



**CfSC**

# The Centre for Social Concern

## Basic Needs Basket

Cost of Living for July 2024



### **Press Statement: Urgent Action Needed as Cost of Living and Commodity Prices Soar between June and July 2024**

The Centre for Social Concern (CfSC) issues this statement with a heavy heart, as we witness the continued rise in the cost of living in Malawi, driven by unprecedented increases in the prices of essential food items. The period between June and July 2024 has seen the overall cost of living increase by 1.2%, from K510,000 in June to K516,000 in July. This rise is not just a statistical figure, but a representation of the deepening struggle of millions of Malawian families who are being pushed further into poverty and deprivation

*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 2024

| A. FOOD ITEMS                           |        |                | B. NON FOOD ITEMS                         |                |                |
|---|--------|----------------|---|----------------|----------------|
| Maize                                   | 39,375 | 78,750         | Charcoal (50 kgs)                         | 29,318         | 58,636         |
| Milling (Including Grinding)            | 825    | 11,550         | Protex                                    | 1,263          | 12,630         |
| Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days                | 4,000  | 25,600         | Boom                                      | 1,288          | 10,304         |
| Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days             | 16,021 | 16,021         | Clere Body Lotion                         | 1,694          | 3,388          |
| Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days      | 14,971 | 11,977         | Vaseline Blue Seal                        | 2,838          | 5,676          |
| Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days               | 0      | 0              | Electricity                               | 16,367         | 16,367         |
| Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days                   | 6,000  | 24,000         | Running Water (meter)                     | 10,538         | 10,538         |
| Eggs (12/day) 4 days                    | 273    | 13,104         | Housing (3 bedroom)                       | 81,961         | 81,961         |
| Rape (750g/day) for 30 days             | 618    | 13,905         | <b>Sub-Total</b>                          | <b>199,500</b> |                |
| Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days            | 1,628  | 24,420         | <b>Lilongwe Total Basic Needs 527,858</b> |                |                |
| Onion (116g/day) 30 days                | 1,816  | 6,356          |   |                |                |
| Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days          | 963    | 14,445         | C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS            |                |                |
| Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days | 4,631  | 13,893         | Education                                 |                |                |
| Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days           | 1,531  | 30,620         | Secondary (fees) per year                 |                | 58,500         |
| Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)                     | 2,463  | 19,704         | Primary (GPF) per year                    |                | 3,000          |
| Kitchen Salt                            | 1,013  | 1,013          | Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year          |                | 24,465         |
| Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)               | 375    | 15,000         | Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year        |                | 40,685         |
| Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)         | 500    | 8,000          | Other (pens, books, etc.) per term        |                | 21,958         |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                        |        | <b>328,358</b> | <b>Sub-Total</b>                          |                | <b>148,608</b> |

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

| A. FOOD ITEMS                           |        |                | B. NON FOOD ITEMS                      |                |                |
|---|--------|----------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Maize                                   | 45,429 | 90,858         | Charcoal (50 kgs)                      | 15,500         | 31,000         |
| Milling (Including Grinding)            | 1,000  | 14,000         | Protex                                 | 1,657          | 16,570         |
| Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days                | 4,000  | 25,600         | Boom                                   | 1,443          | 11,544         |
| Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days             | 10,000 | 10,000         | Clere Body Lotion                      | 1,829          | 3,658          |
| 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                            | 17,275         | 17,275         |
| Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days                   | 6,000  | 24,000         | Running Water (meter)                  | 15,636         | 15,636         |
| Eggs (12/day) 4 days                    | 300    | 14,400         | Housing (3 bedroom)                    | 72,507         | 72,507         |
| Rape (750g/day) for 30 days             | 886    | 19,935         | <b>Sub-Total</b>                       | <b>175,190</b> |                |
| Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days            | 1,129  | 16,935         | <b>Zomba Total Basic Needs 500,269</b> |                |                |
| Onion (116g/day) 30 days                | 1,029  | 3,602          |  |                |                |
| Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days          | 1,000  | 15,000         | C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS         |                |                |
| Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days | 4,448  | 13,344         | Education                              |                |                |
| Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days           | 1,500  | 30,000         | Secondary (fees) per year              |                | 81,827         |
| Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)                     | 2,500  | 20,000         | Primary (GPF) per year                 |                | 9,000          |
| Kitchen Salt                            | 1,029  | 1,029          | Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year       |                | 53,209         |
| Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)               | 151    | 6,040          | Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year     |                | 57,069         |
| Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)         | 771    | 12,336         | Other (pens, books, etc.) per term     |                | 18,714         |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                        |        | <b>325,079</b> | <b>Sub-Total</b>                       |                | <b>219,818</b> |

