

# FIVE KEY ASKS

## TOWARDS CREDIBLE ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

#WillToReform

Civil Society in Zimbabwe is calling for a pathway to free, fair and credible elections premised on

- i. proper **constitutionally aligned electoral laws**
- ii. effective **electoral administrative arrangements**
- iii. a **political environment** that allows citizens to make free and informed choices on electoral processes

We believe that there are five fundamental requirements which must be completed before Zimbabwe will be able to hold a credible election namely:

**1. NEW ELECTORAL LAW** - The first requirement is the urgent introduction of a new electoral law that is fully aligned to the Constitution. This is necessary to provide a satisfactory legal framework for free and fair elections and to foster democratic values. Previous efforts by the Government to implement electoral reforms such as the General Laws Amendment Act (2016) and the recent Electoral Amendment Bill (2017), have been piecemeal, selective, inequitable and inadequate. In the absence of substantive legislative realignment and reform it will be difficult for Zimbabwe to hold credible elections.

**2. VOTER REGISTRATION** - The second requirement is the creation and implementation of a complete, accurate, inclusive and current voters' roll, free from any politically motivated bias. A valid voters' roll is prerequisite for the credibility of any election and is an important tool in improving the efficiency of the electoral management body. The right to vote and to contest elections should be enjoyed by all eligible citizens including women, the youth and people with disabilities as provided for in the Constitution. **ZEC** must extend the right to vote to all eligible Zimbabweans including those in hospitals and prisons and reinstate special voting.

**3. ZEC INDEPENDENCE AND TRANSPARENCY OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES** - The third requirement is the revitalisation of electoral governance through a truly independent **Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC)**. **ZEC** must be highly professional and adequately resourced. Appointments and recruitment procedures must strictly adhere to the requirements of the Constitution. The Parliament of Zimbabwe, not the government, should be responsible for the oversight of **ZEC** to ensure that its independence is not compromised. Zimbabwe civil society expects transparency in electoral processes in particular the voter registration, voting and results management processes. As an organisation, **ZEC** itself must adhere to regional and internationally accepted norms for accountability, inclusivity, transparency, and integrity.

**4. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT** - The fourth requirement is to develop a political environment that guarantees the full enjoyment of fundamental political and human rights. Zimbabwe civil society calls for the creation of a conducive political environment devoid of violence, intimidation, patronage, propaganda and hate speech particularly in the media with all stakeholders (citizens, political parties, traditional leaders, media, churches, the security sector, civil society organisations, etc.) abiding by the rules of proper electoral conduct. There is need for an effective electoral dispute resolution mechanism that responds to potential conflicts and disputes before, during and after an election. Institutions supporting democracy such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the judiciary should execute their mandate without fear or favour, ensuring that perpetrators of human rights violations face meaningful sanctions. There must be an enforceable Electoral Code of Electoral Conduct for Political Parties. This will give citizens the confidence to participate freely in electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

**5. ELECTION OBSERVATION** - The fifth requirement is the involvement of a broad range of observers from regional, continental and international communities. Observation and monitoring of electoral processes play an important role in safeguarding election integrity and underpin the legitimacy of free and fair elections. In addition, election observation promotes transparency, accountability and strengthens democratic processes. This important role of both local and international observers is also recognised in the laws of Zimbabwe. Therefore, Zimbabwe civil society calls for the invitation of observers to be de-linked from the executive.

## SUPPORTED BY:

- Association of Women's Clubs
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Zimbabwe (CCJPZ)
- Civic Education Network Trust (CIVNET)
- Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA)
- Counselling Services Unit (CSU)
- Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe (CCiZ)
- Election Resources Centre (ERC)
- Evangelical Fellowships of Zimbabwe (EFZ)
- Gender Network Connect
- Habbakuk Trust
- Heal Zimbabwe Trust (HRT)
- Human Rights Lawyers Network (Abameli)
- Human Rights NGO Forum
- Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
- Media Monitors
- MISA-Zimbabwe
- National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH)
- National Association of Youth Organisations (NAYO)
- National Youth Development Trust (NYDT)
- Organisation for Rural Association for Progress (ORAP)
- Platform for Leveraging Elections, Democracy & Governance (PLEDGE)
- Plumtree Development Trust
- Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ)
- Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU)
- Shalom Trust
- Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ)
- VERITAS
- Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)
- Women's Action Group (WAG)
- Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ)
- Women in Politics Support Network (WIPSU)
- Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)
- Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT)
- Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender (ZACRO)
- Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET)
- Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)
- Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC)
- Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights)
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)
- Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU)
- Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP)
- Zimbabwe Students Christian Movement (SCM.Z)
- Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ)
- Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA)
- Zimbabwe Union of Residents and Ratepayers Association (ZURRA)

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Zimbabwe Election Support Network



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*Promoting Democratic Elections In Zimbabwe*