



Slightly smaller than the state of Pennsylvania, the **Republic of Malawi** is a small landlocked country in Southern Africa that was born following independence from Great Britain in 1964. After three decades of one-party rule, multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections were finally held in 1994.

Of its more than 18 million people, **70% live below the line of poverty** (\$1.90 per day).

Rapid population growth has increased pressure on Malawi's land, forest and water resources. As a result, **acute food shortages** have occurred within the country where 80% of the population is employed in agriculture.

The UN classifies Malawi as a "low human development" country, **ranking 170 out of 188 countries and territories** with a Human Development Index score of 0.476.

Malawi **ranks 145 out of 159 countries evaluated for gender-based inequities** – the loss in human development of Malawian women as a result of inequalities in comparison to Malawian men in fundamental areas of health, empowerment and economic activity.

- **1,000,000 are living with HIV**, more than half of whom are women.
- **670,000 children have been orphaned by AIDS.**
- **100,000 children under the age of 14 are infected with HIV**, including 4,300 children infected as a result of mother-to-child transmission, which disappeared decades ago in the west.

While not fully immune to internal ethnic conflict between Chewa, Tumbuka and other groups, Malawi has not experienced the degree of ethnic violence that has erupted among various ethnicities within neighboring countries.

Long known as the "Warm Heart of Africa," the Malawian people are the nation's greatest asset, a direct result of their kindness and willingness to help both friend or stranger.