| Blantyre cost of living for a household of six people for July 2024 |        |                |                                       |                |        |
|---|--------|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| A. FOOD ITEMS   |        |                | B. NON FOOD ITEMS                     |                |        |
| Maize   | 43,929 | 87,858         | Charcoal (50 kgs)                     | 46,429         | 92,858 |
| Milling (Including Grinding)  | 400    | 5,600          | Protex                                | 1,321          | 13,210 |
| Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days  | 3,814  | 24,410         | Boom                                  | 1,307          | 10,456 |
| Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days   | 20,571 | 20,571         | Clere Body Lotion                     | 1,721          | 3,442  |
| Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days                                  | 21,429 | 17,143         | Vaseline Blue Seal                    | 2,543          | 5,086  |
| Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days   | 26,000 | 20,800         | Electricity                           | 19,985         | 19,985 |
| Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days   | 4,714  | 18,856         | Running Water (meter)                 | 18,424         | 18,424 |
| Eggs (12/day) 4 days  | 300    | 14,400         | Housing (3 bedroom)                   | 70,955         | 70,955 |
| Rape (750g/day) for 30 days   | 571    | 12,848         | <b>Sub-Total</b>                      | <b>234,416</b> |        |
| Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days  | 2,257  | 33,855         | <b>Blantyre Total Basic Needs</b>     | <b>593,217</b> |        |
| Onion (116g/day) 30 days  | 1,800  | 6,300          | <b>C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS</b> |                |        |
| Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days                                      | 979    | 14,685         | Education                             |                |        |
| Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days                             | 4,314  | 12,942         | Secondary (fees) per year             |                | 37,732 |
| Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days                                       | 1,500  | 30,000         | Primary (GPF) per year                |                | 5,451  |
| Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)   | 2,443  | 19,544         | Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year      |                | 59,375 |
| Kitchen Salt  | 814    | 814            | Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year    |                | 49,011 |
| Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)   | 100    | 4,000          | Other (pens, books, etc.) per term    |                | 21,904 |
| Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)                                     | 886    | 14,176         | <b>Sub-Total</b>                      | <b>173,472</b> |        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>  |        | <b>358,801</b> |                                       |                |        |

| Mzuzu cost of living for a household of six people for July 2024 |        |                |                                       |                |        |
|--|--------|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| A. FOOD ITEMS  |        |                | B. NON FOOD ITEMS                     |                |        |
| Maize  | 33,333 | 66,666         | Charcoal (50 kgs)                     | 17,833         | 35,666 |
| Milling (Including Grinding)                                     | 2,400  | 33,600         | Protex                                | 2,342          | 23,420 |
| Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days   | 2,508  | 16,051         | Boom                                  | 842            | 6,736  |
| Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days                                      | 11,000 | 11,000         | Clere Body Lotion                     | 2,500          | 5,000  |
| Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days                               | 26,833 | 21,466         | Vaseline Blue Seal                    | 2,488          | 1,066  |
| Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days  | 5,000  | 4,000          | Electricity                           | 7,964          | 7,964  |
| Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days  | 7,000  | 28,000         | Running Water (meter)                 | 6,904          | 6,904  |
| Eggs (12/day) 4 days   | 290    | 13,920         | Housing (3 bedroom)                   | 39,777         | 39,777 |
| Rape (750g/day) for 30 days                                      | 1,157  | 26,033         | <b>Sub-Total</b>                      | <b>126,533</b> |        |
| Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days                                     | 2,533  | 37,995         | <b>Mzuzu Total Basic Needs</b>        | <b>500,491</b> |        |
| Onion (116g/day) 30 days   | 2,540  | 8,890          | <b>C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS</b> |                |        |
| Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days                                   | 1,200  | 18,000         | Education                             |                |        |
| Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days                          | 4,567  | 13,701         | Secondary (fees) per year             |                | 60,000 |
| Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days                                    | 1,800  | 36,000         | Primary (GPF) per year                |                | 4,580  |
| Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)  | 2,583  | 20,664         | Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year      |                | 57,000 |
| Kitchen Salt   | 2,260  | 2,260          | Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year    |                | 46,900 |
| Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)  | 250    | 10,000         | Other (pens, books, etc.) per term    |                | 18,770 |
| Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)                                  | 357    | 5,712          | <b>Sub-Total</b>                      | <b>281,049</b> |        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>   |        | <b>373,958</b> |                                       |                |        |

