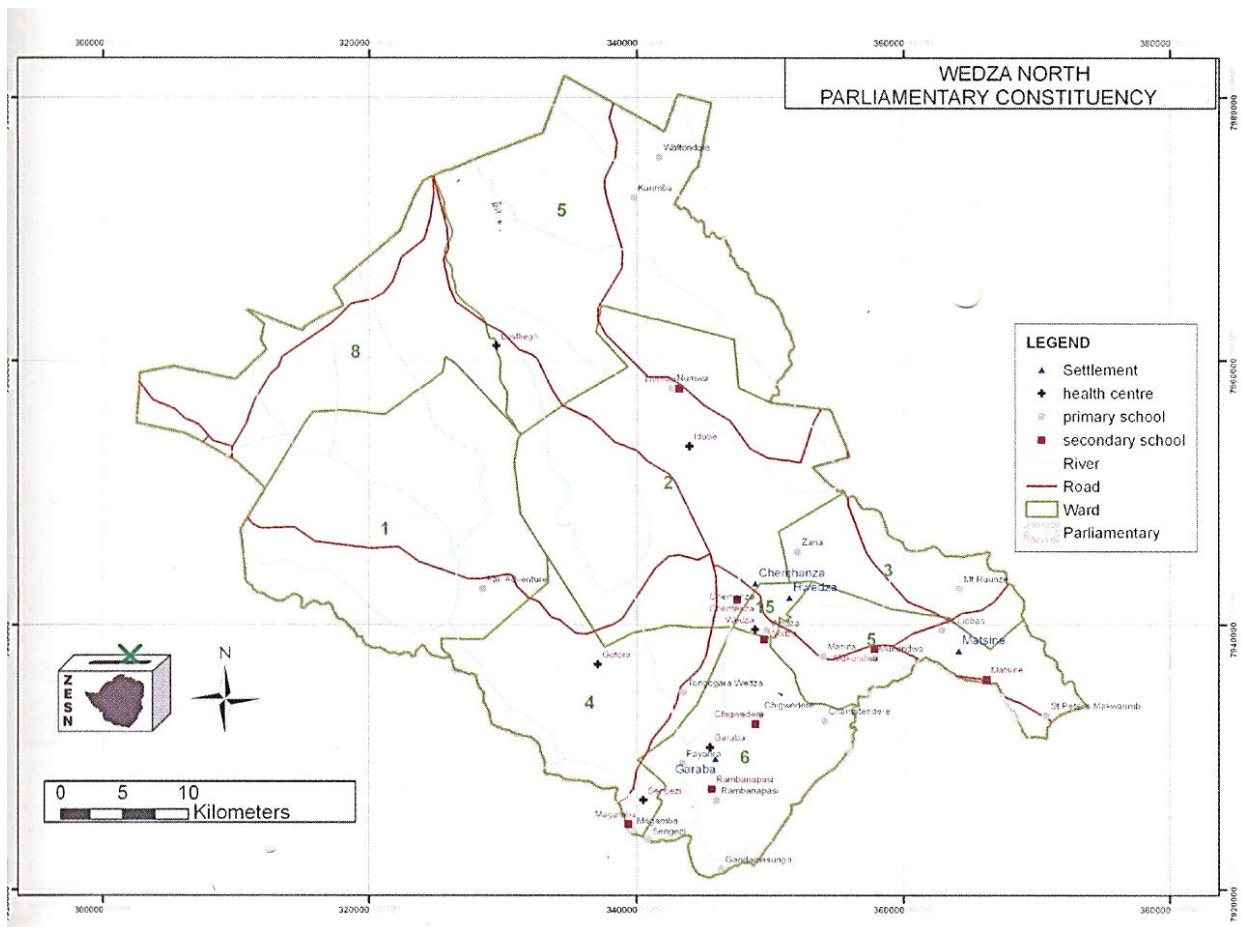


Zimbabwe Election Support Network



CONSTITUENCY PROFILE

Wedza North Constituency



Introduction

Mashonaland East Province has nine districts, 23 House of Assembly and six senatorial constituencies. Wedza North constituency was created after the 2008 Delimitation exercise. It was hived off from Hwedza constituency. It is made up of major areas of Garaba, Chemhanza, Hwedza, and Matsine. This constituency is made up of eight wards that is 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6 of Wedza Rural District Council and wards 5 and 8 of Marondera Rural District Council. The by-election will be held on the 15th of May 2015.

Population Distribution

Mashonaland East has a population of 1 344 955 representing 10.3% of the total national population. The province comprises of 51.5% females and 48.5% males and is ranked sixth in terms of its population. The rate of natural increase¹ of the population is 2.3%. The population in the province mostly resides in the rural areas, with only 14% found in the urban areas. In terms of the age composition, 42% of the population is under 15, 53% between 15-64 years and 5% aged 65 years and above.

