

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS REPORT
March 2017

Part I – Name of Country: Malawi

Part II – U.S. Embassy Information:

U.S. Embassy Lilongwe
Area 40, Plot 24, Kenyatta Drive
Lilongwe 3

Phone:

Embassy Main: +265 (0) 1-773-166
Consular Section: +265 (0) 1-773-166 ext. 3411 / ext. 3251 / ext. 3431
After-Hours: +265 (0) 1-773-166 ext. 3443
Fax: +265 (0) 1-770-471

Online:

Embassy Website: <https://mw.usembassy.gov/>
Register with the U.S. Embassy, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Part III – Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors

- a. Country Profile:
The Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches conduct English-language services in Lilongwe. Other denominations, including the Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Seventh-day Adventist, and Southern Baptist are represented. The International Bible Fellowship holds non-denominational Christian services every Sunday on the campus of African Bible College. Islamic and Hindu places of worship are also available in Lilongwe.
- b. Religious Activities For Visitors:
English language Christian services are available in Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Part IV – Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Malawi

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy Lilongwe, Malawi assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

Dr. Charles Dzamalala

Pathologist/Embalmer
MalMed Health Care Services Ltd
Malawi College of Medicine – University of
Malawi
Blantyre 3
Tel: +265 (0) 1-871-911
Cell +265 (0) 0888-837-762

Dr. Steve Kamiza,

Pathologist/Embalmer
Malawi College of Medicine – University of
Malawi
Mahatma Gandhi Road
Private Bag 360, Chichiri, Blantyre 3
Tel: +265 (0) 1-871-911
Cell +265 (0) 0888-276-576

Dr. Charles Dzamalala and Dr. Steve Kamiza are the only certified pathologist/embalmers in Malawi. Both doctors are based in Blantyre and work with the Malawi College of Medicine of the University of Malawi. They can travel anywhere in the country if called to perform embalming services. *They also can arrange everything, including coffin, embalming, and shipment of remains to any location in the United States.*

Cremation: There are two crematoriums in Malawi that are acceptable by the international standards: Hindu Crematorium in Blantyre, and Shree Seva Samaj Crematorium in Lilongwe. Below are the locations and contact information in Blantyre and Lilongwe.

Hindu Cremation Services (Blantyre)

C/o Bharat Trading Company Limited
P.O. Box 5163, Blantyre
Mr. Vanzara: +265(0) 1-823-961
Mr. Navin Patel: +265(0) 888-821-636

Shree Seva Samaj Crematorium (Lilongwe)

Along Blantyre M1 Road
After Partners in Hope Hospital, Lilongwe
Mr. JB Kotecha: +265(0) 999-223-563
Mr. Kalaria +265(0) 888-821-000
Mr. Ganatra: +265 (0) 888-821-785

Part V – Profile of services available in Malawi regarding preparation and shipment of remains

1) Maximum period before burial

Malawi law does not regulate a maximum period before burial. The Malawian norm is to bury the body the same day if possible. Cold storage facilities are provided at all 24 Government secondary level care (District) hospitals and the four central hospitals: Lilongwe Central Hospital in Lilongwe, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, Mzuzu Central Hospital in Mzuzu, and Zomba Central Hospital in Zomba. The storage capacity for all the Central Hospitals is 50 bodies, while the cold rooms at the District Hospital mortuaries usually accommodate about 20 bodies. The maximum amount of time the hospitals can store a body is 30 days. After one month, bodies still unidentified in the mortuaries are referred to the District or City Assemblies for disposal in mass graves in Government cemeteries. This is done in conjunction with the Malawi Police.

2) Embalming

Malawi law does not regulate embalming. In most cases bodies are not embalmed. There are two formally trained embalmers/pathologists in Malawi.

3) Cremations

The Hindu Cremation Services handle cremation in Malawi. They are located in Lilongwe and in Blantyre. They require a death report (certified copies will do), a consent letter for cremation that is verified by the family, and a fee (see costs in Section 6). Ashes are ready for collection after 72 hours. Crematorium staff may also be able to assist with the logistics of shipping the remains for an additional fee.

4) Caskets and Containers

When remains are to be transported out of the country, the body is first embalmed or otherwise appropriately prepared or cremated for shipment. It is then placed in a galvanized tin coffin or casket (or urn in the case of cremation) for shipment. This is then placed within a wooden coffin, which is finally placed in a suitable packing case that can support the weight of the complete container and body. Caskets and urns that meet the requirements for shipping out of the country are available locally.

5) Exportation of Human Remains:

To export human remains, the following documents are required by the Ministry of Health and Population to issue a Transmittal Permit for the Remains:

- a) Death certificate issued by the National Registrations Bureau (NRB).
- b) Death report signed by a registered medical doctor on form B of the Births and Registration Act.
- c) Medical report from the Ministry of Health and Population stating the cause of death, the body is free of infectious disease, and that the body can be transported outside the country.
- d) Embalming certificate to include statement of method used.
- e) Malawi Customs form 35-Declaration form for minor exports.
- f) Declaration Certificate stating that the contents of coffin/casket are only human remains of deceased person.
- g) Postmortem report if death was due to unnatural causes.
- h) Transport/shipment permit from the Malawi Police Service – Interpol section
- i) Consular Mortuary Certificate (issued by the U.S. Embassy)

The following are also required to export an embalmed body

- a) Metal lined leak proof coffin or casket
- b) Physical address and phone number of person/agent sending the remains
- c) Coffin with metal lining inside.
- d) Casket to be enclosed in wooden crate for ease of handling with forklift and in a manner that it is not identified as such during transportation/shipment, also referred to as Police Clearance Certificate

