



**CfSC**

# The Centre for Social Concern

## Basic Needs Basket

Cost of Living for November 2023



### **URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS EXPERIENCE 9% COST OF LIVING SPIKE BETWEEN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER AMIDST 44% MALAWI KWACHA DEPRECIATION"**

A 44% devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha has increased the average cost of living by approximately 9% in urban and peri urban areas between October and November. the most expensive city in November has been Blantyre with a cost of living of K505,427 from K461,421 in October, representing an increase of 9.5% seconded by Zomba with the cost of living of K455,451 in November from K401,274 in October representing a 13.5% increase in the cost of living. with an increase of 1.7%.

*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 November 2023					
A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	37,000	74,000	Charcoal (50 kgs)	25,000	50,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	788	11,032	Protex	1,063	10,630
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,000	12,800	Boom	1,175	9,400
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	11,625	11,625	Clere Body Lotion	1,488	2,976
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	10,750	8,600	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,263	4,526
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	11,669	11,669
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,838	19,352	Running Water (meter)	12,205	12,205
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	184	8,832	Housing (3 bedroom)	62,455	62,455
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	710	15,975	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>163,861</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	975	14,625	<b>Lilongwe Total Basic Needs</b>	<b>433,127</b>	
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,463	5,121			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,056	15,840	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,325	12,975	Education		
Bread (5 bkfst/ wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	Secondary (fees) per year	58,500	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	1,969	15,752	Primary (GPF) per year	3,000	
Kitchen Salt	913	913	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year	24,465	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	238	9,520	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year	40,685	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	394	6,304	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term	21,958	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>269,266</b>		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>148,608</b>	

Zomba cost of living for a household of six people for November 2023					
A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	45,429	90,858	Charcoal (50 kgs)	18,214	36,428
Milling (Including Grinding)	800	11,200	Protex	1,500	15,000
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,471	15,814	Boom	1,200	9,600
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	7,571	7,571	Clere Body Lotion	1,771	3,542
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	8,571	6,857	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,971	5,942
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	14,971	14,971
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,500	18,000	Running Water (meter)	14,209	14,209
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	180	8,640	Housing (3 bedroom)	60,292	60,292
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	1,029	23,153	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>159,984</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,593	23,895	<b>Zomba Total Basic Needs</b>	<b>455,451</b>	
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,771	6,199			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	800	12,000	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,843	11,529	Education		
Bread (5 bkfst/ wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	Secondary (fees) per year	81,827	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,000	16,000	Primary (GPF) per year	9,000	
Kitchen Salt	1,000	1,000	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year	53,209	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	196	7,840	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year	57,069	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	557	8,912	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term	18,714	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>295,467</b>		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>219,818</b>	

Blantyre cost of living for a household of six people for November 2023					
A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	42,143	84,286	Charcoal (50 kgs)	37,143	74,286
Milling (Including Grinding)	400	5,600	Protex	971	9,710
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,586	16,550	Boom	1,271	10,168
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	12,714	12,714	Clere Body Lotion	1,550	3,100
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	14,571	11,657	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,357	4,714
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	29,000	23,200	Electricity	17,393	17,393
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,000	16,000	Running Water (meter)	15,613	15,613
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	200	9,600	Housing (3 bedroom)	65,478	65,478
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	557	12,533	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>200,462</b>	
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,586	23,790	<b>Blantyre Total Basic Needs</b>	<b>505,427</b>	
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,529	5,352			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	836	12,540	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,943	11,829	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,264	25,280	Secondary (fees) per year		37,732
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,000	16,000	Primary (GPF) per year		5,451
Kitchen Salt	771	771	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		59,375
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	100	4,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		49,011
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	829	13,264	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		21,904
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>304,965</b>		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>173,472</b>	

Mzuzu cost of living for a household of six people for November 2023					
A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	35,375	70,750	Charcoal (50 kgs)	23,000	46,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	2,000	28,000	Protex	1,442	14,420
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,508	16,051	Boom	758	6,064
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	7,250	7,250	Clere Body Lotion	1,700	3,400
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	22,000	17,600	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,250	1,066
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	4,500	3,600	Electricity	7,176	7,176
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	6,083	24,332	Running Water (meter)	6,126	6,126
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	200	9,600	Housing (3 bedroom)	37,143	37,143
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	910	20,475	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>121,395</b>	
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,573	23,595	<b>Mzuzu Total Basic Needs</b>	<b>442,614</b>	
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,517	5,310			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	983	14,745	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,735	11,205	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,600	32,000	Secondary (fees) per year		60,000
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,133	17,064	Primary (GPF) per year		4,580
Kitchen Salt	1,530	1,530	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		57,000
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	200	8,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		140,700
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	632	10,112	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		18,770
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>321,219</b>		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>281,049</b>	

### Mangochi cost of living for a household of six people for November 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS			
Maize	40,000	80,000	Charcoal (50 kgs)	8,500	17,000	
Milling (Including Grinding)	800	11,200	Protex	1,500	15,000	
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	1,600	10,240	Boom	1,000	8,000	
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	12,667	12,667	Clere Body Lotion	1,500	3,000	
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	17,667	14,134	Vaseline Blue Seal	3,500	1,600	
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	15,000	12,000	Electricity	9,412	9,412	
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,000	20,000	Running Water (meter)	9,103	9,103	
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	250	12,000	Housing (3 bedroom)	38,591	38,591	
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	967	21,758	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>101,706</b>		
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,733	25,995	<b>Mangochi Total Basic Needs 422,489</b>			
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,083	7,291				
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	800	12,000	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS			
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,633	13,899	Education			
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	Secondary (fees) per year		69,363	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,000	16,000	Primary (GPF) per year		4,627	
Kitchen Salt	800	800	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		57,713	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	300	12,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		53,708	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	800	12,800	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		36,047	
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>320,783</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>221,458</b>

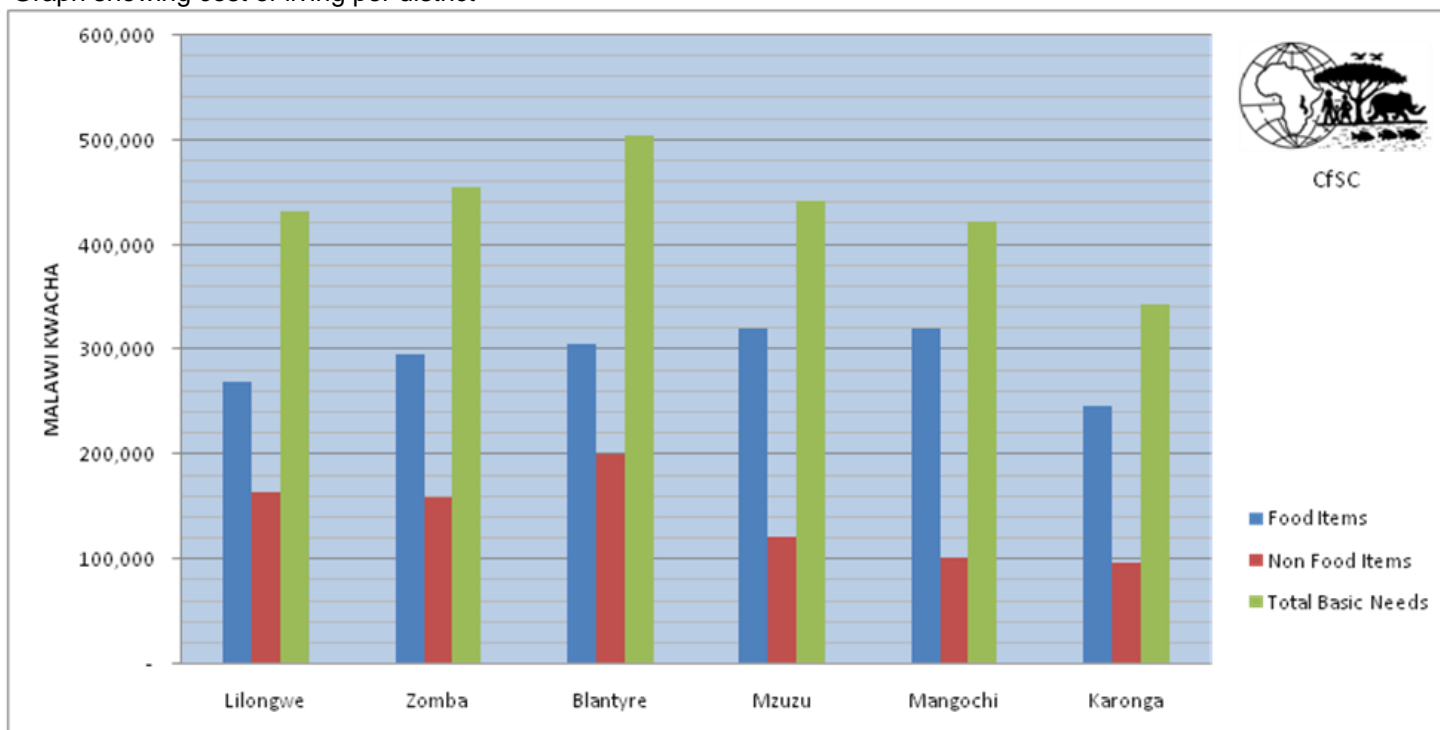
### Karonga cost of living for a household of six people for November 2023