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

| A. FOOD ITEMS                           |                |        | B. NON FOOD ITEMS                  |        |                |
|---|----------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Maize                                   | 43,667         | 87,334 | Charcoal (50 kgs)                  | 16,333 | 32,666         |
| Milling (Including Grinding)            | 1,000          | 14,000 | Protex                             | 2,000  | 20,000         |
| Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days                | 3,400          | 21,760 | Boom                               | 1,200  | 9,600          |
| Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days             | 19,667         | 19,667 | Clere Body Lotion                  | 2,500  | 5,000          |
| Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days      | 23,333         | 18,666 | Vaseline Blue Seal                 | 4,000  | 1,600          |
| Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days               | 27,333         | 21,866 | Electricity                        | 9,521  | 9,521          |
| Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days                   | 6,000          | 24,000 | Running Water (meter)              | 9,474  | 9,474          |
| Eggs (12/day) 4 days                    | 300            | 14,400 | Housing (3 bedroom)                | 42,944 | 42,944         |
| Rape (750g/day) for 30 days             | 1,533          | 34,493 | <b>Sub-Total</b>                   |        | <b>130,805</b> |
| Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days            | 1,700          | 25,500 | <b>Mangochi Total Basic Needs</b>  |        | <b>532,821</b> |
| Onion (116g/day) 30 days                | 2,933          | 10,266 | C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS     |        |                |
| Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days          | 1,000          | 15,000 | Education                          |        |                |
| Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days | 4,200          | 12,600 | Secondary (fees) per year          |        | 69,363         |
| Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days           | 1,500          | 30,000 | Primary (GPF) per year             |        | 4,627          |
| Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)                     | 2,533          | 20,264 | Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year   |        | 57,713         |
| Kitchen Salt                            | 1,000          | 1,000  | Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year |        | 53,708         |
| Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)               | 300            | 12,000 | Other (pens, books, etc.) per term |        | 36,047         |
| Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)         | 1,200          | 19,200 | <b>Sub-Total</b>                   |        | <b>221,458</b> |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                        | <b>402,016</b> |        | <b>Sub-Total</b>                   |        | <b>221,458</b> |

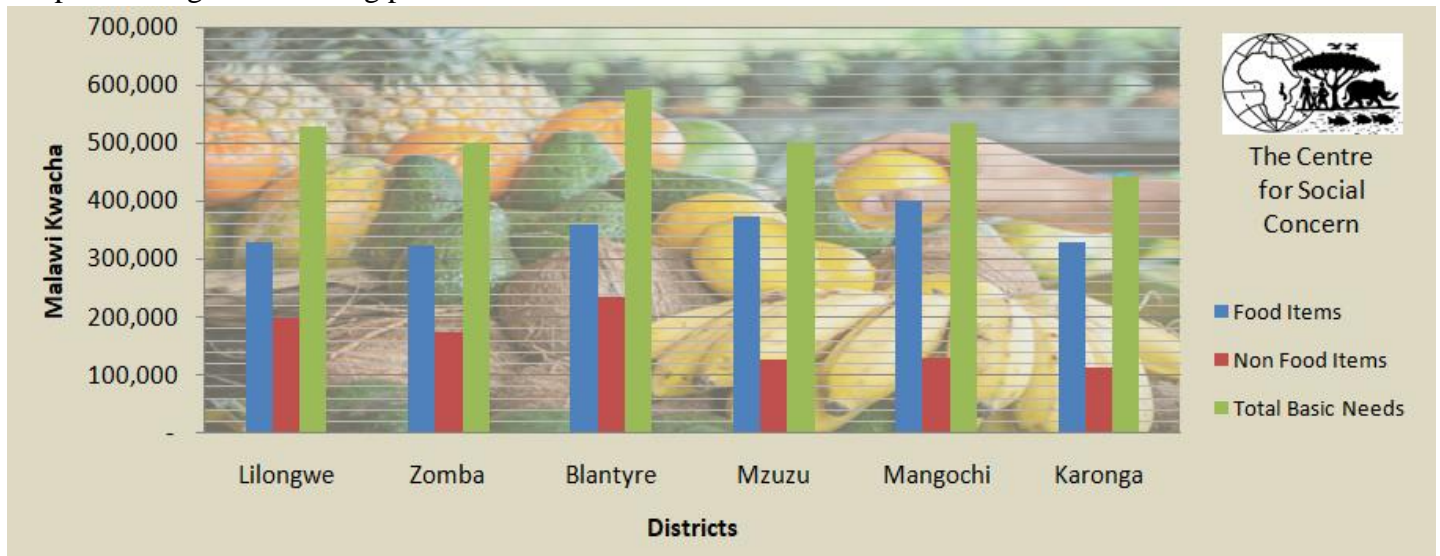
### Karonga cost of living for a household of six people for July 2024

