

1.1 Introduction

Guruve South Constituency was cleaved from the old Guruve Constituency during the 2008 delimitation exercise. It consists of (12) wards covering such areas as Mudindo which has relatively developed infrastructure, Shinje and Jester growth points. The infrastructure in the constituency is generally dilapidated following years of negligence and lack of servicing. The road network is mainly gravel. The constituency is located in a good climatic area suitable for agriculture with crops such as maize, cotton and groundnuts the predominant agricultural produce. The major forms of economic activity in the constituency are subsistence farming and illegal gold panning.

1.1 Population Demographics

Zimstat Census Report of 2012 put the population of the province at 1 152 520 people with 567 140 males and 585 380 females. Mashonaland central province has 18 constituencies. The Constituency had 34,757 potential voters of which 31,294 were registered representing a 90% registration rate¹ in the 2013 voters' roll.

1.2 Previous Elections

Guruve South constituency has been a ZANU PF stronghold since 2008. At its birth in 2008, Guruve South constituency was contested by ZANU PF, MDC-T and UPP. It was won by Chininga E.T Chindori of ZANU PF. He beat his next rival Mwapenya Tichaona of the MDC-T party with 4 986 votes. In 2013 national elections, ZANU PF was represented by Mutematsaka Chriswell after beating his MDC-T revival by a huge margin of 16 735 votes to maintain ZANU PF dominance in the constituency. MDC-T lost 2 229 votes between 2008 and 2013 National elections representing a 51.9% decrease in votes received for the party. This further weakened the opposition politics in the constituency.

¹ RAU- An Audit of Zimbabwe's 2013 Voters' Roll

Table 1: Comparison of 2008 and 2013 Election Results

| YEAR | CANDIDATE | POLITICAL PARTY | VOTES RECEIVED |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 2013 | Chimanikire Noel | MDC | 695 |
| | Karise Tinei | MDC-T | 2,069 |
| | Mutematsaka Chriswell | ZANU PF | 18,804 |
| 2008 | Chininga ET Chindori | ZANU PF | 9284 |
| | Mwapenya Tichaona | MDC-T | 4298 |
| | Paganga Vakanai | UPP | 350 |

1.3 Background to the By-Election

The Guruve South by-elections will be held on 23 April 2016. The seat fell vacant following the expulsion of the Member of Parliament Mutematsaka Chriswell expelled from ZANU PF and subsequently recalled from Parliament on allegations of fanning factionalism within the party and working to unseat the President through unconstitutional means². The Constitution of Zimbabwe, Section 129 (1) (k) states that a seat of a member of Parliament becomes vacant if the member ceases to belong to the political party in which he or she was a member when elected to Parliament. In accordance with the Electoral Act, Section 39 (2) the President proclaimed the date of the by-election as 23 April 2016. So far the MDC-T has expelled twenty one³ MPs who subsequently joined the Renewal Democrats Party and the People's Democratic Party while ZANU PF has expelled six MPs on allegations of working to unseat the President through unconstitutional means.

1.4 Nomination Court and contesting Parties

The nomination court sat on 26 February 2016 at Bindura Magistrate Court to receive nomination papers for the Guruve South constituency. Two candidates successfully filled their nomination papers and will contest the by-election. As the case in all previous by-elections since the 2013 harmonised elections, the MDC formations are not participating in the by-election.

² <http://www.herald.co.zw/zanu-pf-expels-3-more-suspends-6/>

³ <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/03/24/no-joy-fired-mps-parly-demands-car-loan-money/>

Table 2: list of candidates for the Guruve by-election

| NAME OF CANDIDATE | SEX | PARTY NAME |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Dutiro Patrick | M | ZANU PF |
| Mutsvene Simbarashe | M | NCA |

1.5 Voter Registration

The Zimbabwe Electoral commission (ZEC) conducted polling station based voter registration in Guruve south constituency from 29 February to 9 March 2016. The Commission used the 2013 ward-based voter's list as the basis for the registration exercise. According to the Research and Advocacy Unit's 2013 Voter's Roll Audit Report, Mashonaland Central had 537 708 registered voters and 31,294 registered voters in Guruve South constituency.

1.5 Voter Education

Section 239 (h) of the Constitution provides for the ZEC to conduct and supervise voter education. ZEC conducted targeted Voter education in phases. Voter education for pre-nomination was conducted from 15-19 February 2016 while voter education for voter registration was carried out from 27 February to 2 March 2016. The Commission also planned to conduct voter education for inspection of the voters' roll from the 29th of March to April the 3rd while pre-polling voter education will be conducted from 11-15 April 2016.

1.6 Conclusion

ZESN encourages the contesting political parties and supporters to observe the rule of law that will usher in an enabling environment to support the conduct of a credible election. ZESN continues to promote democratic elections and therefore urges the candidates to respect the right to vote and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution.