



**CfSC**

# The Centre for Social Concern

## Basic Needs Basket

Cost of Living for April 2024



### **RISING COST OF LIVING: CFSC URGES IMMEDIATE GOVERNMENT ACTION TO SUPPORT LOW-INCOME EARNER**

The latest monthly cost-of-living study has revealed a significant increase in the cost of living for Malawians. The data indicates a 2.2% rise in the cost of living from March to April 2024, with average household expenses increasing from MK510,720 in March to MK521,936 in April. This follows a 1.4% increase from February to March 2024, when the average cost was MK503,876.

*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 April 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	40,875	81,750	Charcoal (50 kgs)	50,938	101,876
Milling (Including Grinding)	813	11,382	Protex	1,238	12,380
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	3,250	20,800	Boom	1,238	9,904
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	13,000	13,000	Clere Body Lotion	1,631	3,262
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	16,738	13,390	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,588	5,176
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	14,973	14,973
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,063	20,252	Running Water (meter)	12,809	12,809
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	248	11,904	Housing (3 bedroom)	80,221	80,221
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	857	19,283	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>240,601</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,007	15,105	<b>Lilongwe Total Basic Needs</b>		<b>580,517</b>
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	4,819	16,867	<b>C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	981	14,715	<b>Education</b>		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,044	12,132	Secondary (fees) per year		58,500
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,506	30,120	Primary (GPF) per year		3,000
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	3,988	31,904	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		24,465
Kitchen Salt	913	913	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		40,685
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	250	10,000	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		21,958
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	1,025	16,400	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>148,608</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>339,916</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>148,608</b>

### Zomba cost of living for a household of six people for April 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	34,286	68,572	Charcoal (50 kgs)	21,357	42,714
Milling (Including Grinding)	1,000	14,000	Protex	1,693	16,930
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	4,000	25,600	Boom	1,157	9,256
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	8,714	8,714	Clere Body Lotion	1,629	3,258
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	10,000	8,000	Vaseline Blue Seal	3,500	7,000
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	15,745	15,745
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,000	20,000	Running Water (meter)	14,443	14,443
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	250	12,000	Housing (3 bedroom)	70,520	70,520
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	1,229	27,653	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>179,866</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,714	25,710	<b>Zomba Total Basic Needs</b>		<b>502,821</b>
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,443	8,551	<b>C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,000	15,000	<b>Education</b>		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,964	11,892	Secondary (fees) per year		81,827
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,500	30,000	Primary (GPF) per year		9,000
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	4,000	32,000	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		53,209
Kitchen Salt	1,000	1,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		57,069
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	151	6,040	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		18,714
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	514	8,224	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>219,818</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>322,955</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>219,818</b>

### Blantyre cost of living for a household of six people for April 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	34,643	69,286	Charcoal (50 kgs)	65,714	131,428
Milling (Including Grinding)	400	5,600	Protex	1,321	13,210
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	3,729	23,866	Boom	1,321	10,568
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	22,714	22,714	Clere Body Lotion	1,757	3,514
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	19,000	15,200	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,786	5,572
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	25,429	20,343	Electricity	19,558	19,558
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	4,643	18,572	Running Water (meter)	17,399	17,399
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	250	12,000	Housing (3 bedroom)	67,931	67,931
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	557	12,533	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>269,180</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	2,229	33,435	<b>Blantyre Total Basic Needs</b>		<b>621,353</b>
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	4,114	14,399	<b>C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	979	14,685	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,043	12,129	Secondary (fees) per year		37,732
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,486	29,720	Primary (GPF) per year		5,451
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	3,271	26,168	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		59,375
Kitchen Salt	836	836	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		49,011
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	100	4,000	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		21,904
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	1,043	16,688	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>173,472</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>352,173</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>173,472</b>

### Mzuzu cost of living for a household of six people for April 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	34,417	68,834	Charcoal (50 kgs)	17,983	35,966
Milling (Including Grinding)	2,400	33,600	Protex	2,275	22,750
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,508	16,051	Boom	808	6,464
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	7,500	7,500	Clere Body Lotion	1,833	3,666
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	26,000	20,800	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,500	1,066
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	4,917	3,934	Electricity	8,314	8,314
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	6,000	24,000	Running Water (meter)	6,761	6,761
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	250	12,000	Housing (3 bedroom)	39,512	39,512
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	1,080	24,300	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>124,499</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	2,308	34,620	<b>Mzuzu Total Basic Needs</b>		<b>495,499</b>
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,173	7,606	<b>C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS</b>		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,167	17,505	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,333	12,999	Secondary (fees) per year		60,000
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,600	32,000	Primary (GPF) per year		4,580
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	4,767	38,136	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		57,000
Kitchen Salt	2,236	2,236	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		46,900
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	250	10,000	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		18,770
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	305	4,880	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>281,049</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>371,000</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>281,049</b>