| A. FOOD ITEMS                           |                |        | B. NON FOOD ITEMS                  |        |                |
|---|----------------|--------|------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Maize                                   | 30,000         | 60,000 | Charcoal (50 kgs)                  | 17,500 | 35,000         |
| Milling (Including Grinding)            | 1,500          | 21,000 | Protex                             | 1,200  | 12,000         |
| Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days                | 700            | 4,480  | Boom                               | 1,095  | 8,760          |
| 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                 | 2,450  | 4,900          |
| Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days               | 15,000         | 12,000 | Electricity                        | 5,953  | 5,953          |
| Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days                   | 6,000          | 24,000 | Running Water (meter)              | 7,838  | 7,838          |
| Eggs (12/day) 4 days                    | 300            | 14,400 | Housing (3 bedroom)                | 32,958 | 32,958         |
| Rape (750g/day) for 30 days             | 800            | 18,000 | <b>Sub-Total</b>                   |        | <b>114,809</b> |
| Tomato ( 0.5 Kg/day) 30 days            | 2,725          | 40,875 | <b>Karonga Total Basic Needs</b>   |        | <b>443,608</b> |
| Onion (116g/day) 30 days                | 2,860          | 10,010 | C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS     |        |                |
| Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days          | 1,200          | 18,000 | Education                          |        |                |
| Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days | 4,748          | 14,244 | Secondary (fees) per year          |        | 91,998         |
| Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days           | 1,500          | 30,000 | Primary (GPF) per year             |        | 7,488          |
| Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)                     | 2,550          | 20,400 | Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year   |        | 56,277         |
| Kitchen Salt                            | 390            | 390    | Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year |        | 75,278         |
| Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)               | 250            | 10,000 | Other (pens, books, etc.) per term |        | 22,153         |
| Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)         | 1,000          | 16,000 | <b>Sub-Total</b>                   |        | <b>253,194</b> |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                        | <b>328,799</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 | 328,358    | 199,500        | 527,858           |
| Zomba    | 325,079    | 175,190        | 500,269           |
| Blantyre | 358,801    | 234,416        | 593,217           |
| Mzuzu    | 373,958    | 126,533        | 500,491           |
| Mangochi | 402,016    | 130,805        | 532,821           |
| Karonga  | 328,799    | 114,809        | 443,608           |

Graph showing cost of living per district



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

### Disturbing Increases in Commodity Prices:

**Maize:** Maize, the cornerstone of Malawian diets, has seen its average price increase by 7.5%, from K450 per kilogram in June to K484 per kilogram in July. For many families, this means less food on the table, more skipped meals, and an uncertain future.

**Beans:** The price of beans, a vital source of protein for many households, has surged by 12%, from K1,000 per kilogram in June to K1,120 per kilogram in July. This steep rise threatens the nutritional well-being of children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

**Dry Usipa:** Dry usipa, a staple in many homes, saw an alarming 10.2% price increase, from K1,800 per kilogram in June to K1,984 per kilogram in July. For families living on the edge, this means having to choose between buying fish or going without a crucial source of protein.

**Beef:** The cost of beef, a source of nourishment and energy, jumped by 13.5%, from K5,200 per kilogram in June to K5,900 per kilogram in July. This price hike renders this important food item inaccessible to the majority, further widening the gap between the rich and the poor.

**Tomato:** Tomato prices increased by 11.8%, from K650 per kilogram in June to K727 per kilogram in July, making it harder for families to afford this essential ingredient, which adds nutrition and flavor to their meals.

**Cooking Oil:** The price of cooking oil rose by 9.2%, from K5,100 per liter in June to K5,570 per liter in July. For many, these increase forces difficult choices—whether to cook a meal or to save the little money they have for other pressing needs.

These figures are not just numbers—they tell the story of a nation in crisis, where the poorest and most vulnerable bear the heaviest burden. Families are being forced to make heartbreaking decisions every day, choosing between feeding their children and meeting other basic needs. The CfSC is deeply concerned about the impact these price increases are having on the lives of ordinary Malawians.

**A Call to Action for the Malawi Government:** The CfSC implores the Malawi Government to act with urgency and compassion. The time to act is now, before the situation worsens and more families fall into destitution. We urge the government to consider the following measures:

**Enhance Agricultural Support:** The government must urgently increase support for smallholder farmers, who are the backbone of our nation's food supply. By providing subsidies, improved access to agricultural inputs, and robust extension services, the government can help stabilize food prices and ensure that every Malawian has enough to eat.

