
MESN Verification of the Presidential Results 2019 Tripartite Election

Issued: At 6:00pm on 27 May 2019

The Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN) is a registered network of 27 non-governmental and faith-based organisations in Malawi. MESN was formed with the core objective of facilitating coordination among civil society organizations engaged in election monitoring, civic and voter education in Malawi and a platform for dialogue, advocacy and lobbying on electoral matters. Since its establishment in 2003, MESN has successfully observed the 2004 and 2009 parliamentary and presidential elections as well as the 2014 Tripartite Elections.

For the 2019 Tripartite Elections, MESN deployed nearly 1,400 volunteers across the country to observe on Election Day. Prior to Election Day, MESN deployed 57 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) to all 28 districts who provided structured observation of the pre-election period as part of its Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) initiative. MESN also deployed 386 observers to all 193 constituencies during biometric voter registration and, subsequently, to observe instances of violence against women in elections (VAWE) under the Gender Elections Engagement Room (GEER).

For Election Day, MESN's observations sought to make the 2019 Tripartite Elections **more inclusive** by giving voters confidence to participate; **more transparent** by providing systematic information on the conduct of the process; and **more accountable** by independently verifying the accuracy of the official results for the presidential election as announced by the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC).

For the PVT, 907 observers were assigned to statistical samples of 800 polling streams and 809 polling stations. PVT Observers arrived at 5:00am and observed the entire process until the official presidential results were announced for the entire polling station. Throughout the day they sent in observation reports in near real-time via coded text messages using their mobile phones. This enabled MESN to provide the nation with the most accurate and timely information on the conduct of voting and counting. Further, MESN's PVT is able to independently verify if the official results for the presidential election are accurate and truly reflect the ballots cast at polling streams and polling stations.

MESN PVT data provided a detailed picture of the conduct of the 2019 Tripartite Election across the entire country. MESN's main findings were:

1. There was a clear improvement in logistics from 2014.
2. As a result of improved logistics, polling streams largely opened on time in contrast to 2014.
3. Voting was largely conducted in accordance with MEC procedures as in 2014.
4. Insufficient logistical preparations and lack of clarity on the procedures and training, resulted in significant delays in the start of counting and the time required for counting, but counting was conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner and

these issues did not appear to undermine the credibility of the counting process. These challenges likely existed in 2014, but were overshadowed by concerns over logistics and the collation of results.

5. Once counting was completed for polling streams, the announcement of presidential results for entire polling stations was transparent and inclusive.

MESN PVT Observers specifically collected data on the participation of party representatives in the counting process at polling streams and polling stations. In particular, PVT observers reported that there were party representatives for Chakwera/MCP at 96% and for Mutharika/DPP at 99% of sampled polling streams for the counting of presidential results. At 96% of sampled polling streams with a Chakwera/MCP party representative, the person agreed with the official polling stream presidential results while at 95% of polling streams with a Mutharika/DPP party representative, the person agreed with the official polling stream presidential results. Further, at 96% of sampled polling stations a Chakwera/MCP party representative signed the official presidential results form while at 99% of sampled polling stations a Mutharika/DPP party representative signed official presidential results form.

The MEC has now announced the official results for the 2019 presidential election. MESN is independently verifying the official presidential results as announced by MEC based on PVT results data from a random and representative sample of 800 polling streams¹. It is at the polling stream where votes are cast and counted. If the MEC's official results fall within the PVT estimated ranges, then MESN's PVT verifies the MEC's official results reflect the ballots cast at polling streams. However, if they fall outside the PVT's estimated ranges then it provides empirical evidence that official results have been manipulated. The PVT sample of 800 polling streams was carefully selected using well-established statistical principles from all the three regions, 28 districts and 193 constituencies of the country. All sampled polling streams were well spread across the regions, districts and constituencies. At the sampled 800 polling streams there were a total of 498,062 registered voters. All PVT Observers were carefully recruited and trained and duly accredited by the MEC. MESN received and verified reports from 99.9% of its PVT Observers. All data was received by the morning of 22 May.

The PVT estimates show turnout should be between 74.9% and 76.1% (75.5% +/- 0.6%). As MESN previously reported, at 24% of polling streams, PVT Observers found there were one or more presidential ballot papers declared "null and void" for which the voter's intention was clear. However, MESN's PVT shows and the percentage of rejected ballot papers should be between 1.5 % and 2.1%. Therefore, this issue did not affect a large number of ballot papers. Further, party representatives overwhelmingly agreed with the results suggesting that this issue, while widespread, did not affect a large number of ballots.