### Mangochi cost of living for a household of six people for April 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	40,000	80,000	Charcoal (50 kgs)	14,500	29,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	1,000	14,000	Protex	2,000	20,000
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	3,000	19,200	Boom	1,000	8,000
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	16,667	16,667	Clere Body Lotion	2,500	5,000
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	19,333	15,466	Vaseline Blue Seal	3,500	1,600
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	19,000	15,200	Electricity	9,170	9,170
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	6,000	24,000	Running Water (meter)	9,543	9,543
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	300	14,400	Housing (3 bedroom)	42,944	42,944
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	1,233	27,743	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>125,257</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,350	20,250	<b>Mangochi Total Basic Needs</b>		<b>498,844</b>
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,467	8,635			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,000	15,000	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,833	14,499	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,500	30,000	Secondary (fees) per year		69,363
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	3,400	27,200	Primary (GPF) per year		4,627
Kitchen Salt	1,200	1,200	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		57,713
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	300	12,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		53,708
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	1,133	18,128	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		36,047
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>373,587</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>221,458</b>

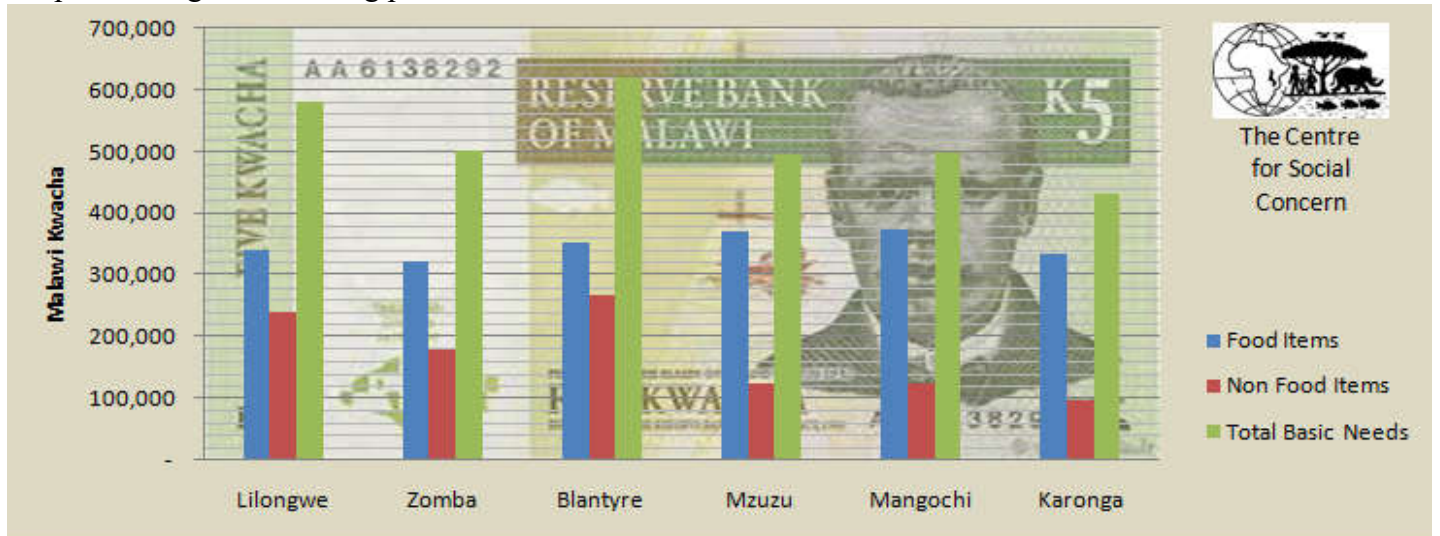
### Karonga cost of living for a household of six people for April 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	28,750	57,500	Charcoal (50 kgs)	9,750	19,500
Milling (Including Grinding)	1,500	21,000	Protex	1,200	12,000
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	700	4,480	Boom	850	6,800
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	15,000	15,000	Clere Body Lotion	3,700	7,400
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,850	5,700
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	12,000	9,600	Electricity	5,580	5,580
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,000	20,000	Running Water (meter)	8,498	8,498
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	250	12,000	Housing (3 bedroom)	32,958	32,958
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	875	19,688	<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>98,436</b>
Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	2,325	34,875	<b>Karonga Total Basic Needs</b>		<b>432,581</b>
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,775	9,713			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,225	18,375	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	3,975	11,925	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,500	30,000	Secondary (fees) per year		91,998
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	5,750	46,000	Primary (GPF) per year		7,488
Kitchen Salt	390	390	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year		56,277
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	250	10,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year		75,278
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	850	13,600	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term		22,153
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>334,145</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	339,916	240,601	580,517
Zomba	322,955	179,866	502,821
Blantyre	352,173	269,180	621,353
Mzuzu	371,000	124,499	495,499
Mangochi	373,587	125,257	498,844
Karonga	334,145	98,436	432,581

Graph showing cost of living per district



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

## IMPACT OF INCREASED COST OF LIVING AND PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT

### Impact on Low-Income Earners

These rising cost pose a considerable challenge to low-income earners, who are already struggling to meet basic needs. The continuous increase in commodity prices exacerbates the financial strain on families, leading to difficult choices between essential goods and services such as food, healthcare, and education. This situation is particularly dire for those living on fixed incomes or minimum wage, making it harder to maintain a decent standard of living.

