affairs in the first round of appointments signals that the President intends to stabilize the economy and reposition Malawi on the diplomatic stage. Yet, the absence of key ministries such as Health, Education, and Agriculture from the initial lineup raises questions about the government's immediate priorities.

Already, small ripples of change have been felt. The price of maize, a crucial staple in every Malawian household, has dropped from a pre-election high of K75,000 per 50kg to around K38,000 - a relief to many struggling families. However, the rise in fuel prices during the transition week has reminded citizens that promises alone cannot sustain livelihoods. The real test lies in consistent policy action and economic discipline.

In his inaugural speech, President Mutharika struck a tone both assertive and cautious. He vowed to wage an uncompromising war against corruption, warning that any public officer caught in graft will be dismissed immediately. "I have come back to rescue Malawians," he declared, "and to lay a solid foundation for the youth of this nation." It is a vision that resonates - but one that demands not only rhetoric, but visible reform.

Malawians, especially the youth, are watching closely. They want to see jobs, access to education, fair distribution of opportunities, and a government that listens rather than lectures. They expect transparency, not patronage; action, not endless speeches. The people have entrusted this administration with the weight of their hopes, and the months ahead will reveal whether this government has indeed returned to serve - or simply to rule.

Beyond politics, October carries a different, yet equally urgent message: it is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. As the nation debates its political future, it must not lose sight of the silent battles being fought in

homes and hospitals across Malawi. Too many women continue to die due to late detection and lack of access to treatment.

The story of breast cancer is not just about disease - it is about resilience, awareness, and compassion. Encouraging self-examinations, routine checkups, and community support systems must remain part of our national conversation. Encouragingly, there are signs of progress: Malawi has witnessed increased advocacy for early screening, and even the private sector has begun stepping forward. Notably, business magnate Dr. Thom Mpinganjira has opened a cancer hospital - a monumental step toward improving access to specialized care in the country.

As a nation, we must understand that the fight against cancer is a collective one, just as the fight against poverty, corruption, and injustice is. Both require consistency, honesty, and shared responsibility.

This month's edition of *The Insight Bulletin* captures that spirit of vigilance and reflection. From the shifting political landscape to the personal struggles of cancer survivors, it calls upon every reader to engage - intelligently, critically, and compassionately.

The questions before us are profound: Can President Mutharika's government rebuild public trust where it has been eroded? Will it transform the energy of political victory into meaningful national progress? And as we observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month, can we as Malawians transform awareness into real action - so that no life is lost for lack of care or information?

Time, as always, will tell. But for now, Malawi stands ready - watching, hoping, and waiting for leadership that matches the people's faith.