MESN's PVT shows that for every candidate the MEC's official presidential result closely matches the PVT estimate and fall within the estimated range (see Table 1).

¹ MESN employed two representative random samples: a sample of 800 polling streams and 809 polling stations. This statement reflects the data from the sample of polling streams as this is where votes were cast and counted. However, the data from the sample of polling stations is consistent with that for the sample of polling streams giving greater confidence in these findings. Information for the sample of polling stations will be shared in MESN final report on the 2019 Tripartite Elections. The sample of 809 polling stations have a total of 1,332,808 registered voters.

MESN's PVT results data shows:

- Dr. Lazarus Chakwera (MCP) between 32.8% and 37.4%;
- Dr. Saulous Klaus Chilima (UTM) between 18.8% and 21.4%;
- Professor John Eugene Chisi (UP) between 0.3% and 0.5%;
- Mr. Reverend Hadwick Kaliya (Independent) between 0.2% and 0.4%;
- Mr. Peter Dominic Sinosi Driver Kuwani (MMD) between 0.3% and 0.5%;
- Mr. Atepele Austin Muluzi (UDF) between 4.3% and 5.7%; and
- Mutharika between 36.4% and 40.8%.

The PVT estimates, listed above, are consistent with the MEC's official presidential results and therefore, the PVT can independently verify that the official results for the presidential election as announced by MEC reflect ballots cast and counted at polling streams. While PVT does not provide evidence that the presidential results have been manipulated, the PVT results data cannot definitively determine the order for the two leading candidates because of the overlap in the estimated ranges.

Table 1: Comparison of MEC Official Results with MESN PVT Estimates for the 2019 Presidential Election					
Candidate	Party	MEC Official Result	MESN PVT		MEC Official Results and PVT Estimates Consistent
			PVT Estimate	Margin of Error	
Dr. Lazarus Chakwera	MCP	35.41%	35.1%	+/- 2.3%	✓
Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima	UTM	20.24%	20.1%	+/- 1.3%	✓
Professor John Eugene Chisi	UP	0.38%	0.4%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Mr. Reverend Hadwick Kaliya	Ind	0.31%	0.3%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Mr. Peter Dominic Sinosi Driver Kuwani	MMD	0.40%	0.4%	+/- 0.1%	✓
Mr. Atupele Austin Muluzi	UDF	4.67%	5.0%	+/- 0.7%	✓
Professor Arthur Mutharika	DPP	38.57%	38.6%	+/- 2.2%	✓

Based on reports from 797 of 800 of sampled polling streams

Source: MESN

Malawi is a peaceful country and MESN calls on all candidates/political parties and their supporters as well as the public in general to remain calm. If any candidate or political party has any concerns they should raise these with the MEC or through the proper channels provided by our legal system.

MESN will issue a comprehensive final report on the entire 2019 Tripartite Election once all elements of the electoral process, including the resolution of any electoral disputes, have concluded.

Again, MESN would like to thank the millions of Malawians who went out, voted and exercised their fundamental right to vote; the tens of thousands of MEC polling officials who worked long hours to ensure that Malawians were able to exercise their right to vote and more than one

thousand MESN volunteers located in every region, district and constituency of the country who worked tirelessly on behalf of all Malawians, regardless of their political preference, to ensure the elections were inclusive, transparent and accountable.

Signed



Steven Duwa, Board Chairperson
Pan African Civic Educators Network
(PACENET)



Emma Kaliya, Vice Chairperson
NGO Gender Coordination Network
(NGO GCN)



Dr. Fred Mathengere, Board Member
Church and Society Nkhoma Synod



MacBain Mkandawire, Board Member
Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)



Lewis Msiyadungu, Board Member
Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
(CCJP)



Timothy Mtambo, Board Member
Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
(CHRR)



Sophia Nthenda, Board Member
Public Affairs Committee (PAC)



Stoti Watch, Board Member
Muslim Association of Malawi

###

For further information contact:

Steven Duwa, MESN Chairperson 0995 67 43 24

Andrew Kachaso, National Coordinator 0999 86 96 80

Deus Sandram, Media and Communications Consultant 0997 04 19 25

Learn more about MESN:

On our website: <http://mesnmalawi.org/>

On Twitter: @mesnmw

On Facebook: <https://facebook.com/mesnmalawi>

MESN PVT Samples: MESN deployed a total of 907 PVT Observers. Some Election Day procedures take place at the level of the polling streams while others at polling stations. Thus, MESN is employing two complementary overlapping PVT samples – a sample of 800 polling streams and 809 polling stations. The data for both samples is collectively reported by the 907 PVT Observers. Both samples are representative of the entire country and include sampled points from every region, district, and constituency.