**Market Regulation:** It is imperative that the government strengthens market regulation mechanisms to prevent price gouging and ensure fair pricing of essential commodities. No one should profit at the expense of those who are struggling to survive.

**Social Protection Programs:** The government must expand social protection programs, such as cash transfers and food assistance, to cushion the most vulnerable from the impact of rising food prices. These programs are not just a safety net; they are a lifeline for those who have nowhere else to turn.

**Invest in Infrastructure:** The government must invest in infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to reduce transportation costs and ensure efficient distribution of food products. No Malawian should go hungry because of poor roads or lack of access to markets.

**Encourage Local Production:** The government should promote local production of essential commodities, such as cooking oil, to reduce dependency on imports and stabilize prices. This will not only ensure food security but also create jobs and stimulate the economy.

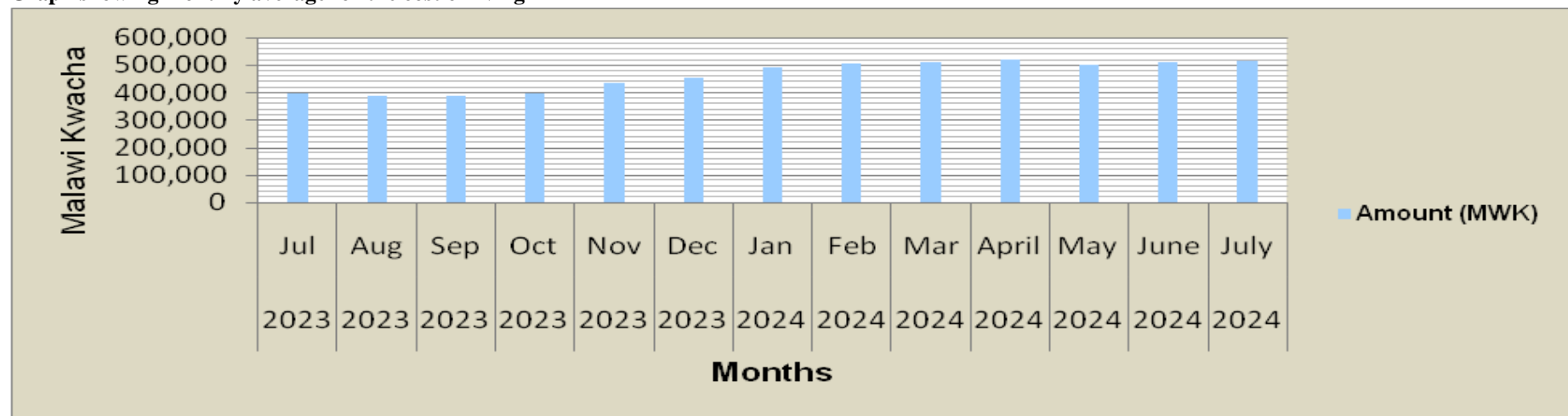
We cannot afford to wait. The CfSC calls on the Malawi Government to take immediate and decisive action to address this crisis. The well-being of millions of Malawians is at stake. Let us work together to ensure that every Malawian has access to affordable food, decent living conditions, and the opportunity to live a life of dignity and hope.

The Centre for Social Concern stands ready to support the government in these efforts and urges all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, to join forces in addressing these challenges. Together, we can build a Malawi where no one is left behind, where every family has enough to eat, and where every child has a chance to thrive.

**Monthly average for the cost of living**

| Monthly Average | 2023    | 2023    | 2023    | 2023    | 2023    | 2023    | 2024    | 2024    | 2024    | 2024    | 2024    | 2024    | 2024    |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                 | Jul     | Aug     | Sep     | Oct     | Nov     | Dec     | Jan     | Feb     | Mar     | Apr     | May     | Jun     | Jul     |
| Amount (MK)     | 395,993 | 386,192 | 389,455 | 397,134 | 433,793 | 455,707 | 491,037 | 503,876 | 510,720 | 521,936 | 500,154 | 510,634 | 516,377 |

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



**Fuel Cost**

| <b>Fuel (cost at the pump)</b> |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Diesel (per litre)             | K2734 |
| Petrol (per litre)             | K2530 |
| Paraffin (per litre)           | K1910 |

**Minibus Fare**

| <b>Minibus fare to town and back</b> |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Lilongwe                             | K3000 |
| Zomba                                | K1400 |
| Blantyre                             | K1200 |
| Mzuzu                                | K1600 |
| Karonga                              | K1900 |
| Mangochi                             | K1000 |

NB: 1 USA dollar (\$) = K1, 745.18 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> July, 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**