- Managing Editor





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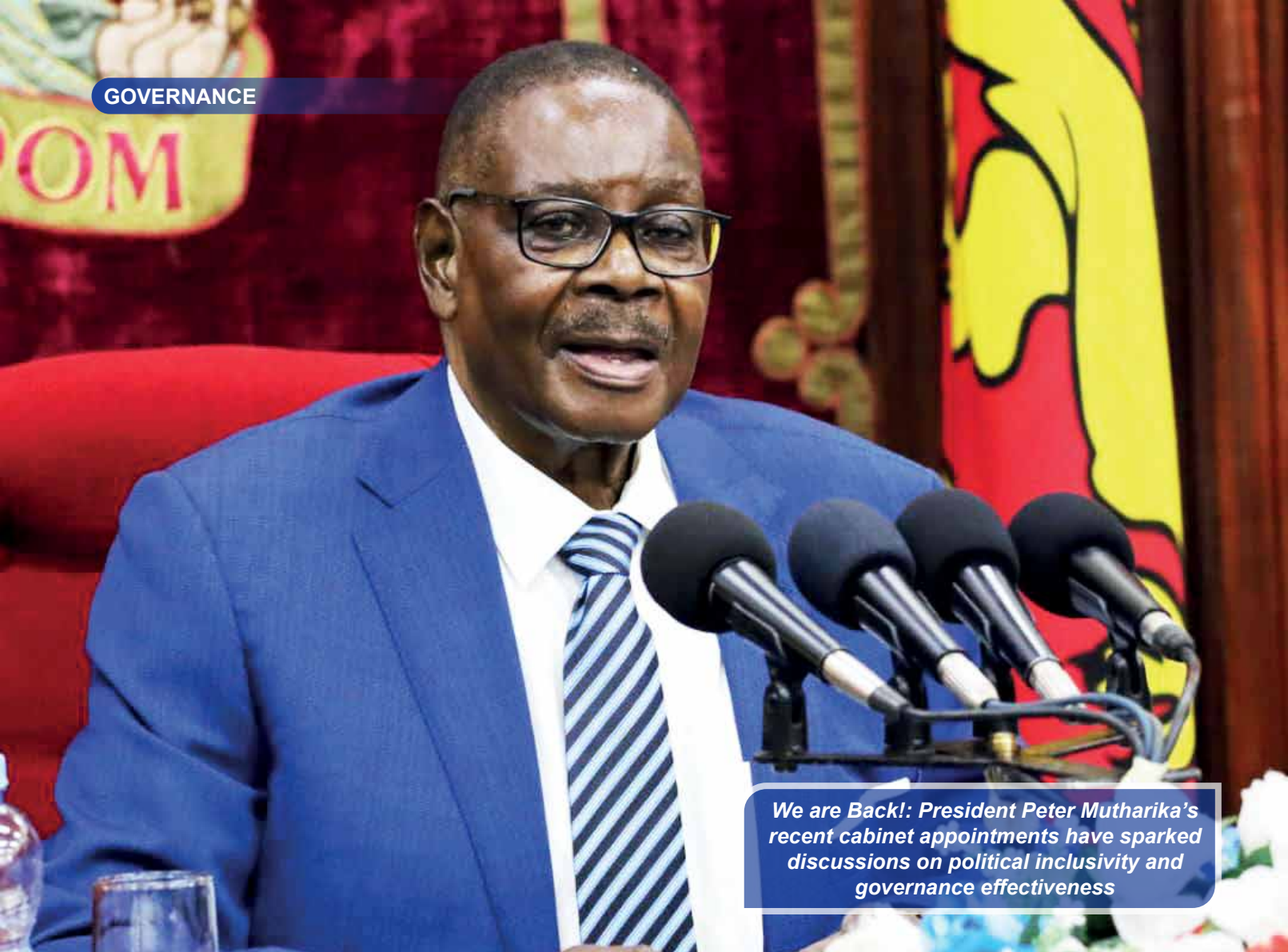
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*We are Back!: President Peter Mutharika's recent cabinet appointments have sparked discussions on political inclusivity and governance effectiveness*

# WE ARE BACK!

By Aubrey Thom Vakhani

**W**hen President **Arthur Peter Mutharika** stepped to the podium at Kamuzu Stadium, the air was thick with expectation. The crowd - a sea of blue - erupted as he declared, *"We are back! The mighty DPP is back!"* It was not just a slogan. It was a declaration of political rebirth, a return of a party that once ruled, was rejected, and has now found its way back to power through the will of the people.

The inauguration ceremony was nothing short of historic. The stands trembled with applause, songs of praise, and chants of victory. Supporters, draped in blue attire, danced and waved flags as the President took his oath of office. The excitement reflected a national mood

of renewed hope - a hope that the mistakes of the past five years would not be repeated.

In his speech, President Mutharika struck a tone of humility, conviction, and determination. He reminded the nation that *"Malawi belongs to its people - not to any individual, tribe, or political party."* It was a statement that resonated deeply with many who had grown disillusioned by years of political division and self-serving leadership.

The President's words set a clear tone for his new administration: a call for unity, discipline, and integrity. He promised to restore order in government institutions, fight corruption relentlessly, and ensure that public service returns to its core purpose - serving the people. "We are not here to feast," he said

firmly. "We are here to serve." The crowd responded with thunderous applause, sensing that a new chapter was indeed unfolding.

Mutharika also appealed for patience. He acknowledged that Malawi's challenges - from economic instability to unemployment and poor infrastructure - are not problems that can be solved overnight. But he assured Malawians that the new administration has a plan to stabilize the economy and revive confidence in government. "Many of the problems we face are man-made," he said. "And it will take men and women of courage to fix them."

