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Madonna jets out of Malawi: Official

LILONGWE: US pop star Madonna jetted out of Malawi on Friday ending a five-day trip which included laying a foundation stone for a new girls school, an airport official told AFP.

The singer who was accompanied by her biological children Rocco and Lourdes and her other two children whom she adopted in Malawi flew out of Kamuzu international Airport on a private jet bound for London, the official said.

Madonna's charity, Raising Malawi, is building a 15-million-dollar Girls Academy to educate young Malawi girls from poor backgrounds.

The star already funds several charities in the country, including homes for children with AIDS.

She has built a multi-purpose community centre 50 kilometres (30 miles) from Lilongwe which looks after more than 8 000 orphans.

Late Thursday Madonna, accompanied by Lourdes and adopted daughter Mercy 'Chifundo' James, visited the centre where a local band and a choir serenaded the pop star and villagers thanked her for her help.

"I am happy my small contribution has lifted the lives of many," Madonna told the cheering villagers.

"It pains me as a mother to see children suffering because they can't get food or clothes. I want to use what I have to make the world a better place where everyone will enjoy life."

The southern African country is one of the world's poorest nations, with more than half of the population of 13 million living on less than one dollar a day.

Madonna first visited Malawi in 2006 to controversially adopt David Banda, who is now four. She adopted her second Malawian child Mercy, also four, last year. — AFP



Madonna