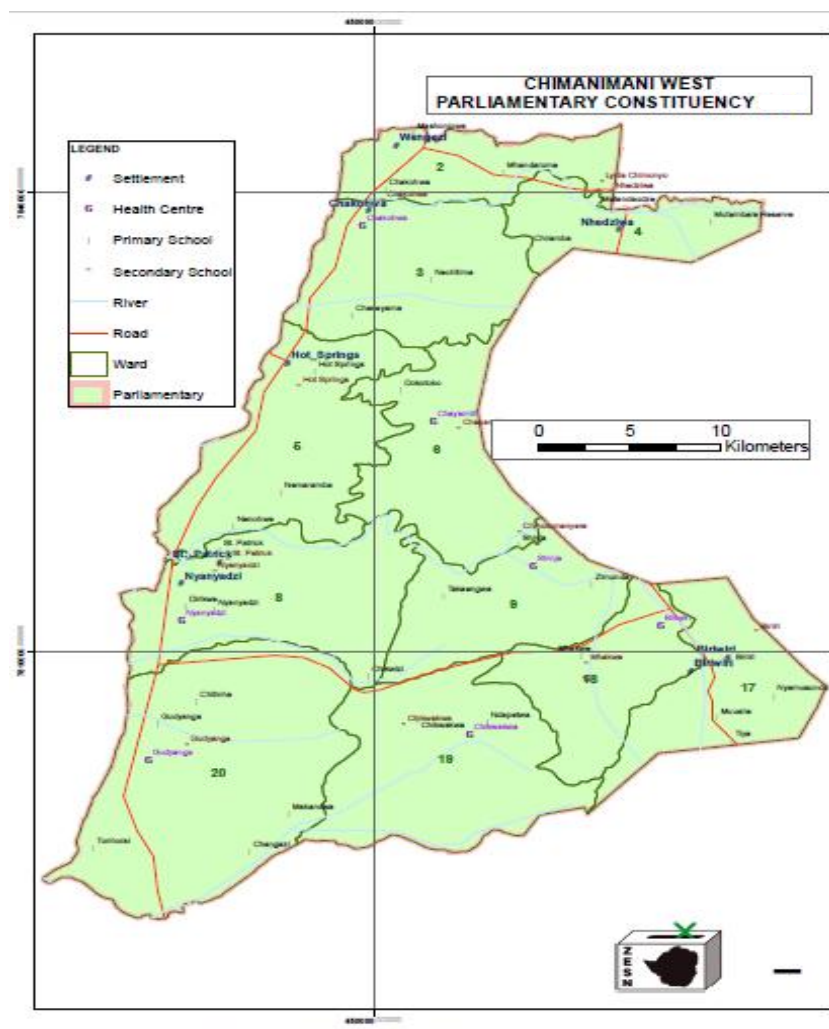


Zimbabwe Election Support Network



CHIMANIMANI WEST CONSTITUENCY PROFILE



1. Introduction

Chimanimani West Constituency is located in Manicaland Province and comprises of 11 wards of covering areas such as Biriwiri, Hot Springs, Wengezi, Nyanyadzi and Chakohwa. People mainly rely on subsistence farming and market gardening for livelihoods selling their produce in Mutare City to the North of the Constituency a distance of about 140 kilometres. There are very limited opportunities for formal employment following the closure of factories and some of the diamond mines in the area. In accordance with Section 51 (3) of the Electoral Act the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has allocated fifty-one (51) polling stations for the by-election for the purpose of electing the Chimanimani West Member of Parliament.

1.1 Population Demographics

According to the ZimStat Census Report of 2012, Manicaland Province has a total population of 1,752,698 and Chimanimani District has a total population of 134, 940. The constituency has a total population of 66,792 of which 35,720 are females and 31, 072 are males.

1.2 Previous Election Results

In the 2005 and 2008 elections the Chimanimani Parliamentary seat was won by MDC-T candidates, Roy Bennet and Lynette Karenyi respectively. Munacho T Mutezo of ZANU PF wrestled the seat from the MDC-T in the 2013 harmonised elections receiving 9,997 compared to the 7,019 received by Lynette Karenyi of the MDC-T.

Table 1: Comparison of 2008 and 2013 Election Results

Year	Candidate	Political party	Number of votes
2013	Mutezo Munacho Thomas	ZANU PF	9,997
	Dube Pindukai Guide	MDC	589
	Karenyi Lynette	MDC-T	7019
	Nhamo Solomon	ZAPU	167

2008	Karenyi Lynette	MDC-T	8,558
	Mutezo Munacho Thomas	ZANU PF	7,108

Source: www.zec.org.zw

1.3 Background to the by-election

The Chimanimani West by-election is the 29th National Assembly by-election since the 2013 harmonised elections. President Mugabe proclaimed 26 November 2016 as the date for the Chimanimani West National Assembly by-election. The seat fell vacant following the expulsion of the Member of Parliament Munacho Mutezo from ZANU PF and his subsequent recalling from Parliament. The by-election was therefore necessitated by Section 129 (1) (k) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which states that the seat of a Member of Parliament becomes vacant if the member ceases to belong to the political party of which he or she was a member when elected to Parliament.

1.4 Political Environment in the run up to the by-election

In the run up to the by-election in Chimanimani West, ZESN received reports of vote buying using food aid such as rice and maize and allegations of voter intimidation. The role of traditional leaders in the constituency during the campaign period has also come under scrutiny with some of the leaders campaigning for the ZANU PF candidate in contravention of Section 281 of the Constitution which outlines the principles to be observed by traditional leaders.

1.5 Nomination and Contesting Parties

The Nomination Court sat on Friday 30 September 2016 at the Mutare Magistrates Court and was presided over by the ZEC Provincial Elections Officer Mr Masabeya. Four candidates successfully filed their papers at the nomination court and will contest the by-election on 26 November, 2016. This is the first by-election to have a female contestant in 2016 reflecting that elections remain a male dominated space in Zimbabwe and political parties have a long way to go in ensuring gender balance.

Below is the list of candidates who managed to successfully submit their papers to the Nomination Court.

Table 2: List of Contesting Candidates for the Chimanimani West By-Election

CANDIDATE	PARTY	GENDER
Gudyanga Peter	Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe (RDZ)	M
Matsikenyere Nokuthula	ZANU PF	F
Musakanuka Pesanai	National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)	M
Mtetwa Edmore	Independent	M

1.6 Voter Registration

The ZEC registered voters in the constituency using the polling station based voter registration system. The voter registration centres will be used as the polling stations on election day. Over 16,000 people were registered during the voter registration process and about 32,000 are in the supplementary voters' roll based on registered voters from the 2013 harmonised elections. According to a research conducted by the Research and Advocacy Unit Manicaland Province had a total of 753,982 registered voters while Chimanimani West Constituency had 28, 849 registered voters¹.

1.7 Voter education

The ZEC has in recent by-elections faced numerous financial constraints which have hampered the Commission's ability to conduct comprehensive voter education. The Commission was unable to do voter education for Nomination and for inspection. ZEC deployed one (1) team per ward for voter education for polling and was unable to print voter education materials for the pre-polling voter education exercise.

¹ Research and Advocacy Unit Report on key statistics from the June 2013 Voters' Roll

The Commission invited accredited civic society organisations to conduct the voter education as provided for in the Electoral Act and ZESN conducted voter education for polling from 15 to 18 November 2016.

1.8 Conclusion

ZESN notes with concern the recurring trend of vote buying and intimidation in recent by-elections and calls upon the ZEC and other institutions supporting democracy to investigate the cases. ZESN urges contesting candidates to respect the right to vote and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution.