

[2017]

# Zimbabwe Election Support Network



**2018 Population Projections for  
Zimbabweans Aged 18+**

## **Introduction**

As Zimbabwe readies itself for the new polling station based and biometric voter registration for the 2018 harmonised elections, it is imperative that efforts and resources are channelled towards ensuring that all eligible voters are registered so that they are able to vote come 2018. The polling based voters' roll and the implementation of the proposed Bio-metric Voter Registration system (BVR) requires that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) conduct a fresh voter registration process. An early registration process will go a long way in avoiding reportedly chaotic registration process that characterized 2013 harmonized elections. ZESN undertakes to come up with projections of the Zimbabwean population aged 18 and above in 2018. In order to support the registration process, it is important that ZESN has an idea of the approximate number of Zimbabweans that will be eligible for voter registration prior to the 2018 harmonized elections.

## **Problem Statement**

ZESN is cognizant of the fact that a comprehensive voters' roll contributes greatly to the credibility of any election. One of the lessons learnt in 2013 is that a significant number of potential voters were not registered due to insufficient information on voter registration procedures and requirements, inadequate funding, lack of adequate personnel and the slow processing of registration queues in some areas such as Harare. In light of these challenges, ZESN continues to call upon ZEC to put measures in place for effective discharge of the new voter registration system, allowing adequate time for voter registration so as to ensure that the registration process is all-inclusive and that potential voters are not disenfranchised.

In terms of Section 239 of the Constitution, the sole responsibility of registering voters and compiling a voters' roll rests with ZEC. The Commission therefore compiles voters' rolls and registers; and ensures the proper custody and maintenance of such. At the centre of political contestation in Zimbabwe over the years has been voter registration, compilation of the voters' roll and access. One key issue raised by stakeholders is alleged bias of partisan landlords and traditional leaders in the issuance of affidavits to prospective voter registrants aligned to the opposition parties. Other opposition political parties have raised concerns that prior to the July

2013 elections there was limited time to register particularly aliens whose right to vote was restored under the new Constitution enacted less than three months before the July elections.<sup>1</sup>

Again it was noted that the Commission suffered from lack of and delayed funding for the exercise. From 29 April to 19 May 2013, the Registrar-General, under the supervision of ZEC, conducted a mobile voter registration throughout the country. However, the funds provided were not sufficient as there were problems with a lack of personnel, materials and other resources during the exercise.<sup>2</sup> There was also very poor publicity and inadequate voter education. Some citizens did not know that voter registration was taking place. In addition, many prospective registrants arrived at registration centers without knowing the requirements for registration. The requirement for proof of residence thwarted many prospective registrants, particularly in urban areas.<sup>3</sup>

When the exercise ended on 19 May 2013, there was much criticism that it was inadequate and did not capture all those interested in registering. To address these concerns and abide by a requirement of the new Constitution, a new exercise was conducted from 10 June to 9 July 2013. Improvements were noted, including more publicity and the deployment of at least two voter educators per ward, unlike the previous exercise when there were only two educators per district.<sup>4</sup>

Time constraints created by the declaration of the election date also obliged the electoral authorities to compromise normal electoral procedures by combining the voter registration exercise with the inspection of the voters' roll. On the other hand, the credibility of Zimbabwe's voters' roll has been a subject of much debate over the years. Opposition political parties and

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<sup>1</sup> Zimbabwe Electoral Commission - Report on the All-Stakeholders Review Conference on the 2013 referendum and harmonised elections; Harare International Conference Centre, Rainbow Towers 19-21 March 2014

<sup>2</sup> ZESN-Report on the Zimbabwe 31 July 2013 Harmonised Elections

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

other stakeholders have been pushing for a clean and credible voters' roll that provides an accurate record of Zimbabweans eligible to vote.

According to section 21 (1) of the Electoral Act, the voters' roll is a public document which is open for inspection by members of the public free of charge. However, it appears that these copies were (and continue not to be) provided within a reasonable time to allow for a comprehensive inspection and audit of a roll whose state has been controversial for a number of years<sup>5</sup>. Accessing the voters' roll proved to be a nightmare for some political candidates. A classic example was the case of Dabengwa and ZAPU v Chairperson of ZEC and others in which Dabengwa started requesting the electronic voters' roll from ZEC on 20 November 2012. Due to lack of co-operation from ZEC, a case was filed against ZEC in the High Court in May 2013 and it was only then that an electronic copy was provided in June 2013 to avert litigation.<sup>6</sup> A more disturbing scenario was that four days before the July 2013 elections, and in spite of repeated requests, political parties had not yet been provided with copies of updated voters' roll to be used in the elections.

