
ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



ZESN STATEMENT ON THE ROADMAP

HARARE – 16 June 2011- As talk of elections continues to confound many Zimbabweans, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) calls upon political parties in the Global Political Agreement to seriously address fundamental reforms that will give legitimacy and credibility to any future elections in the country.

Since 2010, ZANU PF has shown keenness to have elections in 2011 with or without political reforms. This is reinforced by ZESN observers deployed in rural constituencies who have reported an increase in ZANU PF rallies and meetings, a clear indication that they are preparing for elections for 2011.

Of major concern to the Network is the observation by its observers in Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West, of the fact that campaign bases have been resuscitated. These “bases” in the run up to the June 2008 Presidential Run-off Election were used in the commission of torture and gross violation of individual rights. Observers reported “bases” that have been set up in **Mudzi Kotwa, Muzarabani South at Chiwashira, Mazowe at Fox Farm, Mazowe at Negomo, Mazowe at Nzvimbo Council Hall, Rushinga at Kasanga Primary School and Chakari Hall**. We strongly reiterate our call on the demolition of these structures of violence which continue to perpetuate an atmosphere of fear in communities.

We also note the absence of any real progress in the area of media reforms in particular the opening up of airwaves and unbiased media coverage of political parties by the state media. In particular, the singular dedication of airtime to ZANU PF jingles and positive coverage without access to a diversity of information on both television and radio clearly show the continued bias of the state media.

We again call upon SADC, as guarantors of the GPA, to ensure that negotiations on a comprehensive and time-bound electoral road map are finalized as a matter of urgency. ZESN is mindful of the importance of the said road map to elections as it promises to usher in fundamental political reforms. However, ZESN calls for political will from the parties involved in crafting the roadmap and that realistic and enforceable time frames are included to solidify the foundation for electoral reforms and the creation of a conducive environment and fair playing field in the electoral process.

ZESN continues to urge adherence to the standards enshrined in the SADC Guidelines and Principles governing democratic elections as the benchmark that Zimbabwe has voluntarily committed itself to. Holding democratic, free and fair elections is critical for Zimbabwe.

With a view of improving future elections, ZESN notes that failure to implement any significant reforms will have a negative impact on peace and security in Zimbabwe and the region at large. ZESN therefore reiterates that there is need for fundamental reforms that could be ushered in through a clear roadmap

with timelines and an election calendar. We recommend that adequate time be given to pave way for a free and fair election and that the following issues be addressed:-

1. **Independence of the Electoral Management Body (ZEC);**
2. **The many problems noted on the voters' roll;**
3. **Conducive Environment** (zero tolerance on politically motivated violence - before, during and after elections, upholding of freedoms of association, assembly, expression, political choice/activity, movement, speech, media and repeal of all repressive laws);
4. **Ensure the absence of barriers and ensure that both local and international election observers are invited early and are able to access all electoral processes;**
5. **Transparency in the entire electoral process;**
6. **Security sector reform, transitional justice process and institutional reform.**

We anticipate the implementation of the Roadmap and proposed Electoral Amendments will positively address these and other concerns held by ZESN and other CSOs. In conclusion we commend the SADC's positive engagement in resolving the Zimbabwe crisis. We hope that SADC continues to be determined to support deepening democratic norms in Zimbabwe through political reforms and an agreed roadmap leading to a credible election. We therefore call for political will in the conclusion of the roadmap and that clear time frames be put in place and respected by all political parties. Ends//

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PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE



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