

# ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK

## ZESN'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM EVENING UPDATE

**Harare-16 March 2013** - Voting in the Constitutional Referendum has been fairly quiet and peaceful, with votes being processed relatively quickly and few incidents of violations.

ZESN observers have noted the following;

- Throughout the day, Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) observers witnessed recurring incidents of political party representatives systematically recording details of voters after they had cast their ballots. These incidences can be perceived as a clear intimidation strategy ahead of the harmonized elections scheduled for later this year. Our observers in Zengeza, Chitungwiza, witnessed six youths who were recording details of persons who had just voted.

- • ZESN observers continued to note the presence of police officers inside polling stations, while other police officers reportedly assisted citizens to vote in the case of assisted voters. An incident was reported at a polling station in Masvingo province, where an elderly man was assisted by six officials.

- Observers also noted that as assisted voters were casting their votes, the people helping them shouted the voters' choice thereby violating the secrecy of the ballot.

- In some polling stations, observers have reported that the police were checking voters' identity documents, an activity which was outside their mandate of providing security of the polling process.

- Observers have also noted that people who have been labeled aliens were keen to vote but were turned away as they did not meet the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's eligibility criteria.

- However, as polling comes to a close, some ZESN observers reported being barred from observing the constituency collating centres notably in Harare, at Alfred Beit Primary School, and in Chiredzi, at Mkwesine Jete Hall, and have been advised to contact the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's offices. The ZESN national Communication Centre is currently engaging ZEC over the matter.

As the referendum process comes to a close, ZESN will now continue to focus on the counting process and has deployed observers to ZEC constituency collating centres to observe the collation of results.

### PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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