



CfSC

The Centre for Social Concern

Basic Needs Basket

Cost of Living for June 2024



RISING COST OF LIVING AND ITS IMPACT ON LOW-INCOME EARNERS IN MALAWI

The cost of living in Malawi has seen a notable increase of 2.1% from May to June, with prices rising from K500, 154 to K510, 534. This uptick in living costs has significantly impacted low-income earners across the country. Notably, this increase has been largely driven by substantial rises in the prices of key commodities, specifically maize and tomatoes.

*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 June 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	39,750	79,500	Charcoal (50 kgs)	30,625	61,250
Milling (Including Grinding)	850	11,900	Protex	1,263	12,630
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	3,488	22,323	Boom	1,275	10,200
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	16,858	16,858	Clere Body Lotion	1,825	3,650
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	14,665	11,732	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,854	5,708
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	0	0	Electricity	16,367	16,367
Beef(1 kg/day) 4 days	5,188	20,752	Running Water (meter)	10,538	10,538
Eggs (12/day) 4 days	266	12,768	Housing (3 bedroom)	81,961	81,961
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	885	19,913	Sub-Total	202,304	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	2,169	32,535	Lilongwe Total Basic Needs 538,222		
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	3,514	12,299			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	900	13,500	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,325	12,975	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,531	30,620	Secondary (fees) per year	58,500	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,456	19,648	Primary (GPF) per year	3,000	
Kitchen Salt	875	875	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year	24,465	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	181	7,240	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year	40,685	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	655	10,480	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term	21,958	
Sub-Total	335,918		Sub-Total	148,608	

Zomba cost of living for a household of six people for June 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	42,857	85,714	Charcoal (50 kgs)	23,929	47,858
Milling (Including Grinding)	1,000	14,000	Protex	1,664	16,640
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	4,000	25,600	Boom	1,357	10,856
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	10,714	10,714	Clere Body Lotion	1,714	3,428
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	17,857	14,286	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	5,214	20,856	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	743	16,718	Sub-Total	191,200	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,629	24,435	Zomba Total Basic Needs 517,410		
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	1,757	6,150			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,000	15,000	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,014	12,042	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,500	30,000	Secondary (fees) per year	81,827	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,471	19,768	Primary (GPF) per year	9,000	
Kitchen Salt	1,000	1,000	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year	53,209	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	151	6,040	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year	57,069	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	593	9,488	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term	18,714	
Sub-Total	326,210		Sub-Total	219,818	

Blantyre cost of living for a household of six people for June 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	43,214	86,428	Charcoal (50 kgs)	48,571	97,142
Milling (Including Grinding)	400	5,600	Protex	1,336	13,360
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	3,814	24,410	Boom	1,307	10,456
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	20,143	20,143	Clere Body Lotion	1,721	3,442
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	20,143	16,114	Vaseline Blue Seal	2,543	5,086
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	25,000	20,000	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	657	14,783	Sub-Total	238,850	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,914	28,710	Blantyre Total Basic Needs 591,442		
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,143	7,501			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	979	14,685	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,171	12,513	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,500	30,000	Secondary (fees) per year	37,732	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,436	19,488	Primary (GPF) per year	5,451	
Kitchen Salt	786	786	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year	59,375	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	100	4,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year	49,011	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	886	14,176	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term	21,904	
Sub-Total	352,592		Sub-Total	173,472	

Mzuzu cost of living for a household of six people for June 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	32,083	64,166	Charcoal (50 kgs)	18,150	36,300
Milling (Including Grinding)	2,400	33,600	Protex	2,325	23,250
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	2,508	16,051	Boom	842	6,736
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	9,167	9,167	Clere Body Lotion	2,483	4,966
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	26,000	20,800	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	297	14,256	Housing (3 bedroom)	39,777	39,777
Rape (750g/day) for 30 days	1,142	25,695	Sub-Total	126,963	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	2,405	36,075	Mzuzu Total Basic Needs 491,142		
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	2,373	8,306			
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,200	18,000	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,533	13,599	Education		
Bread (5 bkfsts / wk) 20 days	1,700	34,000	Secondary (fees) per year	60,000	
Sugar (2 Kgs /Week)	2,600	20,800	Primary (GPF) per year	4,580	
Kitchen Salt	2,240	2,240	Uniform/shoes (Primary) per year	57,000	
Tea leaves (Chisangalalo)	250	10,000	Uniform/shoes (Secondary) per year	46,900	
Cassava /potatoes (2Kgx2Bkfst/)	339	5,424	Other (pens, books, etc.) per term	18,770	
Sub-Total	364,179		Sub-Total	281,049	

