



PRESS RELEASE

22 November 2014 Local Government By-Election Press Statement

Harare, 22 November 2014 –The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) observed the three local government by-elections in Chimanimani Ward 15, Mberengwa Ward 33 and Zvishavane Ward 1. ZESN observers reported a peaceful and orderly electoral process in all three wards.

Voting: All polling stations opened on time and voting started on schedule. There were short queues outside the polling station at the time of opening, and most of the queues had disappeared by mid-day. ZESN applauds ZEC for their preparedness as all polling stations had all their critical electoral material and polling officers were professional. The voting process was peacefully and orderly in all polling stations.

Compliance with the Electoral Law: every political party was allowed to have one agent inside the polling station and to have an additional agent stationed within the vicinity of the polling station. This is consistent with provisions of the Electoral Amendment Act.

Disaggregated Data: ZESN commends the compilation data on voters that is disaggregated by age and gender. ZESN however continues to recommend that these statistics be shared with relevant stakeholders including political parties and civil society to aid their programming especially in the promotion of women and youth's participation in elections.

ZESN observers reported a number of incidents that took place during the voting process. These included:

- **Use of Voting Slips:** Voters whose names did not appear in the ward voter's role were permitted to cast their vote if the voting slip was issued on or before the 10 July 2013 cut-off date. This was problematic in that political party agents and observers present were not able to ascertain the authenticity of the voting slips. The continued use of voting slips show the gap in voter registration that needs to be urgently addressed.
- **Voter Registration:** Currently there is a legal vacuum as there is no Law that explicitly identifies the government institution that is responsible for management of the voters roll and for voter registration. The Constitution has provisions that give ZEC full control of the voter registration process and management of the voters' roll however the Electoral Legislation, specifically the Electoral Amendment Act failed to capture the spirit of these constitutional provisions. As a result neither ZEC nor the Registrar General has the legal mandate to register voters, or update the voters' roll.

The Law provides for a continuous voter registration process, unfortunate the current impasse between ZEC and the Registrar General on custodianship of the voters roll means that youth who have attained the legal age of majority and those who wish to transfer their vote are unable to do so. Until the impasse has been resolved a significant number of citizens will continue to be disenfranchised, and the use of voter slips will remain contentious. In addition citizens cannot launch objections about deceased persons thus the accuracy of the voters roll will always be thrown into question.

- **Secrecy of the Vote:** Of concern was the procedure of showing the folded ballot paper to the presiding officer after casting a vote. This system was done away with using the Electoral Amendment Act of 2013

which prescribed that the voter did not have to show the seal to the Presiding Officer but simply place their ballot paper in the box after voting. ZESN noted that in some of the polling stations, the voters would show their folded ballot paper to the presiding officer after voting. Although ZEC corrected this practice through its training of polling officials, there remains a need for enhanced voter education so that voters are made aware that this requirement no longer exists.

Counting: Counting in all polling stations took place according laid down procedures and results were displayed outside the respective polling stations. All party agents concurred and signed the V11 form.

Chimanimani, Mberengwa and Zvishavane Results

Chimanimani RDC, Ward 15 Results

Name of Party	Candidate	Magistrate Courts	Ngangu Ext Shops	Ngangu Primary School	Total Votes
Independent	Chidambiza Innocent	91	53	107	251
Independent	Mereta James Nyatwa	36	28	64	128
Independent	Muchateera Matsekete-Beta Joseph	10	6	9	25
NCA	Mukwayo Prudence	11	3	3	17
ZANU PF	Chirongera Panganai	274	248	427	949
	<i>Rejected Votes</i>	3	1	1	5
	<i>Unaccounted for</i>	0	0	0	0
	Total Votes Cast	425	339	611	1375

Mberengwa RDC Ward 33

Name of Party	Candidate	Chingechuru Primary	Gobera Business Centre	Jeka Business Centre	Maringambizi Secondary School	Ruvabvu Primary	Total Votes
MDC-T	Moyo Dzingai	14	22	15	16	15	82
ZANU PF	Dumbuseya Enoch	150	92	40	89	44	415
	<i>Rejected Votes</i>	3	1	0	0	0	4
	<i>Unaccounted for</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Votes Cast	167	115	55	105	59	501

Zvishavane RDC Ward 1

Party Name	Candidate	Mandava Clinic Tent	Zvizvobgo Towerline Tent	Total Votes
MDC-T	Chihava Kupa	45	51	96
Independent	Dzvetera Panganai	3	6	9
ZANU PF	Kasiyapasi Rowayi	60	224	284
	<i>Rejected Votes</i>	0	2	2
	<i>Unaccounted for</i>	0	0	0
	Total Votes Cast	108	283	391

Conclusion:

ZESN applauds ZEC for affording the eligible voters of Chimanimani, Mberengwa and Zvishavane an opportunity to elect councillors as provided for in the legislative framework governing the conduct of by-elections in Zimbabwe. This is one of ZEC's important contributions to the consolidation of democracy in Zimbabwe. ZESN concurs that local authority by-elections help strengthen democratic consolidation at the grassroots level and enhances citizen participation in electoral processes at all levels. It is however disconcerting that a significant number of citizens continue to be disenfranchised until the impasse on voter registration is resolved. Youth who turned 18 after 10 July 2013 are not able to register and citizens who wish to transfer their votes are not able to do so. //End

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT

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