



CfSC

The Centre for Social Concern

Basic Needs Basket

Cost of Living for July 2023



"MALAWI FACES ECONOMIC DILEMMA AS COST OF LIVING SHOWS NO SIGNS OF RETREAT"

According to Centre for Social Concern's monthly Urban Basic Needs Basket surveys done in Lilongwe, Zomba, Blantyre, Mzuzu, Mangochi and Karonga, it indicates that the cost of living still continues to increase, leaving Malawians in an economic dilemma.

Between June and July 2023, the average cost of living has increased by 4.5% from MK378,812 in June to MK395,993 in July. In July, Blantyre has been the most expensive city at MK452,013 while Karonga was the lowest at MK318,599. The main contributor to this increased cost of living is an increase in the maize prices in all the markets we collect data.

*Centre for Reflection,
Research and Action on
Issues of Social Concern in
the Light of the Gospel and
the Church's Social
Teaching*

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Lilongwe cost of living for a household of six people for July 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	34,250	68,500	Charcoal (50 kgs)	40,000	80,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	469	6,566	Protex	925	9,250
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	1,975	12,640	Boom	963	7,704
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	12,375	12,375	Clere Body Lotion	1,350	2,700
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	12,125	9,700	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,275	4,550
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	11,606	11,606
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,513	18,052	Running Water (meter)	8,459	8,459
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	180	8,640	Housing (3 bedroom)	73,695	73,695
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	513	11,543	Sub-Total	197,964	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,100	16,500	Lilongwe Total Basic Needs		
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,158	7,553	448,170		
C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS					
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	788	11,820	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,613	10,839	Secondary (fees) per year		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,294	25,880	44,280		
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,494	11,952	Primary (GPF) per year		
Kitchen Salt	638	638	2,560		
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	250	10,000	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	438	7,008	22,647		
			Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		
			38,184		
			Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		
			20,086		
Sub-Total	250,206		Sub-Total	127,757	

Zomba cost of living for a household of six people for July 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	41,314	82,628	Charcoal (50 kgs)	18,000	36,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	500	7,000	Protex	942	9,420
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,500	16,000	Boom	921	7,368
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	9,000	9,000	Clere Body Lotion	1,271	2,542
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	9,000	7,200	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,571	5,142
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	13,306	13,306
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,500	18,000	Running Water (meter)	12,227	12,227
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	180	8,640	Housing (3 bedroom)	59,827	59,827
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	686	15,435	Sub-Total	145,832	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	714	10,710	Zomba Total Basic Needs		
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,686	5,901	397,826		
C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS					
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	700	10,500	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,000	9,000	Secondary (fees) per year		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	68,771		
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,500	12,000	Primary (GPF) per year		
Kitchen Salt	900	900	9,000		
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	159	6,360	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	420	6,720	49,114		
			Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		
			52,912		
			Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		
			15,185		
Sub-Total	251,994		Sub-Total	194,982	

Blantyre cost of living for a household of six people for July 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	37,857	75,714	Charcoal (50 kgs)	31,071	62,142
Milling (Including Grinding)	400	5,600	Protex	864	8,640
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	1,843	11,795	Boom	843	6,744
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	20,857	20,857	Clere Body Lotion	1,200	2,400
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	18,714	14,971	Vaseline Blue Seal	1,764	3,528
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	20,857	16,686	Electricity	16,200	16,200
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	3,857	15,428	Running Water (meter)	16,436	16,436
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	150	7,200	Housing (3 bedroom)	60,110	60,110
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	500	11,250	Sub-Total	176,200	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,471	22,065	Blantyre Total Basic Needs		452,013
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,900	6,650	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	500	7,500	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,586	10,758	Secondary (fees) per year		37,397
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,264	25,280	Primary (GPF) per year		5,624
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,500	12,000	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		65,121
Kitchen Salt	571	571	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		47,138
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	70	2,800	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		21,217
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	543	8,688	Sub-Total	Sub-Total	176,498
Sub-Total			275,813		

