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## ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



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### MID-DAY STATEMENT: MHONDORO-MUBAIRA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY-ELECTION

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**Harare- 5 March 2016** - ZESN is observing the National Assembly by-election in Mhondoro-Mubaira, observers have reported that voting started on time in all polling stations ZESN has deployed and is proceeding smoothly. At polling stations where ZESN has deployed observers there are adequate polling personnel and voting materials.

ZESN has deployed 15 election observers comprising static (polling station based observers), constituency and mobile observers to measure compliance with the Constitution and Electoral Laws. Election observation is still on-going in the constituency, as of midday the following trends had been observed;

**Political Party Agents:** The Electoral Act allows for contesting parties to have one agent inside the polling station and an additional agent stationed within the vicinity of the polling station. ZESN has observed that in this by-election only ZANU Pf has deployed party agents at all polling stations. This is regrettable given that party agents are critical in assessing whether the election conforms to national legislation, regional and international standards for credible elections.

**Polling Station Based voting:** As with previous by-elections in Marondera Central and Nkulumane, ZEC is using the polling station based voter registration system in Mhondoro-Mubaira. ZESN notes the continued use of polling station based voters' rolls as well as a supplementary roll based on the previous ward based voters' rolls. However, the capacity of the Voter Registration department at the Commission should be enhanced to enable the consolidation of the main voters' rolls with the Supplementary Rolls into one voters' roll. The use of one voters' roll in future elections will greatly enhance the transparency and integrity of the electoral processes.

Furthermore, as part of its preparations for the 2018 elections, ZEC should consider piloting the biometric voter registration (BVR) in future by-elections.

**Police presence:** There is a heavy presence of police officers inside and outside of polling stations especially at the Ward collation centres, for instance at Rwizi Poly Clinic there are 10 police officers. The heavy presence of police officers at polling stations might be intimidating to voters.

**Peaceful Environment:** ZESN has observed that the political environment in the constituency is relatively peaceful with voters casting their votes in peace and general calm. There was however one incident at Watyoka polling station where an ineligible drunk voter with an expired passport was detained by police on the basis of trying to disrupt the voting process.

ZESN is still observing the voting throughout the day, the counting process at the end of the day and the collation of results at the ZEC Constituency Centres. ZESN is committed to promote democratic elections in Zimbabwe.

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**PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

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