



**Zimbabwe Election
Support Network**

Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

Report on the 27 April 2024 National Assembly By-Elections



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Acronyms

CCC	Citizens Coalition for Change
CCCC	Changu Chimuti Chakapinda Chapinda
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
UZA	United Zimbabwe Alliance (UZA)
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Elections Support Network

1 Executive Summary

Zimbabwe held by-elections on 27 April 2024 to fill vacancies that arose in two (2) National Assembly Constituencies following the resignations of Allan Markham Rusty and Fadzayi Mahere, the August 2023 MPs' elected officials representing Harare East and Mount Pleasant Constituencies respectively.

In the run-up to the by-elections, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) observed the pre-electoral environment. On election day, ZESN deployed a total of 107 observers (95 static and 12 mobile observers) who observed the election day processes. Observer findings helped ZESN's assessments in determining whether elections adhered to the set legal framework.

For the Harare East by-election, two (2) candidates (Kiven Mutimbanyoka-ZANU-PF and Ropafadzo Cynthia Cheza-Independent) successfully filed nomination papers to contest the constituency seat. For Mount Pleasant, three candidates (George Mashavave-ZANU-PF, Naison Mamuse- Independent and Brian Ticky-Independent) successfully submitted nomination papers. Aspiring candidates in the two Constituencies utilised various campaign strategies to appeal to the voters. Chief among these were social media, posters, door-to-door and rallies. ZANU-PF campaigns in the two Constituencies were attended by senior party leadership, to drum up support for the candidates. ZANU-PF party conducted the most visible campaigns during the campaign season. ZESN observers reported that the political environment was calm and peaceful in both Constituencies during the campaigns and on election day, save for a lone incident where, according to social media platforms, Ropafadzo Cynthia Cheza¹, the Harare East independent candidate was assaulted together² with members of her campaign team, on election day.

According to the official results, George Mashavave and Kevin Mutimbanyoka of the ZANU-PF party were declared winners in Mount Pleasant and Harare East, respectively.

¹ <https://twitter.com/OpenParlyZw/status/1784257036877734365>

² <https://twitter.com/CynthiaRCheza/status/1784188152069980536>

2 Introduction and Constituency Background

Zimbabwe conducted two (2) by-elections on 27 April 2024 to fill vacant constituent seats of Mount Pleasant and Harare East. This was in accordance with Statutory Instrument 37A of 2024, Proclamation 1 of 2024. Constituency vacancies occurred following the resignation of Fadzayi Mahere and Allan Markham Rusty who were elected on the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) party ticket, during the August 2023 Harmonised Elections. On 20 February 2024, the Speaker of Parliament announced the vacancies. Following the declaration of vacancies, the President of Zimbabwe officially scheduled 26 March for receiving nomination papers from the prospective candidates and 27 April as the election date. Accordingly, March 26 Nomination Court convened in Harare at the Rotten Row Magistrates Court to receive candidates' nomination papers and a by-election was subsequently held on 27 April.

Harare East and Mount Pleasant are urban constituencies found in Harare Metropolitan Province. Harare East Constituency consists of high, medium and low-density suburbs of Harare. Areas like Tafara, Gletwyn, Borrowdale, and Glen Lorne among others were combined during the 2022/2023 Delimitation Exercise to meet the Constituency threshold. As far as possible communities with the same interest were contained in same wards in line with Section 161 (6) (d) of the Constitution, the delimitation exercise mixed communities with different interests to meet the constitutional voter population threshold for the Harare East, resulting in a mix of communities with different interests in this Constituency.

Mount Pleasant is also primarily a residential constituency, that shares borders with Hatcliffe, Harare East, Harare Central and Harare West Constituencies. The Constituency was created in 2008 following the 2007/2008 delimitation exercise and was reconfigured again in the 2022/2023 delimitation exercise.

3 Legal Framework

The legal framework for by-elections in Zimbabwe consists of the 2013 Constitution and the Electoral Act. Additional regulations are contained in the Subsidiary and Subordinate legislation that usually takes form of Statutory Instruments. Together, these pieces of legislation outline the conditions under which by-elections can be conducted as well as the electoral system to be used. They proffer a comprehensive legal architecture to which the conduct of by-elections should stick to so that democratic norms and standards are met.

