



Political Science Association

Call for Papers- the 4th Biennial Conference for Malawi Political Science Association (PSA)

Theme: “Malawi’s democracy at the crossroads? Maturing Institutions or a Tailspin into Uncertainty?”

Date: 8-9th August 2026

Venue: Sunbird Livingstonia Beach and Waterfront, Salima.

1.0. About Political Science Association (PSA)

The Political Science Association (PSA) is a professional body -registered under Trustees Incorporation Act -with a diverse membership of academics and professionals in the fields of political science, political philosophy, political and economic governance, public administration, international relations, peace and security studies, public law, public policy and political economy analysis and other related disciplines relevant to the study, analysis and understanding of politics. The purpose of PSA is to contribute to political and socio-economic development of Malawi through promoting the study and analysis of politics through research, advocacy and policy dialogue. PSA is also an institutional member of International Political Science Association (IPSA) (<https://www.ipsa.org/profile/malawi-political-scienceassociation>), and works closely with the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). PSA, in collaboration with University of Malawi’s Department of Politics and Public Affairs, hosts the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs.

2.0. Purpose of the Conference

The Political Science Association (Malawi) is pleased to announce its 4th Biennial Conference, scheduled to take place from 8th to 9th August 2026 at Sunbird Livingstonia Beach and Waterfront, Salima Malawi. The theme of the conference is “*Malawi’s democracy at the crossroads? Maturing Institutions or a Tailspin into Uncertainty?* ”. This conference holds a special significance as it marks 15 years since Political Science Association (PSA) was established in Malawi, and 33 years since Malawi transitioned from one-party system to a multi-party democracy in 1993 after referendum. The Conference is also held after Malawi’s 2025 general elections which ushered into power the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), bringing to an end the brief reign of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP).

The 2025 elections marked another critical moment in Malawi’s democratic journey, offering opportunities to reflect on the resilience, strengths, and weaknesses of the country’s political system. More than three decades since the transition to multiparty rule, and with three successive turnovers of government, questions abound about whether Malawi’s democracy is showing signs of institutional maturity or sliding into turbulence and fragility. The pre and post-election landscapes have raised debates on the quality of leadership, the effectiveness of electoral institutions, the fragility of political parties, and the degree to which citizens’ voices shape governance.

This year’s conference takes on added significance as the Political Science Association (PSA) celebrates 15 years of existence. Since its founding, the Association has provided a vital platform for scholarship, dialogue, and engagement on governance and democracy. The 2026 conference therefore seeks not only to reflect on Malawi’s current democratic trajectory but also to celebrate PSA’s contributions to advancing political science research, shaping public discourse, and informing policy. Bringing together scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and citizens, the conference will critically examine whether Malawi is consolidating its democratic gains or facing a tailspin that could undermine its hard-won freedoms—while charting a way forward for a more resilient democracy. The 4th Biennial Conference will therefore provide a platform for academics, researchers, policymakers, practitioners and citizens to engage in deep discussions, share perspectives, and present empirical findings relating to Malawi’s political and democratic landscape, and hence drawing lessons for the future.

In conjunction with the Conference, the editorial team of Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA) is calling for the submission of papers for presentation at the 4th Biennial conference in Salima. Besides presentation at the conference, selected accepted papers will subsequently be subjected to a rigorous peer review leading to their publication in Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA) December 2026 Issue.

3.0. Specific Thematic Areas

We welcome both theoretical and empirical papers, as well as comparative perspectives, under (but not limited to) the following themes:

3.1. Elections and Democratic Consolidation

- Assessing the credibility of the 2025 elections
- Electoral institutions and their performance
- Citizen trust and participation in electoral processes
- Candidate selection, inclusivity, and internal party democracy

3.2. Political Parties and Representation

- The state of party systems: fragmentation, alliances, and endurance
- Party financing and political accountability
- The rise and rise of independent candidates and the fate of political parties

3.3. Governance and Institutions

- Separation of powers and checks and balances post-2025
- The judiciary, Parliament, and executive relations
- Corruption, integrity, and the rule of law

3.4. Citizenship and Public Opinion

- Public trust in democratic institutions
- Youth, women, and marginalized groups in democratic participation
- Public opinion research in the 2025 elections: useful tools or agents of political propaganda?

3.5. Regional and Comparative Perspectives

- Lessons from neighboring democracies in Southern Africa
- Malawi in the African democracy trajectory: consolidation or backsliding?
- Democracy support, external actors, and sovereignty

3.6. Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

- The role of digital technologies and social media in shaping election campaigns and electoral outcomes
- Climate change, resource governance, and democratic accountability
- Security, conflict, and democratic resilience

3.7. Media and Civil Society in Politics

- Exploring the role of media in shaping political processes during the two distinctive periods.
- Examining the evolution and impact of civil society in promoting political accountability, inclusivity and social justice.

4.0. Timelines

- **Abstracts** (max. 300 words) should clearly state the research question, methodology, and key arguments. Abstracts should be sent to: malawipsa@gmail.com and copied to hkayuni@unima.ac.mw, bdulani@unima.ac.mw by the submission deadline.
- **Abstracts submission deadline:** 30th April 2026

- **Notification of acceptance:** 20th May 2026
- **Full paper submission:** 20th July 2026
- **Presentation of Papers:** 4th PSA Biennial Conference 8th-9th August 2026 at Sunbird Livingstonia Beach, Mangochi. All papers will be presented on 8th August 2026
- **Resubmission of Full paper** addressing comments from the Conference as well as from editors for publication in Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs: 12th September 2026
- **Peer review:** 15th September-15th November 2026
- **Publication in Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs :** December 2026

4.0. Formatting and Style

Submissions must follow APA (author-date style) referencing style and adhere to the Journal's formatting guidelines (see full guidelines at: mendeley.com/guidelines/apa-citation-guide)

5.0. Editorial Team

Chief Editors:

- Prof. Happy Kayuni – Professor of Political Science, University of Malawi (UNIMA)
- Associate Prof. Boniface Dulani – Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Malawi (UNIMA)

Editorial Advisor:

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More information

For more information about the submission guidelines, and editorial team contact us at malawipsa@gmail.com and copied hkayuni@unima.ac.mw, bdulani@unima.ac.mw