The event itself carried strong regional and international significance. It was attended by an impressive lineup of foreign dignitaries, including **Zimbabwean**

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*Palestine on Focus: Palestinians celebrate in Khan Younis, the Gaza Strip, on October 9, 2025 following news of a new Gaza ceasefire deal [AFP].*

# TRUMP'S 20-POINT PLAN: CAN THE CEASEFIRE IN GAZA BE TRUSTED?

*Prepared by Abdullah Bamusi  
Nankumba*

**A**fter nearly a year of relentless bloodshed, former U.S. President Donald Trump has unveiled a “20-point plan” that has led to what many are calling a *fragile ceasefire* between Israel and Hamas. The deal - brokered with quiet diplomacy involving Qatar, Egypt, and the United States - marks the most significant pause since Israel began its latest offensive on Gaza. But beneath the headlines of peace lies a deeper question: *Can this ceasefire be trusted?*

## THE ROAD TO DOHA

According to reports from **Al Jazeera**, the plan was finalized after weeks of high-stakes negotiations in **Doha**, where Qatari mediators worked

around the clock to bridge a gaping divide between Israeli and Hamas representatives. Egypt’s intelligence chief, Abbas Kamel, also played a crucial behind-the-scenes role, shuttling messages between Cairo, Tel Aviv, and Doha.

Trump’s envoys reportedly presented a framework aimed at halting the violence, releasing hostages, and allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza. Yet insiders suggest the talks were far from smooth. Hamas sought an immediate end to Israel’s blockade and the full withdrawal of its forces, while Israel demanded guarantees of security and the disarmament of resistance factions.

Despite these sticking points, the ceasefire was announced after **72 hours of marathon talks**. A senior Egyptian official told Al Jazeera that

the agreement was “the most realistic step toward stability in years,” though he warned it “hangs by a thread.”

## WHAT THE 20-POINT PLAN ENTAILS

Trump’s proposal outlines 20 interconnected steps toward a “comprehensive peace.” It includes a temporary cessation of hostilities, the establishment of safe humanitarian corridors, and a mechanism for prisoner exchanges. It also proposes an international reconstruction fund - heavily financed by Gulf states - to rebuild Gaza’s shattered infrastructure.

Perhaps most controversially, the plan calls for the deployment of **international peace monitors**, possibly under the United Nations or Arab League supervision. While this point was hailed by some as



a safeguard, others see it as an intrusion that could cement Israel's control under the guise of security oversight.

Al Jazeera analysts note that while the document offers a structure for calm, it *stops short of addressing the root cause* - Israel's occupation and the Palestinian struggle for statehood. "Without justice and sovereignty," one commentator argued, "peace will remain an illusion dressed in diplomacy."

## THE POLITICS BEHIND THE PEACE

Trump's reemergence as a Middle East dealmaker has stirred global intrigue. Many see his involvement as politically motivated - a bid to reclaim global relevance ahead of the 2025 U.S. elections. Yet even critics admit that his aggressive negotiation style succeeded where others faltered.

According to **sources in Cairo**, Trump's team used economic incentives to push both sides toward compromise. Israel reportedly agreed to ease restrictions on Gaza's borders in exchange for U.S. support in regional defense projects. Meanwhile, Qatar and Egypt received assurances of expanded trade and security cooperation.

But for Palestinians in Gaza, the ceasefire feels like déjà vu. Al Jazeera's correspondents on the ground describe scenes of "quiet grief," as families return to rubble, uncertain whether the bombs will resume. "We've seen this movie before," said one resident in Khan Younis. "They call it peace, but it's only a pause for Israel to reload."

## THE HUMANITARIAN DIMENSION

The humanitarian toll has been staggering. According to the

Palestinian Ministry of Health, more than **40,000 people** - mostly women and children - have been killed since the war began. Al Jazeera reports that over **1.8 million Gazans** are displaced, surviving on limited aid that trickles through Israeli-controlled crossings.

Under the new plan, aid convoys from Egypt are expected to resume full access through the Rafah crossing, monitored by international observers. Yet relief agencies warn that without lasting political change, the ceasefire will only "slow the bleeding."

## A FRAGILE FUTURE

While the ceasefire has brought temporary calm, experts warn that neither side has fundamentally altered its position. Hamas insists on Palestinian sovereignty over Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem - a position Israel rejects.

Qatar's foreign ministry hailed the deal as a "breakthrough," but in Gaza and the West Bank, skepticism remains. Palestinian analysts speaking to Al Jazeera described the plan as "a temporary truce without a horizon." One noted that Israel's far-right ministers are already opposing key clauses, especially those involving international monitors.

Meanwhile, the **United Nations** has called for an independent inquiry into alleged war crimes committed by both parties. Israel's leadership, however, has dismissed the probe as "politically biased," while Hamas insists on international accountability for what it calls "genocide."

## CAN IT HOLD?

The 20-point plan may represent a turning point - or merely another chapter in a long history of failed truces. Its success depends on implementation, trust, and political



**President Trump just announced his 20 point plan for cease fire in Gaza.**

will, all of which remain in short supply.