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS			
Maize	31,250	62,500	Charcoal (50 kgs)	12,500	25,000	
Milling (Including Grinding)	1,500	21,000	Protex	995	9,950	
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	700	4,480	Boom	1,000	8,000	
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	5,000	5,000	Clere Body Lotion	2,075	4,150	
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,250	4,500	
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	6,000	4,800	Electricity	5,476	5,476	
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,000	20,000	Running Water (meter)	8,433	8,433	
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	250	12,000	Housing (3 bedroom)	31,520	31,520	
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	600	13,500	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>97,029</b>		
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,225	18,375	<b>Karonga Total Basic Needs 343,649</b>			
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,050	3,675				
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	670	10,050	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS			
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,750	11,250	Education			
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,300	26,000	Secondary (fees) per year		91,998	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,000	16,000	Primary (GPF) per year		7,488	
Kitchen Salt	390	390	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		56,277	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	200	8,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		75,278	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	600	9,600	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		22,153	
<b>Sub-Total</b>			<b>246,620</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>253,194</b>

Table showing cost of living per district

District	Food Items	Non Food Items	Total Basic Needs
Lilongwe	269,266	163,861	433,127
Zomba	295,467	159,984	455,451
Blantyre	304,965	200,462	505,427
Mzuzu	321,219	121,395	442,614
Mangochi	320,783	101,706	422,489
Karonga	246,620	97,029	343,649

Graph showing cost of living per district



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

### **MALAWI GRAPPLES WITH 44% KWACHA DEVALUATION: URBAN LIVING COSTS SURGE BY 9%**

In the wake of a 44% devaluation of the Malawian Kwacha at the beginning of this month, urban and peri-urban areas have witnessed a significant upswing in the cost of living, experiencing an average increase of approximately 9% between October and November. The impact of this currency devaluation has been particularly pronounced in major cities, with Blantyre, Zomba, and Karonga emerging as focal points of concern. We expect the real effects of this devaluation to start hitting the consumers and consequently Malawi households from December onwards if government does not come up with social interventions quickly.

#### **City-Specific Challenges: Blantyre, Zomba, and Karonga**

Blantyre, as the most expensive city in November, reported a cost of living of K505,427, marking a 9.5% increase from K461,421 in October. Zomba closely followed, experiencing a 13.5% surge in living costs, with November's figure standing at K455,451 compared to K401,274 the previous month. Karonga, despite having the lowest cost of living at K343,649 in November, still faced an 8.5% increase from K316,858 in October.

## **Contributing Factors: Maize and Sugar Price Surges**

The surge in living costs was attributed primarily to the remarkable increases in the prices of staple commodities, especially maize and sugar. Mzuzu witnessed a substantial 14% hike in maize prices between October and November, with Zomba following closely with an 8% increase. In contrast, Lilongwe experienced a comparatively modest 1.7% rise in maize prices during the same period.

## **Effects on Malawians and Urgent Call for Action**

The escalating cost of living places a heavy burden on the citizens of Malawi, particularly those in urban and peri-urban areas. The strain on household budgets is felt across various income groups, impacting the ability of families to meet their basic needs. As the cost of essential commodities continues to rise, there is a growing urgency for intervention to mitigate the adverse effects on the people.

## **Government Response and Mitigation Strategies**

In light of these challenges, the Malawi government is urged to take immediate and decisive action to alleviate the burden on its citizens. Potential measures may include:

1. **Economic Stabilization Policies:** Implementing comprehensive economic policies aimed at stabilizing the currency and addressing the root causes of the Kwacha devaluation.
2. **Social Safety Nets:** Expanding social safety net programs to provide targeted assistance to vulnerable populations, ensuring they have access to essential goods and services, especially during challenging economic times.
3. **Subsidy Reevaluation:** Assessing the possibility of targeted subsidies on crucial commodities, such as maize and sugar, to shield citizens from the full impact of price hikes.
4. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Engaging in public awareness campaigns to educate citizens on prudent financial management, and cost-saving measures.

As Malawi navigates through these economic challenges, collaboration between the government, private sector, and civil society is paramount to formulate and implement effective strategies that will alleviate the impact of the rising cost of living on the people of Malawi. The government's commitment to swift and thoughtful action will be crucial in fostering economic stability and securing the well-being of its citizens.

## Monthly Average for Cost of Living

Monthly Average	2022	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Amount (MK)	328,522	356,108	372,471	405,669	385,848	377,892	378,812	395,993	386,192	389,455	397,134	433,793

## Fuel Cost

Fuel (cost at the pump)	
Diesel (per litre)	K2,734
Petrol (per litre)	K2,530
Paraffin (per litre)	K1,910

## Minibus Fare

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

NB: 1 USA dollar (\$) = K1, 693.49 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 22 to 23 November, 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 quarterly basis**