Mzuzu cost of living for a household of six people for July 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	26,417	52,834	Charcoal (50 kgs)	20,417	40,834
Milling (Including Grinding)	1,500	21,000	Protex	1,217	12,170
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,508	16,051	Boom	658	5,264
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	4,500	4,500	Clere Body Lotion	1,358	2,716
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	14,433	11,546	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,100	1,066
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	4,000	3,200	Electricity	6,472	6,472
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,000	20,000	Running Water (meter)	5,694	5,694
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	200	9,600	Housing (3 bedroom)	35,154	35,154
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	865	19,463	Sub-Total	109,370	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,532	22,980	Mzuzu Total Basic Needs		374,204
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,355	4,743	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	800	12,000	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,583	10,749	Secondary (fees) per year		60,000
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,400	28,000	Primary (GPF) per year		4,650
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,700	13,600	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		51,520
Kitchen Salt	1,368	1,368	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		72,000
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	200	8,000	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		13,924
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	325	5,200	Sub-Total	Sub-Total	202,093
Sub-Total			264,834		

Mangochi cost of living for a household of six people for July 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	38,000	76,000	Charcoal (50 kgs)	8,000	16,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	700	9,800	Protex	1,500	15,000
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	1,700	10,880	Boom	900	7,200
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	12,333	12,333	Clere Body Lotion	1,500	3,000
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	16,833	13,466	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,500	1,600
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	14,667	11,734	Electricity	8,423	8,423
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,500	18,000	Running Water (meter)	8,156	8,156
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	200	9,600	Housing (3 bedroom)	38,591	38,591
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	900	20,250	Sub-Total	97,970	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,090	16,350	Mangochi Total Basic Needs		385,146
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,667	5,835	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	700	10,500	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,500	13,500	Secondary (fees) per year		72,361
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	Primary (GPF) per year		3,936
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,500	12,000	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		55,840
Kitchen Salt	800	800	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		51,948
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	250	10,000	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		34,383
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	633	10,128	Sub-Total	218,467	
Sub-Total		287,176			

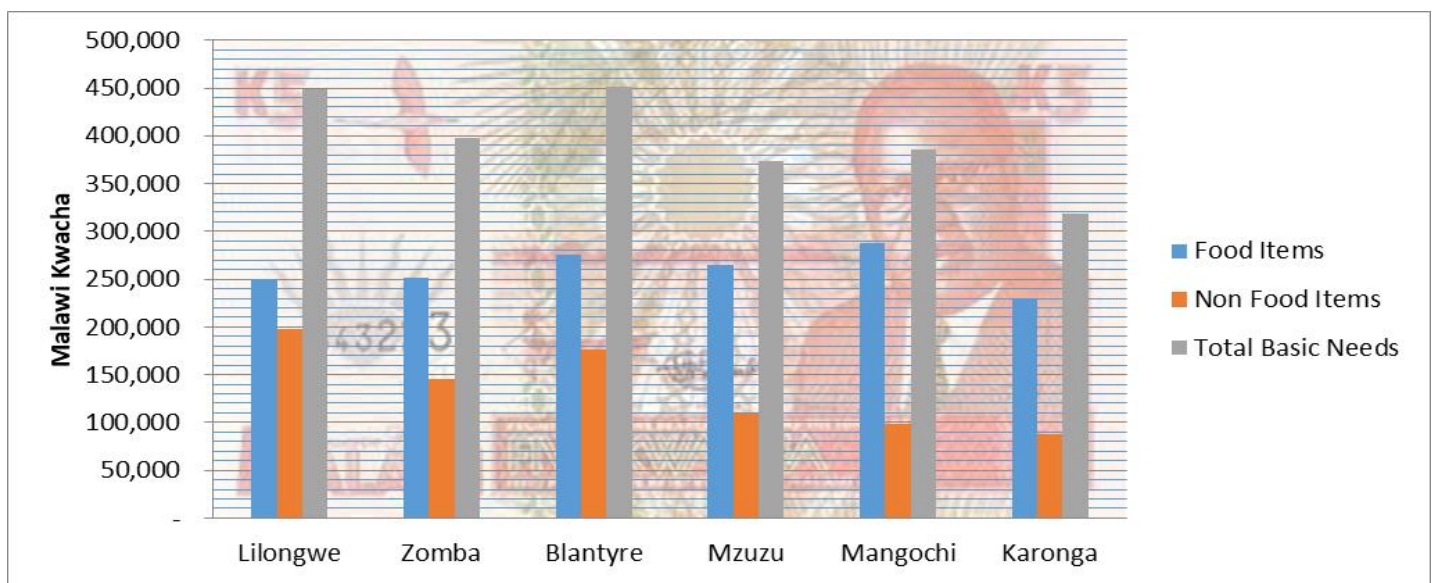
Karonga cost of living for a household of six people for July 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	27,000	54,000	Charcoal (50 kgs)	9,950	19,900
Milling (Including Grinding)	700	9,800	Protex	850	8,500
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	700	4,480	Boom	1,000	8,000
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	6,000	6,000	Clere Body Lotion	2,200	4,400
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	6,500	5,200	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,300	4,600
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	5,678	5,678
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	3,500	14,000	Running Water (meter)	7,348	7,348
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	200	9,600	Housing (3 bedroom)	29,593	29,593
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	730	16,425	Sub-Total	88,019	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,625	24,375	Karonga Total Basic Needs		318,599
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,560	5,460	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	800	12,000	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,750	11,250	Secondary (fees) per year		66,139
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	Primary (GPF) per year		5,578
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,600	12,800	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		44,269
Kitchen Salt	390	390	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		62,394
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	150	6,000	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		23,763
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	800	12,800	Sub-Total	202,143	
Sub-Total		230,580			