"Every ceasefire looks good on paper," one Qatari diplomat told Al Jazeera. "But unless Israel ends the occupation and Palestinians achieve justice, peace will always be temporary."

As the world watches Gaza breathe in the first moments of quiet, the echoes of past betrayals linger. For now, guns are silent, but the wounds - physical, political, and emotional - remain open.

Whether Trump's plan marks a genuine path to peace or a carefully staged illusion will be revealed not by signatures on a document, but by what unfolds in the days to come.

**Abdullah Bamusi Nankumba** is a journalist and international relations enthusiast with a focus on global politics, diplomacy, and storytelling. He authors *Focus on Palestine* for *The Insight Bulletin* and created *Transform Malawi*, a television series on urban development. His work has appeared in the German National Archive and at SOAS, University of London. The views expressed in this column are his own.

&lt;&lt;FROM PAGE 6

# WE ARE BACK!

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, the President of Mozambique, the Prime Minister of Tanzania, and several representatives from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and the Frimax Bank. Their presence highlighted Malawi's renewed standing within the regional and global community after a period of strained relations.

At home, the ceremony reflected a rare moment of national unity. Among those in attendance were former Presidents Dr. Bakili Muluzi, Dr. Joyce Banda, Dr. Cassim Chilumpha, SC and Khumbo Kachale, as well as the outgoing Vice President Dr. Michael Usi. The sight of former leaders sharing the same platform symbolized a maturing democracy - one where transitions of power are increasingly peaceful, even if politically charged.

The inauguration followed Mutharika's decisive victory in the September 16, 2025 presidential

election, where he secured **3,035,249 votes (56.8%)** against his main challenger, **Lazarus Chakwera** of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), who garnered **1,765,170 votes (33.0%)**. A total of seventeen candidates contested the election, making it one of the most competitive races in the country's history.

The mood in Blantyre was electric long after the ceremony. The



**Zimbabwean President, Emmerson Nangagwa being welcomed by DPP senior members at Kamuzu Stadium.**

city's streets turned into a river of celebration as the **Blue Alliance - DPP and AFORD** - paraded through the roads. For the Democratic

Progressive Party (DPP), this victory is not only a return to power but also a chance at redemption. For Malawians, it is an opportunity to hold their leaders accountable and demand the delivery of promises made during the campaign trail - jobs for the youth, affordable living costs, reliable electricity, and an end to corruption.

As the sun set on Kamuzu Stadium, one message remained in the hearts of the people: the return of DPP must be different. Malawians are hopeful but cautious. They have witnessed many promises before, and their expectations are higher than ever.

For now, President Mutharika's rallying cry - "*We are back!*" - rings as both a celebration and a challenge. The people have entrusted him once again with the nation's destiny. What remains to be seen is whether this administration can turn those words into action and restore faith in the promise of a better Malawi.



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 TUM Secretary General Charles Kumchenga.

# TUM Slams Government Over Unfulfilled Salary Promises for Promoted Teachers

By Shaffie A. Mtambo

**T**he Teachers Union of Malawi (TUM) has criticized the government for a lack of seriousness in addressing the welfare of educators, following ongoing delays in implementing salary adjustments for promoted teachers.

TUM Secretary General **Charles Kumchenga** said the union is “deeply disheartened” by the government’s silence and slow response to an issue that has dragged on for months, despite repeated assurances that it would be resolved.

According to Kumchenga, many teachers who have earned promotions continue to receive salaries based on their previous positions, leaving them frustrated and demoralized. He described the situation as unfair and particularly discouraging for teachers

serving in rural areas under challenging conditions.

“This has been a long-standing issue, and it is unfortunate that every time we raise it, we only receive promises without tangible action. Our teachers deserve better recognition and respect for their contributions to national development,” Kumchenga said.

The union also expressed concern that, with Malawi heading toward another election period, teachers’ welfare could be used as a political talking point without meaningful follow-through. Similar promises made last year were either delayed or ignored, further eroding morale among educators.

Kumchenga emphasized that the persistent neglect of the education sector reflects misplaced government priorities, arguing that sustainable national progress cannot be achieved

without adequately supporting teachers.

“As we commemorate World Teachers’ Day, it is disheartening to see our educators struggling to make ends meet. This is a day meant to celebrate teachers, but many feel abandoned,” he said.