## **Methodology**

There are two major methods used, the component method and the mathematical method. The current methodology used the mathematical formula to make population projections. The alternative method was the component method where:  $P_0$  = initial population

$P_t$  = population after time t

B = Births

D = Deaths

I = Immigrants

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<sup>5</sup> Zimbabwe - Ready for Elections? Pre-Election 2013 Report. A Publication of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

E = Emigrants

The Component method simulates how a population changes according to the components of demographic change which are fertility, mortality and migration. Using the cohort-component model has the greatest advantage of providing detailed demographic data of population growth. However, the approach requires availability of key information on the three major components (births, deaths, migration) by age cohort, to produce the reasonable population projections. In Zimbabwe, the current challenge with this approach is that data on migration is very difficult to get.

The mathematical formula was chosen mainly because it does not need inputs required by the component method. This means that the present calculations do not take into account immigration or emigration factors contributing to population growth. This is consistent with other studies done in the country (Zimstat, 2009). The mathematical formula is appropriate because the population of Zimbabwe over years has shown to continuously increase and following closely a geometric pattern (Mandishona, 1987). Thus the geometric formula has been used to project the population of adult Zimbabweans aged 18 plus, that is the voting population up to 2018. The 2012 population census data was used as the base population to project the 2017 and 2018 voting population. The 2018 projections were calculated using the following geometric formula

$$R = P_t * (1+r)^n$$

$P_t$  - base population (last census)

$R$  - Is the growth rate

$N$  = number of years after the base year

The projections are presented in tables according to gender, province, district of residence and also specific ages. Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro), a statistical data processing software package, was used for the production of the tables in the current report.  $P_t = P_0 + (B - D) + (I - E)$

## Voting Age Population Projections for 2018 Harmonized Elections

The current section provides estimations for adult Zimbabweans who will be aged 18 and above by the year 2018. The calculations presented in subsequent sections are based on 2012 population data according to the 2012 census.

### Voting Population Projections for 2018

**Table 2: 2018 Voting Population Projections: Overall Picture**

	2012	2017	2018
Men	3 155 345	3 316 299	3 349 462
Women	3 650 110	3 836 302	3 874 665
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 805 455</b>	<b>7 152 602</b>	<b>7 224 128</b>

Table 2 shows population projections for 2017 and 2018 for both Zimbabwean men and women aged 18 years and above. The voting population for the entire country is projected to increase from 6.8 million in 2012 to 7.2 million in 2018. Of this 7.2 million, approximately 3.3 million are men and 3.9 million are women.

### Provincial Breakdown of Voting Population

**Table 3: Population Projections, by Province**

Province	2012		Total	2017		Total	2018		Total
	Men	Women		Men	Women		Men	Women	
<b>Harare</b>	613780	654041	<b>1267821</b>	645089	687404	<b>1332493</b>	651540	694278	<b>1345818</b>
<b>Manicaland</b>	382349	477514	<b>859863</b>	401853	501872	<b>903725</b>	405871	506891	<b>912762</b>
<b>Midlands</b>	374641	440402	<b>815043</b>	393751	462867	<b>856618</b>	397689	467496	<b>865185</b>
<b>Mash West</b>	387187	398869	<b>786056</b>	406937	419215	<b>826153</b>	411007	423407	<b>834414</b>
<b>Masvingo</b>	302629	407969	<b>710598</b>	318066	428780	<b>746846</b>	321247	433067	<b>754314</b>
<b>Mash East</b>	321818	371329	<b>693147</b>	338234	390271	<b>728504</b>	341616	394173	<b>735790</b>

<b>Mash Central</b>	279583	304748	<b>584331</b>	293845	320293	<b>614138</b>	296783	323496	<b>620279</b>
<b>Bulawayo</b>	175272	210391	<b>385663</b>	184213	221123	<b>405336</b>	186055	223334	<b>409389</b>
<b>Mat North</b>	167303	199710	<b>367013</b>	175837	209897	<b>385734</b>	177596	211996	<b>389592</b>
<b>Mat South</b>	150783	185137	<b>335920</b>	158474	194581	<b>353055</b>	160059	196527	<b>356586</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3155345</b>	<b>3650110</b>	<b>6805455</b>	<b>3316299</b>	<b>3836302</b>	<b>7152602</b>	<b>3349462</b>	<b>3874665</b>	<b>7224128</b>

Table 3 shows an overall picture of population projections for 2017 and 2018 across the ten provinces in the country. Projections show that Harare has the highest number of people aged 18+ (1 345 818), followed by Manicaland (912 762), Midlands (865 185) and in third place Mash West (834 414). The Province with the least number is Matabeleland South where 389 592 would have reached 18 by 2018.

