

## **General Information & Security Brief -MALAWI**

### **Country Overview**

Malawi, proudly known as **The Warm Heart of Africa**, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. The country is defined by its topography of highlands split by the Great Rift Valley and enormous Lake Malawi. The lake's southern end falls within Lake Malawi National Park. Malawi enjoys political stability and levels of crime are lower than most of its neighbours.

**Capital:** Lilongwe

**Population:** 18.36 million (National Statistical Office)

**Currency:** Malawian kwacha

**President:** Dr Lazarus Chakwera

**Official language:** English

### **Communications**

The country enjoys good communication networks and good mobile phone coverage with reasonable internet speeds. Airtel and Telecom Networks Malawi (TNM) are by far the largest and widest mobile voice and data service providers. All big hotels provide "free" access to data services for using Wifi, so make sure your laptops are Wifi enabled.

### **Costs**

Roaming as in any other country is expensive just as the use of hotel provided phone services. A visitor can however acquire a local line at the airport. It costs approximately a dollar to get an instant connection. This can be done at the point of purchase. The service lines in most cases give you access to data services depending on the type of gadget you use and the data bundle that you choose to buy.

### **Medical Facilities**

The country has relatively good health facilities. Public health institutions usually have good facilities but are at times under-funded. Private institutions while expensive are relatively properly manned and resourced. Two major reliable private hospitals are Mwaiwathu and Seventh Day Adventist hospitals, both located in the country's commercial city, Blantyre.

If you are using international insurance, you will need to first check if it works in Malawi and with which facilities before taking it up. But there are several international health insurance companies in Malawi.

### **Malaria and other Epidemic Alerts**

All cities in Malawi are prone to malaria infections, hence we advise you to take your Malaria prevention pills at least three days before departure or as advised by your doctor and also bring mosquito repellents that may not cause any health issues to your skin. All hotels in the major cities have mosquito nets in the rooms to ensure you are further protected.

### **Laws you must be aware of**

Malawi is one of the peaceful countries in the world, with no record of civil war or anything along those lines. The country also has professional and skilled security agents. However, we simply advise you to observe the laws and enjoy your stay in Malawi.

### **Public Broadcasting**

The country's laws prohibit the unauthorised use of broadcasting equipment. Please make sure you leave behind any such equipment including podcasters. Also avoid as much as possible use of direct satellite phones, VSats and such equipment as these in most cases require licensing.

### **Protected sites**

When taking photos of buildings and features, please observe if there are any restrictions. Certain buildings and features are protected from public photo scrutiny. There are very few such security sensitive installations though. If not sure, please ask first.

### **Flights**

There are daily international flights into and out of Lilongwe and Blantyre cities. Malawi's airspace is very safe with no major air traffic accident in more than 60 years. The country's national carrier although facing major financial problems has a very good safety record and flies into a number of regional routes.