



Malawi - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 18 June 2013

Q16798 - Treatment of women with HIV in Malawi.

The *Malawi National Aids Commission* noted on their website:

“The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) say they are impressed with the strides that Malawi is making in the fight against HIV and AIDS.” [...]

“I have put a number of people that are either affected or infected of HIV and AIDS in key positions in the fight against the disease in order to put a human face in the battle,” said President Dr. Banda.

President Banda appealed to those involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS to encourage those living positively to come in the open to help fight stigma and discrimination.” (The Malawi National Aids Commission (2013) *Global Fund, UNAIDS promise more funding to Malawi for the fight against HIV and AIDS*)

The *US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices* published in April 2013 notes under the heading ‘Other Societal Violence or Discrimination’:

“Societal discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS remained a problem. Many individuals preferred to keep silent about their health rather than seek help and risk being ostracized, but campaigns by the government and NGOs to combat the stigma had some success. The National AIDS Commission (NAC) maintained that discrimination was a problem in both the public and private sectors. To counter such discrimination, the NAC provided funding to the MHRC to examine discrimination issues; the commission also provided support to the Malawi Law Commission for a sensitization program on the legal issues affecting persons living with HIV.”(US Department of State (19 April 2013) *2012 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Malawi*)

The *Freedom House* report published in September 2012 states:

“Malawi has been severely affected by the HIV-AIDS pandemic and societal discrimination against those with the disease remains a problem. Although government has undertaken efforts to address the problem of discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, pending legislation on this issue has raised concerns for local and international human rights groups. The legislation specifically prohibits and criminalizes discrimination against persons with HIV, and seeks to prevent cultural practices that have increased infection rates among women.” [...] (Freedom House (20 September 2012) *Countries at the Crossroads 2012 - Malawi*)

In July 2012 a document released by the *United States Agency for International Development* notes:

“HIV/AIDS is still stigmatized in Malawi, but the situation is improving.” (United States Agency for International Development (23 July 2012) *Malawi HIV/AIDS Health Profile*)

A report published by *AVERT* notes under the heading ‘HIV-related stigma’:

“HIV is still a taboo subject in many communities within Malawi and discrimination is common. As a result, few people living with HIV make their status known, many have difficulty discussing the subject with their families, and some support groups do not meet openly. [...]”

“It is clear that if AIDS is going to be tackled in Malawi work needs to be done at all levels to address HIV stigma and discriminatory behaviour.” (AVERT (undated) *HIV-related stigma*)

The *Red Ribbon Award* website notes:

“The Coalition of Women living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi (COWLHA) is a grassroots organization based in Lilongwe and active in every district of Malawi. Working with a wide range of partners, COWLHA’s members bring the issues of women living with HIV to the national stage, while providing them with support.” (Red Ribbon Award (undated) *The Coalition of Women living with HIV/AIDS - Malawi*)

Referring to *The Malawi Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (MANET+)* UNITERRA note on their website:

“The Malawi Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (MANET+) strives to improve the quality of life for people living with the disease. The organization creates a supportive environment free of stigma and discrimination. To do this, it promotes effective networking among associations and support groups of people living with HIV and AIDS and their collaborators.

MANET+ has been founded and is run by people living with HIV and AIDS who see a serious need to harmonize their activities. It forms a web of solidarity of associations or groups supporting HIV positive persons and the affected.” (UNITERRA (undated) *The Malawi Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (MANET+)*)

It states under the heading Key members are:

- National Association for People Living with HIV and AIDS – NAPHAM
- Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Malawi – COWLHA
- Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS – MANERELA+
- Health Care Workers Living Positively – HECAWLP
- Network of Journalists Living with HIV – JONEHA
- Teachers Living positively with HIV – T’LIPO” (ibid)

Referring to MANASO the *UNITERRA* website notes:

“The Malawi Network of AIDS Service Organizations (MANASO) is a local nongovernmental organization dedicated to contribute to the reduction of HIV prevalence and alleviate suffering caused by the HIV epidemic in Malawi. MANASO coordinates HIV and AIDS activities and builds the capacities of AIDS service organizations in Malawi. It offers coordination, capacity building, mobilization and it

allocates resources to its members. Formed in 1996, MANASO has a membership of 450 AIDS Service Organizations, including:

- Women for Fair Development (WOFAD)
- Active Youth Initiative for Social Enhancement (AYISE)
- Malawi AIDS Counselling and Resource Organization (MACRO)
- Mzuzu Youth Association (MYA)
- Nancholi Youth Organization (NYO)
- Association of Rural Community Development (ARCOD)
- Centre for the Empowerment of Women
- Centre for Conflict Management and Women's Development
- Youth Network and Counselling (YONECO)
- Active Youth in Development (AYIDO)" (UNITERRA (undated) *The Malawi Network of AIDS Service Organizations (MANASO)*)

References

AVERT (undated) *HIV-related stigma*
<http://www.avert.org/aids-malawi.htm>
(Accessed 14 June 2013)

Freedom House (20 September 2012) *Countries at the Crossroads 2012 - Malawi*
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<http://www.uniterra.ca/who-are-we/partners-profiles/manaso/>
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<http://www.ein.org.uk/print/members/country-report/malawi-hiv-aids-health-profile>
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US Department of State (19 April 2013) *2012 Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2013 – Malawi*
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/204351.pdf>
(Accessed 13 June 2013)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

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Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
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IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
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Relief Web
UNHCR Refworld
UK Home Office
US Department of State