Hwedza District, according to the 2012 Census Report, has a population of 70 698, comprising of 51.2% females and 48.8% males. The rate of natural increase for the District is 1.5%².

Previous Election Results

The constituency is a ZANU PF stronghold, the party has managed to maintain the seat, with the party winning in both 2008 and 2013. In 2013 ZANU PF votes increased by 8 010 or 127%, whilst votes for the MDC T reduced by 2046 from 2008. In 2013 the MDC T was beaten by a margin of 12 737 votes, when compared to 2008 when ZANU PF won by a margin of 2 681 votes. The MDC and MKD fared dismally in the elections, with MDC gaining 510 and MKD just 223 votes.

Table 1: 2008 and 2013 Election Results

¹ This rate of natural increase is the difference between the level of fertility and mortality and does not take account of any growth due to migration.

² Source; ZimStat Report; Zimbabwe National population Census available at < http://www.zimstat.co.zw/dmdocuments/Census/CensusResults2012/Mash_East.pdf>

Year	Candidates	Political Party	Number of Votes
2008 Harmonised Elections	Munjeyi Gibson	ZANU PF	6267
	Mutandwa Thomas	MDC-T	3586
2013 Harmonised Elections	Musanhu Simon	ZANU PF	14277
	Manomano Kudakwashe	MDC-T	1540
	Maminimini Tonderayi	MDC	510
	Choto Dennis	MKD ³	223

Source: www.zec.org.zw

Background to the by-elections

The by-election was proclaimed, when the seat fell vacant following the death of former legislator Simon Musanhu who was also the Deputy Minister of Water Environment and Climate. The election will be held on the 15 of May 2015.

Nomination process

The nomination process was conducted on the 16th of March and the following were duly nominated as candidates:

Table 2: Candidates contesting the by-elections

Name of Candidate	Name of Party
David Musabayana	ZANU PF
Nyarai Precious Manhimanzi	Freedom Front
Messrs Tichaona Makara	Transform Zimbabwe
Chikukwa Mudzingwa	National Constitutional Assembly

³ MKD- Mavambo/Kusile/Dawn

Four candidates from four political parties will be contesting on the 15th of May. The MDC formations will not be contesting this by-election, as their grievances on electoral reforms have not been addressed.

Registered Voters and registration process

Voter registration in Zimbabwe has been contentious and in 2013, a special mobile voter registration was conducted. Wedza North had 23 180 registered voters in 2008⁴. In 2013⁵ the registered voters increased to 25 872, representing an increase of 2 692 voters or an 11.6%.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) conducted the second pilot voter registration exercise in Wedza North. The registration started from 22 March and ran till 28 March 2015. The process included registration of voters' and inspection of the voters' roll with the bases being the 2013 Harmonised elections voters' roll. The ZEC was not re-registering the electorate. The ZEC Chairperson also highlighted that they would incorporate lessons learnt from the Chirumanzu-Zibagwe and Mt. Darwin West by-elections.

Voter Education

Voter education is being conducted in Wedza North. Of concern is the lack of resources by the ZEC, which might hamper effective voter education. The voter education was divided in three phases; voter education for pre-nomination court, for education for voter registration and inspection and voter education for polling. Currently the ZEC is conducting voter education for polling, however this has also been affected by limited stakeholders who are also supplementing the ZEC in conducting voter education.

Campaigning

Campaigning was relatively calm and peaceful. No major incidences of violence, intimidation and harassment were recorded. Of concern still remains the role of traditional leaders in electoral processes and elections. Section 45(2) of the Traditional Leaders Act does not permit traditional leaders to canvass or serve as an election agent

⁴ Zimbabwe Electoral Commission; The Report on the Delimitation Exercise for the 2008 Harmonised Elections

⁵ This is taken from the 19 June voters' roll as the mobile voter registration processes was been conducted.

or manager for any candidate, or nominate any candidate, for election as state President, Members of Parliament or councillor in any local authority. In addition the traditional leaders are not supposed to be influenced by political affiliation in the discharge of their duties.

The electorate should enjoy their political rights enshrined in Section 67 of the Constitution. According to Section 67 every citizen has the right to form, join and to participate in the activities of a political party or organisation of choice; to campaign freely and peacefully for a political party or cause and to participate in peaceful political activity. The rights of freedom of association and assembly should also be guaranteed.

Conclusion

Political parties contesting the elections must take appropriate measures to prevent electoral malpractices before, during and after the election period. This includes calling upon their supporters to peaceful campaigning and canvassing. Traditional leaders must adhere to the Traditional Leaders Act and should be non-partisan in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities.

The government should avail the necessary resources to the ZEC to enable the Commission to fully administer and manage the electoral processes and elections. Realignment of Electoral Laws to the Constitution is urgent and hence the government must accord it the attention it deserves.