Section 39 of the Electoral Act states that in the event of an electoral vacancy occurring, the Speaker of Parliament shall notify the President and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) of the vacancy as soon as possible after he/she becomes aware of it and just as is the case with other elections, a clear roadmap guiding the by-elections should be mapped. Section 129(1) (b) prescribes that the seat of a Member of Parliament becomes

vacant upon a member resigning from his or her seat by written notice to the president of the Senate or the Speaker of Parliament. Sections 159 of the Constitution read together with Section 39 of the Electoral Act provide that whenever a vacancy occurs, it must be filled through a by-election. In compliance with s158 (3) of the Constitution which mandates that any vacancy should be filled through a by-election within 90 days of the date which the vacancy has occurred, President Emmerson Mnangagwa through Statutory Instrument 37A of 2024, Proclamation 1 of 2024 proclaimed 26 March 2024 as the date for nomination of candidates and 27 April 2024 as the by-election date for the two constituencies.

4 Pre-Electoral Observations

ZESN volunteers observed the Nomination Court sitting that was conducted on 26 March 2024. The volunteers also observed the political environment and various key stages of the electoral process including campaigning, voting, counting and announcement of results. Additionally, ZESN trained and deployed observers on election day. A total of 107 observers, comprising 95 static observers and 12 mobile observers were assigned to observe polling processes in the two (2) Constituencies. The Election Day Observer deployment strategy positioned ZESN observers at Constituency Collation Centres to observe the results collation process. To facilitate consistent reporting, all observers used a standard checklist to uniformly collect and submit their observations and findings.

4.1 Electoral Environment

The pre-electoral environment was peaceful and calm. On 25 April, the Borrowdale Residents and Ratepayers Association (BRRA) organised a public debate that brought together candidates for Harare East Constituency to one platform where they engaged with the electorate³. The debates were civil.

4.2 Nomination Court

On 26 March 2024, the Nomination Court opened according to the scheduled time at the Magistrates Court Rotten Row in Harare. The environment inside and outside the Court was peaceful and conducive to the conduct of the nomination process. There were no recorded incidents of undue political interference from candidates or their supporters. ZEC officers were in charge and presided over the process. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), News Hawks, Open Parly, and several free-lance journalists covered the proceedings of the Court.

4.2.1 Readiness of the Candidates

ZANU-PF contesting candidates for the two Constituencies, Mashavave and Mutimbanyoka, submitted nomination papers before the sitting of the Court. The other nominated candidates submitted on 26 March, the day that the nomination court sat.

³ [Harare East Gears Up for Tightly Contested Parliamentary By-Elections \(youtube.com\)](#)

Three candidate nominations were rejected by the Nomination Court for failure to meet legal requirements. Emmanuel Mutsige (Independent), Michael Chidodo (Independent) and David Chitimbe of Changu Chimuti Chakapinda Chapinda (CCCC). Chitimbe's nomination was rejected on the basis that he did not manage to raise the required nomination fee of USD 1,000. Mutsige and Chidodo were nominated by persons registered in other constituencies, which did not comply with the nomination regulations.

Nominated Candidates (As Announced by ZEC)

Constituency	Nominated Candidates	Gender	Political Party
Harare East	Ropafadzo Cynthia Cheza	F	Independent
	Kiven Mutimbanyoka	M	ZANU-PF
Mount Pleasant	George Mashavave	M	ZANU-PF
	Naison Mamuse	M	Independent
	Brian Ticky	M	Independent

Two (2) candidates successfully filed to contest the Harare East and three candidates were nominated to contest in the 27 April National Assembly by-election for Mount Pleasant. Nason Mamuse (Independent), Brian Ticky (Independent) and George Mashavave (ZANU-PF) successfully filed nomination papers for Mount Pleasant.

4.3 Campaigns

Campaigns commenced towards the end of March following the sitting of the Nomination Court on 26 March 2024. Across all the two Constituencies, the political environment was reported to be calm. Several political gatherings were observed to have taken place. Candidates used posters during their campaigns and these were posted around the two (2) constituencies.



Picture 1: Harare East Contestants, Kiven Mutimbanyoka (ZANU-PF) and

The ZANU-PF party held several rallies in both Mount Pleasant and Harare East that were addressed by senior party officials. On 14 April 2024 ZANU PF held a Provincial Launch of the campaign at Bond Shops Post Office Mount Pleasant, Hon CharlesTavengwa led the proceedings. On 20 April, the party hosted a rally at Lewisam Primary, Mount Pleasant Constituency which was led by Vice President Mohadi. In Harare East, a rally was held at Chikurubi, Damview. Vice-President Dr Constantino Chiwenga, officiated at the rally.

Ropafadzo Cheza the independent candidate for Harare East Constituency, held a rally at Chisipite Shops. In addition, Cheza deployed mobile teams with hailers as part of her campaign.

Cheza and Mamuse, for Harare East and Mt Pleasant respectively, were calling on voters to support former CCC leader Nelson Chamisa by casting their votes in their favour. Both Cheza and Mamuse inserted Chamisa's photo on their posters.