### **Zimbabweans living Outside the Country of Permanent Basis post 2012 Census**

The post 2000 era has shown an accelerated rise in emigration flows and cross-border movements due to the worsening economic situation (Makina, 2010; de Jager & Musuva, 2015). In first ever Migration Profile on Zimbabwe, Zanamwe and Devillard (2009) noted that these emigrations have been characterized by informal cross-border movement, migration of highly skilled nationals and survival migration of the poor and impoverished. As a result, reliable estimates of Zimbabweans living outside of their country are difficult and vary considerably from source to source and any current attempts at estimating the number of Zimbabweans living outside of Zimbabwe on a permanent basis are hampered by the generally lack of adequate data on migration in Zimbabwe (Schachter, 2009; ZimStat, 2009).

While the data collected on migration are not reliable and are far from representing the complete reality of migration in Zimbabwe (Schachter, 2009) that has not stopped attempts at estimates. Prior to the 2012 census, conflicting estimates of Zimbabwe leaving outside of the country varied across and within countries of destination such as Australia, Botswana, Canada, South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States. For example, Pasura (2008) estimated that three

to four million Zimbabweans were living in the diaspora, while Tevera and Crush (2003) projected that at least one emigrant exists per household. The estimates vary so much that even the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) faces challenges in trying to catalogue the number of Zimbabweans living outside of the country.

There is, however, consensus that the majority of Zimbabweans living permanently outside Zimbabwe are living in South Africa (Makina, 2010). While there is not agreement on the exact number, literature suggests that the number of Zimbabweans are living in South Africa alone varies from slightly below a million to above 4 million (de Jager & Musuva, 2015; Pasura, 2008; Zanamwe & Devillard 2009; Makina, 2010). Observers note that, since elections in 2013, the number of Zimbabweans leaving the country has doubled while significant number remains documented.

While researchers have shown a lot of interest in Zimbabweans emigrating from their country to live South Africa, there are currently no estimates for other Southern African countries (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009). In an effort to try to come up with a migration profile and estimates of Zimbabweans living outside the country on a permanent basis, Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) has started a process of engaging stakeholders and other government agencies in an attempt to put together all possible data. The results of this process are expected possibly in the second or third quarter of 2017.

### **Special Voting**

To avoid the disenfranchisement of specific groups, the reinstatement of special voting should be considered as it enables electoral officials and the security services on duty on Election Day to vote in advance. It can also be extended to party agents, observers, prisoners, candidates and hospital staff thereby protecting their right to vote. The Special Vote was abolished by the Electoral Amendment Act (2014), which reintroduced the postal voting for government officials on duty. Although the Special Vote was characterised by logistical and management challenges it was a positive development in ensuring the right to vote and secrecy of the ballot. Postal voting is opaque as compared to special voting which can be observed and guarantees secrecy. In South Africa, the disabled and the physically infirm, including heavily pregnant women, are eligible for

registering as special voters and are visited by voting officials and allowed to vote on Election Day.

### **Recommendations**

- CSOs and other electoral stakeholders should continue to push Government and ZEC to provide adequate resources; time, human and financial, towards the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise in order to ensure that everyone who desires to participate in the 2008 election is able to do so.
- The voters' registration process should commence soon given that a projected 7.2million Zimbabweans need to be registered in time for 2018 harmonized elections.
- ZEC should continue to engage and consult interested electoral stakeholders before they make decisions on Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) system and processes to enhance trust and confidence.
- ZEC should partner with key stakeholders that deal with migration issues (e.g., IOM) in an attempt to contribute to the building a migration profile for the country.
- ZEC should share with electoral stakeholders its baseline data and targeted voters for voter registration exercise. The data should be provided in granular detail such as baseline and target per ward level, gender, sex, age etc.
- There is need to consider the establishment of mechanisms that will facilitate Diaspora Voting, special needs groups, prisoners, hospitalized patients, the elderly and personnel on duty on Election Day. Special voting should be reinstated to cater for these groups.

## References

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