TUM has called for urgent government intervention to ensure that all promoted teachers receive their rightful salaries and benefits without further delay. The union reaffirmed its commitment to fight for the rights and dignity of teachers, warning that continued neglect of their welfare could lead to unrest and declining motivation in the education system.

Meanwhile, government officials have requested additional time to respond to the matter, citing ongoing administrative processes.

# INSIDE MUTHARIKA'S PARTIAL CABINET: POLITICAL BALANCE OR STRATEGIC APPEASEMENT?



*Mutharika shortly after swearing-in of newly appointed ministers at Sanjika Palace.*

**By Tagamchira Meeklem  
Chiperesa**

**P**resident Peter Mutharika's recent unveiling of a partial cabinet has reignited debates over Malawi's governance structure and the constitutional relevance of certain executive offices.

Among the key appointments are Jane Ansah as First Vice President, Enock Chihana as Second Vice President, George Chaponda as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joseph Mwanamvekha as Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, and Alfred Gangata as Minister of State. Notably, major portfolios such as Education, Health, Agriculture, and Homeland Security remain vacant, with the President expected to complete his cabinet in the coming days.

The appointment of Enock Chihana, leader of the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), as Second Vice President has drawn significant attention. Legal expert Kennedy Osman has described the move as "political appeasement that offers little value to the country's governance." He pointed out that while the Constitution of Malawi empowers the President to appoint a Second Vice President, the provision is not mandatory, and

the position holds limited practical influence unless the President assigns it specific responsibilities.

The appointment of a Second Vice President is guided by Section 80(5) of the Constitution of Malawi, which states:

"The President may appoint a person who is not from the political party that sponsored him or her into office to serve as Second Vice President."

Additionally, Section 80(7)(e) stipulates that:

"The office of the Second Vice President shall not be occupied by a Member of Parliament unless that person resigns from the National Assembly."

The intent behind these provisions, introduced through the Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 38 of 1998, was to promote inclusivity and coalition-building by allowing the President to bring in leaders from other political parties.

The Second Vice Presidency is not new in Malawi's political landscape. The position was first used by Dr. Bakili Muluzi in the mid-1990s when he appointed the late Chakufwa Chihana, founder of AFORD and father to Enock Chihana, as Second Vice President. That move followed a political alliance between Muluzi's

United Democratic Front (UDF) and AFORD, aimed at stabilizing his government and ensuring regional representation. Like today, it was seen as a gesture of political compromise rather than a structural necessity for governance.

Osman also drew comparisons between the Second Vice Presidency and the newly reintroduced Ministry of State, now headed by Alfred Gangata, arguing that both roles exist more for political accommodation than functionality. He explained that the Minister of State would work closely with the President, "running errands and interconnecting ministries," but questioned whether such a position is necessary.

Despite his criticism, Osman urged Malawians to remain patient and observe whether President Mutharika will assign tangible responsibilities to the newly appointed officials. The revival of the Second Vice Presidency—once a symbol of unity under Muluzi's government—now places Mutharika in familiar territory: balancing political loyalty, constitutional flexibility, and public expectations. Whether the move strengthens inclusivity or simply revives old patterns of political appeasement remains to be seen.





# EVERY STORY IS UNIQUE, EVERY CANCER JOURNEY MATTERS

By Patricia Fiwa

October is more than just another month on the calendar - it is a time to reflect on the strength, courage, and resilience of those living with breast cancer. Behind every diagnosis lies a personal journey. Some are short and victorious, others long and painful, but all deserve respect, compassion, and support.

In Malawi, breast cancer continues to affect women from all walks of life - teachers, farmers, businesswomen, and mothers alike. For some, the disease is discovered early, opening doors to recovery. For others, late diagnosis makes treatment more difficult and survival uncertain. These experiences remind us that every story is unique, and every journey matters.

Recently, Malawi has made significant progress in the fight against cancer. In July 2025, the government opened the **National Cancer Centre** at Kamuzu Central Hospital in Lilongwe - the first of its kind in the country. The facility, co-funded by international partners such as the OPEC Fund and the International Atomic Energy Agency, now provides radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and

diagnostics locally, ending years of costly overseas treatment.

This development forms part of the **National Cancer Control Plan (2019-2029)**, which aims to ensure that by 2030, every Malawian cancer patient can access treatment within the country. Former President Lazarus Chakwera also announced the creation of a **National Health Services Fund** to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and address shortages in cancer drugs and equipment.

