

PARTNERPLAN

Gary Brough - Malawi July 2019

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Dear friends,

Last time we wrote to you Malawi was preparing to go to the polls. Now, over a month since the elections, there is still no peace over the announced results, which saw the incumbent president, Arthur Peter Mutharika, returned for a second term. In the days that followed the election there were reports of significant irregularities in the electoral process, including forged ballots and doctored tally sheets.

Opposition parties have taken the case to court and are seeking a rerun of the presidential election. While Malawi awaits the decision in the coming weeks, there have been protests nationwide calling for the resignation of the chairperson of Malawi Electoral Commission. There is an air of anticipation, a hope for a new form politics and an end to corruption.

Sadly, these protests have given rise to violence, including here in Mzuzu. A disruptive fringe has been present on each occasion and their attacks have escalated. Looting, vandalism and arson were widespread in the city last week.

We are safe. Eilidh is on holiday from school, I can work from home and the cupboards are well stocked. As such we can avoid the violence, but we are, nonetheless, deeply concerned by what we see around us. I'd be lying if I said I was not anxious this morning going into town to ensure we had food, cash and petrol to see us through the next few days. Things are much more disruptive to local vendors and businesses which have lost earnings and suffered damage in recent weeks.

Just over a week ago, Eilidh marked the end of term with her classmates in an early celebration of Malawi's 55 years of independence. They sang songs in Chichewa, dressed in chitenje fabrics and led the school in a rendition of the country's national anthem. It begins "O God bless our land of Malawi, keep it a land of peace."

Reading my bible tells me that peace is not simply the absence of violence and this is clear in the work we are involved in here too. The bible talks about 'shalom' – peace in every aspect of our living and being. According to Tim Keller:

It means complete reconciliation, a state of the fullest flourishing in every dimension—physical, emotional, social, and spiritual—because all relationships are right, perfect, and filled with joy. (Generous Justice, page 174)

So, while we covet your prayers for freedom from violence in Malawi during these post-election tensions, what we long for is God's peace in our hearts and in the hearts of those we are here to serve.

Yours in Him
Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh and Morven

P.S. You'll find a longer musing about peace in Malawi on our blog at <https://broughsinmalawi.com/2019/06/20/peace-isnt-always-peaceful/>

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Images from demonstrations on Thursday 4th July show police and military trying to contain violence. While many people protested peacefully there were those who resorted to arson, vandalism and looting.

