

MALAWI

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exec	exconst	polcomp
0a	MAW	-9	29	7	6	1964	6	14	1993	3	1	1
0b	MAW	-6	1	6	15	1993	5	17	1994	3	2	3
0c	MAW	6	7	5	18	1994	3	25	2001	7	5	9
0d	MAW	4	2	3	26	2001	1	28	2003	7	4	8
0e	MAW	5	1	1	29	2003	5	20	2004	7	5	8
0f	MAW	6	1	5	21	2004	2	5	2005	7	6	8
1X	MAW	6	14	2	6	2005	99	99	9999	7	6	7

PITF Problem Events: none

0a) July 6, 1964 (independence) – Nyasaland (now Malawi) embarked on a slow road to independence beginning in the mid 1940s. In 1953 the British protectorate joined with Northern and Southern Rhodesia to form the short-lived Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which was dissolved on December 31, 1963, when Britain granted Nyasaland self-governing status. Dr. Hastings Banda led the country as its prime minister, representing the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), formerly the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC), which had swept legislative elections in 1961. A new constitution came into force in May 1963 and on July 6, 1964, the country became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth. Under Banda’s guidance, the MCP transformed Malawi into a one-party state in 1966 and in 1971 made Banda “president-for-life.”

0b) June 15, 1993 (referendum lifting ban on political parties) – Banda’s harsh totalitarian rule was undermined by domestic resistance, especially from the Catholic church, and international pressure during the 1980s and early 1990s, pressuring him to issue a national referendum on whether to introduce multi-party politics or to retain the one-party state. On June 14, 1993, the people approved the move towards multi-party elections and, on June 21, against Banda’s will, the MCP agreed to create a multi-party Executive Council to oversee the transition to democracy. Parties were registered later that summer and in November his president-for-life status was repealed.

0c) May 18, 1994 (general election) – On May 17, 1994, Malawi held its first free and fair multi-party elections. President Banda was defeated by opposition candidate Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF). The UDF won 84 of 175 seats in the National Assembly and formed a governing coalition with the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD); the MCP was reduced to an opposition party with 55 seats. Muluzi was re-elected in 1999.

0d) March 26, 2001 (alleged coup plot) – On March 26, 2001, President Muluzi, who was under increased scrutiny over his attempts to stifle the political opposition, ordered the arrests of six people allegedly planning a coup. All six were charged with treason. This represented an escalation of tactics for Muluzi’s government, which was becoming increasingly coercive following the 1999 elections.

0e) January 29, 2003 (legislative defeat of executive) – President Muluzi waged an ultimately unsuccessful campaign in 2002-03 to amend the constitution to allow him to stand for a third term in office, raising fears that he might refuse to hand over power. On January 28, 2003, his

last attempt was stifled by the legislature, when the legislation carrying his amendment was tabled.

0f) May 21, 2004 (general election) – President Muluzi selected Bingu wa Mutharika, a political newcomer, to succeed him as UDF’s presidential candidate in the May 2004 elections. Mutharika’s selection led to a deep rift within the UDF. On May 20, 2004, Mutharika won with 35% of the vote but the election was deemed “free but not fair” by electoral observers, who identified evidence of voter registration irregularities, media bias, and favoritism by the electoral commission. Although opposition parties filed complaints with the courts, pressure to overturn the results was dampened when Mutharika incorporated opposition parties into a governing coalition and began to challenge the policies of his political sponsor Muluzi.

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: February 6, 2005 (party schism)

Brief Explanation of Change To: The increasing independence of President Mutharika from former-President Muluzi and the “old guard” within the UDF, characterized by Mutharika’s anti-corruption campaign, led to a schism within the party. On February 5, 2005, Mutharika left the UDF and formed the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which acquired eighty seats in the legislature by attracting “floor-crossing” parliamentarians, mainly from the UDF. Support for Mutharika was shy of a majority, allowing the MCP and UDF opposition to work together to block the president’s policies. The opposition has acted to block the president’s budget every year since 2005 only to relent in order to keep foreign assistance and government allocations flowing in the severely dependent economy. “Floor-crossing” is explicitly prohibited by Section 65 of the Constitution and this has fueled attempts to initiate impeachment proceedings that have been blocked by the High Court. In return, the government has used anti-corruption proceedings to pressure the opposition, particularly Muluzi.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)* — President Mutharika formed the DPP in February 2005, splitting from the United Democratic Front (UDF) due to a rivalry with former-President Muluzi. Mutharika’s main base of support is the southern region, among the Yao people.
- *United Democratic Front (UDF)* — Former-President Muluzi led the UDF since its formation following the 1993 multi-party referendum. When Mutharika left the party and openly challenged the cronyism of Muluzi and the UDF, the UDF “old guard” attempted to thwart Mutharika’s anti-corruption campaign by mounting a court challenge against the “floor-crossing” by which the DPP was able to gain majority party status and form a ruling coalition. Support for the UDF also is centered in the southern region and among the ethnic-Yao.
- *Malawi Congress Party (MCP)* — John Tembo leads the MCP and was the personal political advisor of former-President Hastings Banda, maintaining the support of many of Banda’s followers from the central region, dominated by the Chewa and Nyanja people.