On the private front, renowned businessman **Dr. Thomson Mpinganjira** has added a major milestone in Malawi's healthcare history by building the **International Blantyre Cancer Centre (IBCC)**. Opened in March 2024 in Nyambadwe, the state-of-the-art facility offers radiotherapy, chemotherapy, brachytherapy, and advanced imaging. The project was inspired by Mpinganjira's late wife, Barbara, whose battle with cancer motivated him to help others receive world-class treatment at home.

Dr. Mpinganjira's initiative complements government efforts, offering affordable services and free cervical cancer treatment to underprivileged women every year.


His contribution has been hailed as a turning point for Malawi's health sector.

Despite this progress, Malawi still records more than **17,000 new cancer cases annually**, with many deaths resulting from late diagnosis and limited awareness. Survivors' stories remind us that paying attention to early warning signs - such as lumps or swelling - and seeking timely medical help can save lives.

Beyond medical care, the fight against cancer is also about how we live and support one another. Eating healthy, exercising, avoiding alcohol and tobacco, and reducing stress help strengthen the body. Equally, community love and encouragement play a powerful healing role for patients battling stigma and fear.

As October unfolds, Malawi joins the world in raising awareness and inspiring action. This month is not about statistics - it's about people. Mothers fighting to raise their children. Young women who dream of long lives. Survivors who guide others toward early detection.

The message is clear: cancer is not a distant illness. It lives among us - but together, through awareness, compassion, and strong healthcare systems, we can defeat it.



## Takaful Islamic

# THE YOUTH AND ISLAMIC FINANCE: A New Generation of Ethical Entrepreneurs

In Malawi and across Africa, the youth represent a dynamic force of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Yet, many young people struggle to find financial avenues that align with their ethical and religious values. Conventional financial models, often reliant on interest (*riba*) and speculative practices, leave young entrepreneurs torn between ambition and conscience. It is in this gap that **Islamic finance and Takaful** - rooted in ethical and faith-based principles - offer a compelling alternative.

Islamic finance is more than a banking model; it is a moral framework for economic activity. Its foundational principles prohibit interest, excessive uncertainty (*gharar*), and unethical investments. Instead, it promotes risk-sharing, transparency, and social justice. For the youth, these principles are not merely spiritual; they resonate with the growing demand for **ethical, responsible, and socially conscious business practices**.

In Malawi, there is increasing awareness of these opportunities. Young professionals and university students are exploring Shariah-compliant financing options to start businesses in agriculture, technology, and services. For instance, FDH Bank's Islamic Window and other emerging Islamic banking initiatives have begun

offering financial products tailored to small entrepreneurs, emphasizing **profit-and-loss sharing** rather than high-interest loans. These platforms provide young people with access to capital while maintaining alignment with their faith.

Takaful, or Islamic insurance, complements this ecosystem by providing a **risk-sharing safety net**. Unlike conventional insurance, which profits from policyholders' misfortune, Takaful pools contributions from participants to support members in need. Young business owners see this model as an ethical alternative to conventional insurance, giving them protection without compromising their beliefs.

Beyond financial mechanics, Islamic finance encourages a culture of **long-term planning, discipline, and accountability**. Young entrepreneurs who engage in Shariah-compliant investments are guided by principles that encourage transparency, honesty, and social responsibility. This approach is particularly valuable in Malawi, where youth unemployment remains high and where ethical entrepreneurship can foster sustainable development.

Education and awareness remain critical. Universities and Islamic organizations across Malawi are introducing seminars, workshops, and mentorship programs to equip

the youth with knowledge of Islamic finance. These initiatives teach practical skills such as business planning, ethical investment evaluation, and compliance with Shariah principles. As a result, a generation of **entrepreneurs is emerging**, ready to blend faith with business acumen.

The broader impact of youth engagement in Islamic finance extends beyond individual businesses. By adopting ethical finance principles, these young leaders contribute to **economic stability, community development, and social justice**. They challenge exploitative financial norms and demonstrate that profitability and morality can coexist. In the words of an emerging Malawian entrepreneur, "We can grow wealth responsibly, serve our communities, and honor our faith at the same time."

In conclusion, the youth of Malawi are poised to redefine entrepreneurship through the lens of Islamic finance. They are proving that business can be both profitable and principled, and that faith-driven financial practices can create **a new generation of ethical leaders**. For policymakers, educators, and community leaders, supporting these initiatives is no longer optional - it is a necessary investment in the country's economic and moral future.





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