

ELECTIONS IN MALAWI.

FONDEMOS' VIEW:



Malawi Parliament Building, Lilongwe – Wikimedia

Democracy can bend without breaking and Malawi has just shown it.

For the third time in ten years, power has changed hands peacefully, with outgoing president Lazarus Chakwera swiftly conceding his defeat, and the electoral process held firm despite deep economic hardship.

That in itself is a democratic victory.

But resilience does not mean renewal.

Peter Mutharika returns to the presidency at 85, in a region where the median age is only 19.

This is not just a quirk of statistics.

It is the mark of a political order that struggles to make space for the young.

In Malawi, as elsewhere, ballots can change leaders without changing generations.

It is worth remembering how this space was secured.

In 2020, Malawi's judges courageously annulled the rigged 2019 election; a rare act in southern Africa, carried out despite threats and political pressure, including an attempt to push aside Chief Justice Andrew Nyirenda.

That decision might have rebuilt public trust and forced stronger safeguards, paving the way for this year's smoother transfer of power.

It is a virtuous circle: one courageous ruling strengthens institutions, stronger institutions build public trust, and trust in turn protects democratic outcomes.

To keep democracy alive, institutions must be defended and the next generation brought in.

The lesson is clear. Celebrate the concession, the alternation, the judges' bravery.

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