Mangochi cost of living for a household of six people for June 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	40,000	80,000	Charcoal (50 kgs)	11,500	23,000
Milling (Including Grinding)	800	11,200	Protex	2,000	20,000
Beans (0.8kg/day) 8 Days	3,000	19,200	Boom	1,200	9,600
Dry Usipa (250g/day) 4 days	17,667	17,667	Clere Body Lotion	2,500	5,000
Dry Utaka/Mcheni (200g/day) 4 days	24,333	19,466	Vaseline Blue Seal	3,500	1,600
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	21,000	16,800	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	1,600	36,000	Sub-Total	121,139	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	1,400	21,000	Mangochi Total Basic Needs		501,810
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	3,333	11,666	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)	2,500	20,000	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/)	1,167	18,672	Sub-Total	221,458	
Sub-Total	380,671		Sub-Total	221,458	

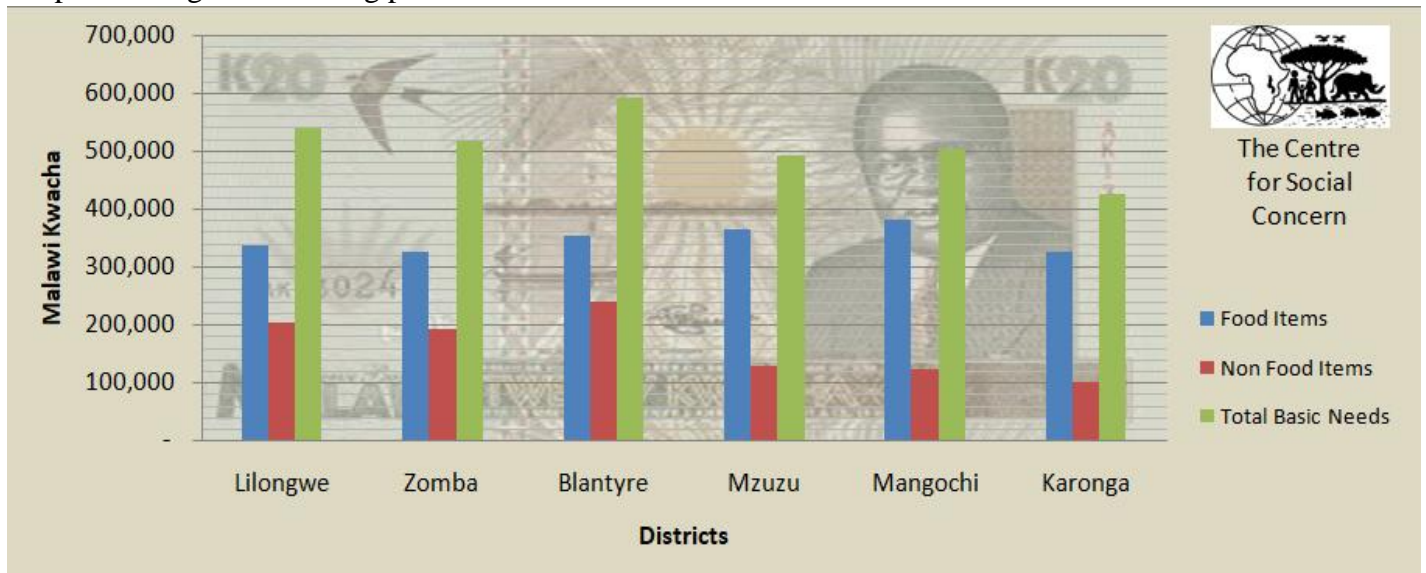
Karonga cost of living for a household of six people for June 2024

A. FOOD ITEMS			B. NON FOOD ITEMS		
Maize	27,500	55,000	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	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	2,850	5,700
Kapenta (200g/day) 4 days	16,000	12,800	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	830	18,675	Sub-Total	100,109	
Tomato (0.5 Kg/day) 30 days	2,700	40,500	Karonga Total Basic Needs		423,779
Onion (116g/day) 30 days	3,050	10,675	C. SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS		
Fresh Milk (250ml/day) 30 days	1,225	18,375	Education		
Kazinga Cooking oil (100mls/day)30 days	4,125	12,375	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)	2,500	20,000	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	Sub-Total	253,194	
Sub-Total	323,670		Sub-Total	253,194	

Table showing cost of living per district

District	Food Items	Non Food Items	Total Basic Needs
Lilongwe	335,918	202,304	538,222
Zomba	326,210	191,200	517,410
Blantyre	352,592	238,850	591,442
Mzuzu	364,179	126,963	491,142
Mangochi	380,671	121,139	501,810
Karonga	323,670	100,109	423,779

Graph showing cost of living per district



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

ADDRESSING THE RECENT INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING AND ITS IMPACT ON LOW-INCOME EARNERS IN MALAWI

Commodity Price Increases:

Maize: In Blantyre, maize prices surged by 30%, the highest among all cities, climbing from K34,286 in May to K42,857 per 50kg bag. This sharp rise has exacerbated the financial strain on households reliant on maize, a staple food in Malawi.