### Government Strategies to Improve Standard of Living

To address these challenges, it is imperative for the government to implement both short-term and long-term strategies aimed at mitigating the impact of rising costs and improving the overall standard of living for all citizens.

## **Short-Term Strategies**

### ***Subsidies and Price Controls***

Introduce or enhance subsidies on essential commodities such as food, fuel, and healthcare to make them more affordable for low-income households.

### ***Social Safety Nets***

Strengthen social safety net programs, including cash transfers and food assistance, to support the most vulnerable populations.

### ***Temporary Tax Relief***

Provide temporary tax relief or reductions on essential goods to reduce the financial burden on consumers.

## **Long-Term Strategies**

### ***Economic Diversification***

Invest in diversifying the economy to reduce dependency on a limited number of sectors, thereby creating more job opportunities and stabilizing incomes.

### ***Agricultural Development***

Support agricultural development to ensure food security and reduce food prices. This includes investing in modern farming techniques, irrigation systems, and access to markets.

### ***Education and Skills Training***

Invest in education and vocational training programs to equip the workforce with the skills needed for higher-paying jobs and improve overall economic productivity.

### ***Infrastructure Development***

Improve infrastructure, including transportation, energy, and water supply, to reduce the cost of doing business and attract investment.

### ***Inflation Control***

Implement monetary policies that control inflation and stabilize the economy, ensuring that the purchasing power of low-income earners is not eroded.

## **Conclusion**

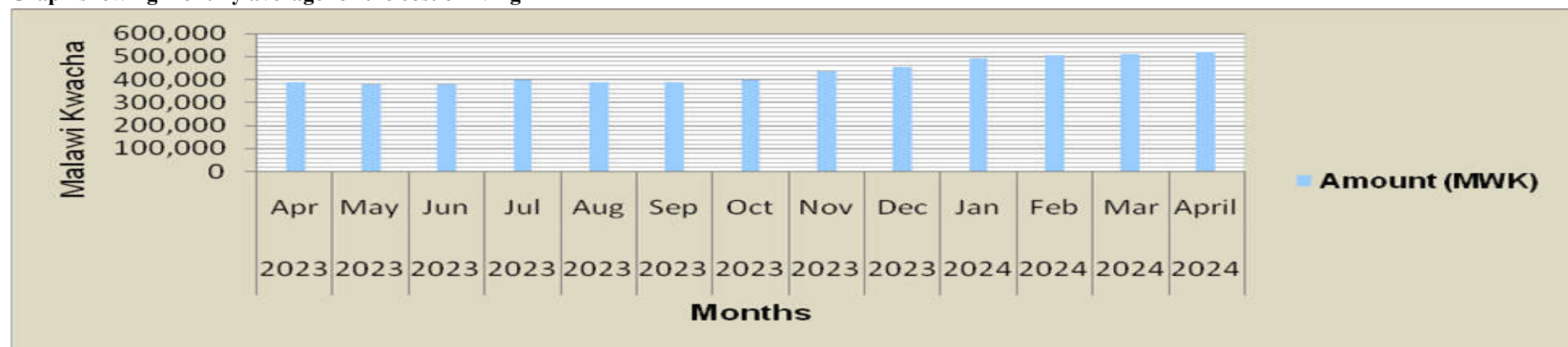
The CfSC calls upon the government, private sector, and civil society to collaborate in addressing the rising cost of living. By implementing comprehensive and effective strategies, we can ensure that all Malawians, especially the most vulnerable, have the opportunity to improve their standard of living and achieve economic security.



### Monthly average for the cost of living

Monthly Average	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	
Amount (MK)	385,848	377,892	378,812	395,993	386,192	389,455	397,134	433,793	455,707	491,037	503,876	510,720	521,936	

### Graph showing monthly average for the cost of living



### Fuel Cost

Fuel (cost at the pump)	
Diesel (per litre)	K2734
Petrol (per litre)	K2530
Paraffin (per litre)	K1910

### Minibus Fare

Minibus fare to town and back	
Lilongwe	K3000
Zomba	K1400
Blantyre	K1200
Mzuzu	K1600
Mangochi	K1000
Karonga	K1900

NB: 1 USA dollar (\$) = K1,754.02 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 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 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**