Table showing cost of living per district

District	Food Items	Non Food Items	Total Basic Needs
Lilongwe	250,206	197,964	448,170
Zomba	251,994	145,832	397,826
Blantyre	275,813	176,200	452,013
Mzuzu	264,834	109,370	374,204
Mangochi	287,176	97,970	385,146
Karonga	230,580	88,019	318,599

Graph showing cost of living per district



Note: Total Basic Needs is calculated from Total Food Items + Total Non-Food Items

INCREASED MAIZE PRICES AS THE MAIN CONTRIBUTOR TO THE RISING COST OF LIVING

The main contributor to the increased cost of living has been the skyrocketing maize prices. On average, between June and July 2023, maize prices increased by 26.2%. The highest being Mangochi where maize prices increased by 40%, from MK27,000 in June to MK38,000 in July per 50 kg bag. In Karonga, maize prices increased by 8%, from MK25,000 in June to MK27,000 per 50 kg bag in July.

SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF THE INCREASED COST OF LIVING AMONG MALAWIANS

Financial Strain: Rising prices for essential goods and services, such as food, housing, healthcare, and transportation, put significant financial strain on individuals and families. This leads to increased debt, reduced savings, and a decreased ability to invest in education or business opportunities.

Rising Unemployment: As businesses face higher operating costs due to inflation, they may cut back on hiring or even lay off workers. This can contribute to rising unemployment rates, making it harder for people to find stable employment.

Monthly Average for Cost of Living

Monthly Average	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Amount (MK)	307,724	307,368	325,902	327,606	328,522	356,108	372,471	405,669	385,848	377,892	378,812	395,993

Fuel Cost

Fuel (cost at the pump)	
Diesel (per litre)	K1920
Petrol (per litre)	K1746
Paraffin (per litre)	K833

Minibus Fare

Minibus fare to town and back	
Lilongwe	K2000
Zomba	K1000
Blantyre	K700
Mzuzu	K550 – K 600

NB: 1 USA dollar (\$) = K1, 076.02 Malawian Kwacha (MK). Source: <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/>; The Social Conditions Research Programme of the Centre for Social Concern
 Conducted these surveys from 25th to 26th July, 2023 in the cities of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe, Mzuzu, and peri-urban areas of Karonga and Mangochi

NOTE: The data on electricity, housing, water, and other additional costs is collected and analyzed on a quarterly basis