

## **ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK**



### **ZESN DID NOT BACK LAXTON GROUP LIMITED IN BVR EQUIPMENT SUPPLY TENDER PROCESS**

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**Harare - 6 June 2017** – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) notes the awarding of the BVR kits tender by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) as part of preparations for the implementation of the biometric voter registration (BVR) system.

ZESN would like to clarify that the network did not back Laxton Group Limited during the BVR tender process as purported in the headline of the Newsday of 6 June 2017. The statements about Laxton and Dermalog were made at a ZESN and CSOs media engagement held on 3 May 2017 at the New Ambassador Hotel and are unrelated to the recent award of the BVR tender to Laxton Group by ZEC. The meeting was held to discuss the pros and cons of the BVR system as well as gaps in the draft voter registration regulations. ZESN's specific comments on the awarding of the BVR tender to the newspaper yesterday were regrettably not included in the story.

ZESN as part of its oversight role in electoral processes will closely monitor the voter registration process to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with regional and international best practice. The Network calls upon ZEC to ensure that equipment of the best quality is delivered and mechanisms to avoid vendor locking and for adequate skills transfer are put in place.

In order to enhance the credibility of the BVR process, ZESN urges the Commission to ensure transparency by adopting the Open Data Policy which entails that processes such as training of voter registration personnel and data clerks, management and storage of the BVR data are open to observation by key stakeholders. In addition, ZESN reiterates its calls for the Commission to publicize the election operational calendar with clear timelines for when the various voter registration processes will be conducted and how the exercise will be phased across the country.

It is imperative for the government to avail adequate funding to ZEC for key processes in the implementation of the voter registration such as training of voter registration personnel, comprehensive voter education for voter registration as well as mobilization initiatives. In addition, the Commission must set up mechanisms to deal with voter intimidation, fear and misinformation to ensure informed participation by all eligible citizens.

ZESN believes that in order to avoid the bottlenecks experienced in previous voter registration exercises, the Commission should remove restrictive voter registration requirements and ensure that adequate voter registration centres are set up in both urban and rural areas.

ZESN is committed to the promotion of democratic electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

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**PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE  
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