Tomatoes: The price of tomatoes also saw a notable increase, with Lilongwe experiencing a rise of 15.75%, the highest in the country. In contrast, Blantyre reported a decrease of 3% in tomato prices, highlighting a disparity in regional price changes.

Impact on Low-Income Earners:

The increase in the cost of living, driven by higher prices for essential commodities such as maize and tomatoes, has had a disproportionate impact on low-income earners. For many Malawians, particularly those in vulnerable economic positions, these rising costs have made it increasingly difficult to afford basic necessities. The spike

in food prices is directly translated to reduction in purchasing power which heightened financial stress for households struggling to make ends meet.

Government Measures Needed:

To address the escalating cost of living and mitigate its impact on low-income earners, the government should consider implementing the following measures:

Subsidies for Essential Commodities

Introduce targeted subsidies to stabilize the prices of critical food items such as maize and tomatoes. This will help reduce the immediate financial burden on low-income families and ensure that staple foods remain affordable.

Strengthening Food Security

Invest in agricultural development and food production to increase local supply and reduce dependency on imports. Supporting local farmers with access to resources, training, and technology will enhance productivity and stabilize food prices.

Price Monitoring and Regulation

Implement and enforce mechanisms for monitoring commodity prices to prevent unjustified price hikes. Regulatory measures can help ensure that price increases are justified and do not disproportionately affect consumers.

Social Protection Programs

Expand and enhance social protection programs, such as food assistance and cash transfer schemes, to provide immediate relief to low-income households affected by rising living costs.

Promote Regional Price Stability

Address regional disparities in commodity prices by improving market access and distribution networks. This will help balance price variations across different cities and reduce the impact of localized price increases.

Public Awareness and Support

Educate the public on available support programs and financial management strategies to help them cope with rising costs. Providing information and resources will empower households to make informed decisions and access necessary assistance.

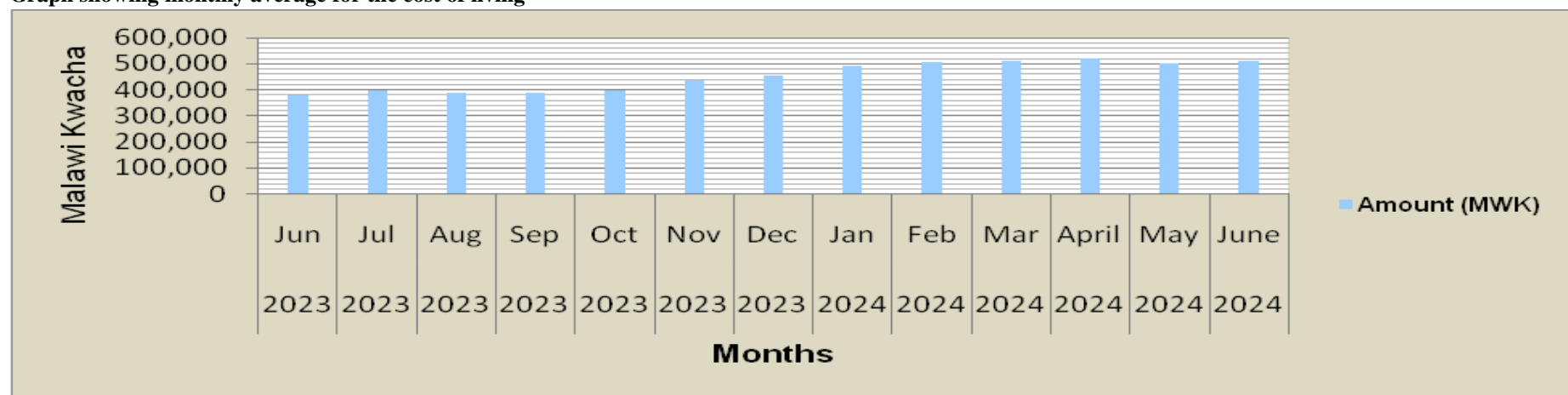
Conclusion:

The recent increase in the cost of living underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to support low-income earners in Malawi. By implementing the proposed measures, the government can help stabilize prices, enhance food security, and alleviate the financial pressures faced by vulnerable communities.

Monthly average for the cost of living

Monthly Average	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Amount (MK)	378,812	395,993	386,192	389,455	397,134	433,793	455,707	491,037	503,876	510,720	521,936	500,154	510,634

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	K1 600
Karonga	K1900
Mangochi	K1000

NB: 1 USA dollar (\$) = K1, 742.86 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 27th June, 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