Table 1: Comparison of Distribution of All MEC Polling Streams and MESN PVT Sampled Polling Streams by Region and District										
		All MEC Polling Streams				MESN PVT Sampled Polling Streams				
Region		Stations	Streams	RVs	% Streams	% RVs	Streams	RVs	% Streams	% RVs
Central		2,024	4,674	2,920,965	42.3%	42.6%	338	211,518	42.3%	42.5%
Northern		1,373	2,313	1,326,690	20.9%	19.3%	167	96,648	20.9%	19.4%
Southern		1,605	4,071	2,613,183	36.8%	38.1%	295	189,896	36.9%	38.1%
Total		5,002	11,058	6,860,838			800	498,062		
Region	District	Stations	Streams	RVs	% Streams	% RVs	Streams	RVs	% Streams	% RVs
Central	Dedza	237	507	310,159	4.6%	4.5%	36	21,512	4.5%	4.3%
Central	Dowa	206	511	324,563	4.6%	4.7%	37	23,133	4.6%	4.6%
Central	Kasungu	289	560	324,881	5.1%	4.7%	40	23,833	5.0%	4.8%
Central	Lilongwe	571	1,557	1,011,553	14.1%	14.7%	113	73,443	14.1%	14.7%
Central	Mchinji	150	378	242,140	3.4%	3.5%	27	17,144	3.4%	3.4%
Central	Nkhotakota	150	296	178,071	2.7%	2.6%	22	13,043	2.8%	2.6%
Central	Ntcheu	166	367	228,432	3.3%	3.3%	27	16,817	3.4%	3.4%
Central	Ntchisi	122	218	129,863	2.0%	1.9%	16	9,893	2.0%	2.0%
Central	Salima	133	280	171,303	2.5%	2.5%	20	12,700	2.5%	2.5%
Northern	Chitipa	168	202	95,714	1.8%	1.4%	15	6,561	1.9%	1.3%
Northern	Karonga	131	245	146,421	2.2%	2.1%	17	10,480	2.1%	2.1%
Northern	Likoma	8	12	6,975	0.1%	0.1%	1	744	0.1%	0.1%
Northern	Mzimba	563	849	478,327	7.7%	7.0%	62	34,985	7.8%	7.0%
Northern	Nkhatabay	129	198	106,089	1.8%	1.5%	14	7,352	1.8%	1.5%
Northern	Rumphi	108	177	96,635	1.6%	1.4%	13	7,415	1.6%	1.5%
Southern	Balaka	152	274	156,398	2.5%	2.3%	20	10,859	2.5%	2.2%
Southern	Blantyre	196	728	497,481	6.6%	7.3%	53	35,788	6.6%	7.2%
Southern	Chikhwawa	161	407	258,518	3.7%	3.8%	29	18,132	3.6%	3.6%
Southern	Chiradzulu	85	224	145,698	2.0%	2.1%	16	10,581	2.0%	2.1%
Southern	Machinga	181	406	250,831	3.7%	3.7%	29	18,530	3.6%	3.7%
Southern	Mangochi	261	626	402,886	5.7%	5.9%	45	29,930	5.6%	6.0%
Southern	Mulanje	134	422	282,150	3.8%	4.1%	31	20,585	3.9%	4.1%
Southern	Mwanza	42	83	48,306	0.8%	0.7%	6	3,354	0.8%	0.7%
Southern	Neno	69	103	56,061	0.9%	0.8%	7	3,574	0.9%	0.7%
Southern	Nsanje	110	233	145,511	2.1%	2.1%	17	10,756	2.1%	2.2%
Southern	Phalombe	90	257	167,492	2.3%	2.4%	18	11,931	2.3%	2.4%
Southern	Thyolo	176	437	279,284	4.0%	4.1%	32	20,310	4.0%	4.1%
Southern	Zomba	214	501	319,096	4.5%	4.7%	37	24,677	4.6%	5.0%
Total		5,002	11,058	6,860,838			800	498,062		

Note: RV stands for Registered Voters

Note: Excludes 32 satellite polling streams

Source: MEC and MESN