
ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



STATEMENT ON THE MT DARWIN WEST AND CHIRUMHANZU-ZIBAGWE BY-ELECTIONS

Harare-28 March 2015- ZESN observed the Parliamentary by-elections in Mt Darwin West and Chirumhanzu-Zibagwe constituencies. ZESN deployed static, constituency and mobile observers at polling stations and collation centres as well as constituency observers who observed collation and tallying at the constituency tally centres. ZESN observers reported that the electoral process was peaceful in the two constituencies.

Prior to the holding of the by-elections, ZESN observed the voter registration and inspection processes.

This statement is based on observations from the observers that were deployed by ZESN on Election Day.

Opening, Set-up and Voting

Everywhere ZESN observed, polling stations opened on time by 7am and voting proceeded smoothly without any major incidences recorded. ZESN observers reported that all polling stations were adequately manned by ZEC officials with an average of 6 polling officials in Mt Darwin West and 8 officials in Chirumhanzu-Zibagwe per polling station. All polling stations had all the essential election materials and important procedures to ensure the secrecy of the ballot were observed as having been followed at all polling stations. At 100 % of polling stations where ZESN observed ballot boxes were shown to be empty and ballot papers were counted and recorded before voting commenced.

By 9 AM, in Mt Darwin West ZANU PF had party agents at 100% of polling stations, Transform Zimbabwe at 100% of polling stations and the NCA at 43% at polling stations where ZESN observed. In Chirumhanzu-Zibagwe ZANU PF had party agents at 100% of polling stations, the Good People Movement at 33% and Transform Zimbabwe at 67% of the polling stations where ZESN observed.

ZESN commends ZEC for ensuring that polling stations were easily accessible to people with disability and for giving priority to pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly.

ZESN noted with concern the continued use of voter registration slips during the by-elections. Though ZEC was authenticating the slips, ZESN is concerned that the continued use of the voters' slips might be an indication that the voters' roll has not been updated

despite voter registration and inspection exercises in the constituencies. This can bring into question the integrity of the voters' roll and votes cast by those using such slips.

ZESN observers noted with concern the number of people who were turned away on the basis of being in the wrong wards or because they were not registered. There were also a significant number of voters who requested for assistance in casting their vote. This has been a documented concern in previous polls and has yet to be addressed.

Despite the challenges noted above, ZESN notes that the logistics of the by-elections were better managed namely; the polling station lists were given to stakeholders in time, smooth accreditation of observers, engagement of CSOs in conducting voter education, the provision of the voters' roll to candidates and political parties in both printed and electronic formats and the improvement in provision of information to electoral stakeholders.

Counting

Counting in all polling stations took place according to procedures and results were displayed outside the polling stations. All party agents agreed that the process had gone well and signed the V11 form.

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout in Mt. Darwin West is estimated at 53% and in Chirumanzu-Zibagwe, 47% of the registered voters. Chirumanzu-Zibagwe turnout is below 50% of the eligible voters. ZESN would recommend collaboration amongst stakeholders in conducting civic and voter education to raise awareness of citizens on participation in elections.

Results

In the two constituencies, ZANU PF candidates won the seats. The table below shows the projected results of the by-elections as well as the 2013 results for the same constituencies.

Mt Darwin West

	Candidate name	Political Party	Votes Received
2015 By-Elections	Kennard Fungai	Transform Zimbabwe	302
	Matigu Reuben	NCA	216
	Seremwe Bornwell	ZANU PF	18315
2013 Harmonised Elections	Joice T Mujuru	ZANU PF	22877
	Kapepa Oliver	MDC-T	828
	Benhura Benjamin	MDC	260

Chirumanzu-Zibagwe

	Candidate name	Political Party	Votes Received
2015 by-Election	Gadzamoyo Dehwa	Good People's Movement	86
	Chawaona Wilboard Kanoti	Independent	257
	Mnangagwa Auxillia	ZANU PF	16092
	Munashe Mutodza	NCA	79
	Abigail Musambasi	Transform Zimbabwe	456
2013 Harmonised Elections	Jeko Ishmael	MDC-T	2803
	Mnangagwa Emmerson D	ZANU PF	17996
	Zinyemba Janet S	MDC	503

The results show that ZANU PF has retained the 2 seats which fell vacant following the appointment in 2013 of former Vice President Joyce Mujuru and the elevation of Hon Emmerson D Mnangagwa to the post of Vice-President of Zimbabwe in December 2014. However the votes for ZANU PF have declined in the 2 constituencies, in Mt. Darwin West by 4562 and in Chirumanzu-Zibagwe by 1904.

Generally there is low interest in elections in between the major harmonised elections. The MDC formations (MDC T and MDC Renewal team) boycotted the elections hence losing ground of their supporters.

Recommendations

- ZESN continues to work towards a Zimbabwe where democratic electoral processes are upheld.
- ZESN makes the following recommendations on the management of elections in Zimbabwe:
- Government must ensure the full alignment of the electoral law to the constitutional provisions and review the regulations in order to improve electoral processes and increase transparency and public confidence in elections, including in the areas of voter education, registration and inspection.
- Financial resourcing of ZEC must be improved to enable them to fully discharge their mandate on key electoral processes.
- ZEC should provide gender disaggregated information on elections to stakeholders in order to facilitate informed interventions by CSOs.
- Enforcement of the code of conduct for candidates to commit to zero tolerance to violence and intimidation against the electorate.

- Voter education must involve more stakeholders and must be strengthened to reduce the number of turned away and assisted voters.
- ZEC must include all stakeholders, including political parties and the civil society in the ongoing voter registration exercises and must diligently provide access to the voters roll to all stakeholders, in print and searchable electronic format. Transparency in the voter registration process will increase confidence and reduce the possibility of the voters' roll continuing to be a source of contention in future elections.

ZESN remains committed to promoting democratic elections and electoral processes in Zimbabwe. ZESN will continue advocating for electoral reforms and a conducive electoral environment.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

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