The following are required to export human ashes

- a) Death certificate from National Registrations Bureau (NRB).
- b) Death report signed by a registered medical doctor on form B of the Births and Registration Act.
- c) Certificate of Cremation
- d) Remains are packed in tin lined wooden packing box (the Urn) that is hermitically sealed.
- e) Malawi Customs form 35- Declaration form for minor exports
- f) Police clearance certificate.
- g) Declaration certificate as with human remains

6) Costs: (Charges based on exchange rate of March 31, 2017: MK 750 = \$1.00)

The pathologists listed in Part IV can facilitate the navigation of mortuary services. Prices are not regulated, but you can expect to pay approximately \$8,000 for an autopsy, embalming, paperwork, transport, and aircraft charges. Additional charges may apply if the death occurs outside of Lilongwe, due to extra storage and transportation fees to bring the body to Lilongwe.

Charges for cremation can vary between MK 200,000 – MK 550,000 (\$250 – \$735)

Preparation of Remains and Shipment to the U.S.

Prices for post-mortem services are not regulated or consistent. Approximate figures are below and based on recent costs of mortuary services. It is most likely that you will be asked to pay a lump sum for a suite of services that will include everything needed to transport the body to the United States.

Service	Malawian Kwacha (MK)	US Dollar
Pathologist Fee	MK 350,000	\$470
Mortuary Assistants' Fee	MK 100,000	\$130
Laboratory Analyses	MK 80,000	\$110
Documentation	MK 100,000	\$130
Exhumation (if necessary)	MK 100,000	\$130
Embalming**	MK 150,000	\$200
Storage*	MK 120,000	\$160
Crate, casket, and casket related costs	MK 920,000	\$1,220
Professional fees (including consignment handling, communications and logistics coordination)	MK 650,000	\$870
Freight charges*** (see freight explanations on next page)	MK 2,000,000-2,500,000	\$2,700 - \$3,400
Transport*	MK 560,000	\$750
Accommodation*	MK 315,000	\$420
Clothing for dressing the body	MK 125,000	\$170
TOTAL	Approximately MK 6,000,000	Approximately \$8,000

All prices are subject to change.

Fees marked with a single asterisk* may vary greatly depending on the location of the death. This will affect transport time and distance, storage time, and any necessary accommodations.

Embalming fees marked with a double asterisk** represent standard fees. If the body was exhumed, there may be additional fees for the embalming process.

Freight charges marked with a triple asterisk*** are explained in greater detail on the following page.

Freight Companies

MANICA Limited

Head Office
Makata Road
P.O. Box 460
Blantyre, Malawi
Tel: +265 (0) 1-876-566
Fax: +265 (0) 1-871-297

GLENS FLA Malawi Limited

Makata Road
P.O. Box 629
Blantyre, Malawi
Tel: +265 (0) 1-871-888
Fax: +265 (0) 1-877-076

Bollore Transport and Logistics

Bollore Africa Logistics

Tour Bollore, 31-34 quai de Dion
Bouton
92811 Puteaux Cedex – France
Tel: +33 (0)1-46-96-44-33

SDV Malawi LTD

Maunde Rd
Blantyre
Tel: +265 (0)1824515
Fax: +265 (0)182107

***Freight charges are determined by kg weight. For normal consignments there is a fixed charge per kg. For human remains, the total consignment weight is multiplied by 2 before charging (per kg). For human ashes, the total consignment weight is multiplied by 3 before charging (per kg).

***Prices to transport a body to various U.S. cities are not published. On average, freight charges to the U.S. are around MK 2,000,000 (\$2700). Transport to the east coast is significantly less than transport to the west coast because flying beyond the east coast requires additional airline transfers. The price difference, although not published, is approximately MK500,000 (\$6,700).

From Malawi to:	Average Approximate Cost (MK)	Average Approximate Cost (\$USD)
East Coast	MK 2,000,000	\$2,700
West Cast	MK 2,500,000	\$3,400

7) Exhumation and Shipment

Bodies are permitted to be exhumed in Malawi. The exhumation process is an additional cost charged prior to the postmortem examination. Permission from the Malawi Police is required for any exhumation. The police then liaise with the village chief (if in a village graveyard), District Commissioner, or Council's Office (if in a city cemetery). The exhumation costs are around MK100,000 (\$130). This fee covers the cost of each party involved in the exhumation. However, additional embalming prices may apply to an exhumed body.

When exhuming a body, it is also required to test ancestry DNA. This can be done through Lancet Laboratories in South Africa and will cost at least MK 240,000 (\$320).

8) Autopsies

Autopsies are performed only by the pathology section of government hospitals (e.g. Kamuzu Central and Queen Elizabeth Central) and Malawi College of Medicine. Hospital records and death notice from village chief (if death occurs in rural area) are required documents.

Autopsies are typically required when a foreign national dies of unnatural causes. A waiver may be available.

9) Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services

Malawian funerals traditionally occur no more than three days after the death. In rare circumstances the burial might be up to one week later (e.g. if close family is out of the country). People traditionally go to see the body and pay their respects before he/she is buried. Bodies are buried either in the city's cemetery or in the local village. Before death, the deceased might have requested to be buried near family or to be brought back to his/her home village. If such a request was made, the family typically obliges. Mourners visit the body and contribute food or cash to neighbors. The neighbors traditionally prepare fresh meals at the site where people gather to pay their respects (i.e. they do not cook ahead of time and bring the prepared food).