Picture 2: One of the campaign teams for Ropafadzo Cynthia Cheza, Harare East Independent Candidate

4.4 Voter Education

ZEC conducted voter education and information dissemination on critical processes relating to the 27 April by-election. Before the nomination of candidates, ZEC conducted online and physical voter education, notifying people of the nomination date, time and venue. ZEC also educated people on the nomination requirements.

In April, ZESN conducted a voter education programme in Harare and Mt Pleasant where voter education material was distributed. ZESN also held **Know Your Candidate** Radio Programmes on 25 and 26 April 2024, The ZANU-PF Harare East and Mount Pleasant candidates participated in these programmes.

5 Election Day Observations

Below are highlights of the feedback that ZESN received from both static and mobile teams on election day.

5.1 Polling Day Political Environment

ZESN observers reported that the political environment was calm and peaceful in both Constituencies. The Network commends the candidates and their supporters for observing peace during the polling periods. Peace not only cultivates stability and unity but also serves as a crucial deterrent against violence, which is indispensable for advancing the cause of democracy. It is however important to note that while peace prevailed on polling day, attempts to dissuade voters from participating in the election were noted through the distribution of flyers that called people to stay home and not cast their ballots.



Picture 3: Pamphlets dissuading people from voting in the 27 April by-election.

ZESN took note of social media reports that reported that, Ropafadzo Cynthia Cheza⁴, the Harare East independent candidate was assaulted together⁵ with members of her campaign team, on election day.

5.2 Set up and opening of polling stations.

Ahead of polling day voters' rolls were displayed outside polling stations to allow voters to identify their correct polling station ahead of election day. This has contributed to the significant reduction of voters showing up at the wrong polling station, thus reducing the number of turned away and redirected voters. ZESN observers reported that polling stations opened on time, with all necessary polling materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, indelible finger markers, voters' rolls and the ZEC official stamps.

5.3 Political parties' agents

ZANU-PF and independent candidates that contested the by-elections had polling agents in all the polling stations where ZESN observed. The comprehensive deployment of polling agents, facilitates the monitoring of polling processes, enables timely interventions if

⁴ <https://twitter.com/OpenParlyZw/status/1784257036877734365>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/CynthiaRCheza/status/1784188152069980536>

required as well as allows political parties to authoritatively comment on the conduct of election day proceedings as their agents would have observed them.

5.4 Polling Officials

On average, ZESN observed seven (7) polling officers, the majority being female. This observation is significant in that it showcases the ZEC's commitment to realizing the objectives outlined in the Commission's gender policy. Further, the Network commends ZEC for the deployment of a Person with Disabilities (PwDs) as Presiding Officer at Chisipite Senior School polling station, as this is crucial for promoting inclusivity and accessibility in elections. It enhances understanding of disability-related needs, ensures equitable participation, and sets an example of diversity in electoral processes, fostering a more representative and accommodating voting environment.

5.5 Voting Process and Procedures

Polling procedures were dully followed in keeping with the law, for example, checking voters' names on the voters' roll and checking their fingers for ink before they could be allowed to vote. Ballot papers were stamped with an official ZEC stamp before being issued to voters. ZESN observers reported that ZEC put clear signage on roadsides leading to polling stations, outside and at all polling stations. ZESN commends ZEC for the clear and prominent signage as it helps voters locate polling stations, understand procedures and navigate the voting process. Well-placed signage also aids election officials in managing voter flow and maintaining order.

5.6 Assisted Voters

Section 59 of the Electoral Act provides for assisted voting of illiterate or physically handicapped voters by a person of choice. ZESN observers reported very low numbers of assisted voters in the by-elections and that the electoral provisions were uniformly applied by polling officials in rendering assistance, whenever a voter required it. For instance, the highest number of assisted voters from the reports submitted by Mount Pleasant Constituency observers was four (4) people, who were assisted at the Paraplegic Centre Tent, while the highest number of assisted voters in Harare East was three (3) people at Tafara 2 Secondary School B. The majority of polling stations in both Constituencies were recorded.

5.7 Voter turnout

The voter turnout in both by-elections was very low. Harare East Constituency recorded a turnout of 15.2% and Mount Pleasant Constituency recorded a turnout of 11.6% turnout.

There has been rising concern over voter apathy evidenced by the decreasing numbers in voter turnout in by-elections held so far since the 2023 Harmonised Elections. Whereas Section 67 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe states that "every Zimbabwean has the right to vote," there seems to be less uptake on exercising this constitutional right to elect leaders by eligible voters in Zimbabwe during by-elections. Voter apathy dilutes the value of democracy and the trend has been ongoing from as far back as the 1980s. The 2023 Harmonised Elections recorded a high voter turnout of 68.9% mainly due to the comprehensive and up-to-date Bio-metric Voters' Roll; increased party mobilisation,

sustained campaigning, and concentrated media spotlight on the harmonized elections not only from local media but from the regional and international media.

ZESN observations reveal that voter apathy marred the Mkoba North National Assembly by-election, with only 14.06% and Pelandaba-Tshabalala Constituency with 11.3% registered voters taking part in the poll. The same scenario of low voter turnout was also observed during the Chegutu West with 33.5%, Seke 30.18%, Zvimba East 31.6% and Goromonzi South 18.1%. This situation is not only peculiar to National Assembly by-elections, the same applies to local authority by-elections. For example; voter turnout significantly decreased in the Harare Municipality Ward 36 by-elections and the Chinhoyi Municipality Ward 4 by-elections where a turnout of 17.8% and 42.3% respectively. This is a clear indication that voting trends in the country are always at their peak during the Harmonised Elections, hence the need for electoral stakeholders to continue supporting voter education efforts on the need for voters to participate in by-elections.

In addition, the turnout was impacted by the nature of the candidates, the majority of whom were independent candidates. Historically voters seem to prefer candidates that are sponsored by political parties as opposed to independent candidates. Further members of the public intimated their disappointment with the recalls that occasioned the majority of by-elections that were held in the last quarter of 2023 and that were held earlier this year. Some members of the public expressed the view the value of their vote was eroded by the recalls.

5.8 Redirected and turned away voters.

The number of re-directed and turned-away observers was also very low. According to ZESN observer reports Harare East's Glen Lorne Shopping Centre C polling station recorded the highest number of re-directed observers where 22 voters were re-directed to other polling stations. In Mount Pleasant's Open Space Hiller Road / Churchill Ave Tent A C polling station recorded the highest number of re-directed voters where 17 people were redirected to other polling stations.

5.9 By-Election Results

George Mashavave and Kiven Mutimbanyoka were declared winners by the ZEC in Mount Pleasant and Harare East, respectively. The table below shows the results of the 27 April 2024 National Assembly by-elections.

The tables below show the results of the by-elections, as declared by ZEC

HARARE EAST CONSTITUENCY							
2024 By-Election Results				2023 Harmonized Election Result			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Cheza Ropafadzo Cynthia	F	Independent	1,974	Markham Allan Norman	M	CCC	15,642
Mutimbanyoka Kiven	M	ZANU-PF	3,533	Gumbo Mavis	F	ZANU-PF	7,621
				Razaru Malvin	M	CCC	1,027
				Mlambo Garikai	M	UZA	84
				Mutizwa Musarurwa Stewart	M	MDC-T	108
MOUNT PLEASANT CONSTITUENCY							
2024 By-Election Results				2023 Harmonized Election Result			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Mashavave George	M	ZANU-PF	3,205	Gwasira Beadle Musatye	M	ZANU-PF	7,787
Mamuse Nason	M	Independent	945	Mahere Fadzayi	F	CCC	12,863
Ticky Brian	M	Independent	220	Machokoto Jonathan	M	CCC	5,510

5.10 Analysis of the Results

Both Constituencies were won by ZANU-PF candidates with comfortable leads. For instance, Mutimbanyoka Kiven won the by-election with a lead of 1,559 votes, while Mashavave George won with a lead of 2,260 votes. Whilst Harare East had predominantly been won by opposition parties since 2000, ZANU-PF previously won the seat in the 2015 by-election when Terrence Mukupe of ZANU-PF was declared the winner in a by-election where the opposition MDC-T who had been at the helm of the constituency did not participate. Mt Pleasant has also been an opposition stronghold since 2008, with ZANU-PF winning the seat in 2013 when Jameson Timba of the opposition MDC-T (3 817) lost to Jaisson Passade of ZANU-PF (7 946).

6 Conclusion

ZEC made significant improvements in the quality of signage used to give direction to the polling stations, and the legibility of the voter rolls posted outside polling stations. A peaceful environment was observed during the campaigns.

National Assembly elections are vital for democratic governance. They shape legislative bodies that create and amend laws, represent citizens' interests, and enable accountability. These elections empower citizens to influence policies, national direction, and the distribution of power, thereby impacting the lives of all citizens. By-elections remain a legal requirement whenever vacancies arise in the national assembly and within local authorities.

ZESN recommends the following, based on its observations:

- Members of the public are encouraged to fully utilise their constitutionally guaranteed civil and political rights by, among other things, participating in voting when elections are conducted.
- There is a need for the ZEC to continue increasing the font for displayed voters' rolls to cater for those with visual impairment.

7 Annexes

Below are the infographics and still images that were developed by ZESN for the 27 April by-elections.



