



**Zimbabwe Election
Support Network** ■
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

Press Statement

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON THE 11 NOVEMBER 2023 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND LOCAL AUTHORITY BY-ELECTIONS

12 November 2023 - In line with its mission to promote democratic free and fair electoral processes through objectively and impartially observing elections in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) observed the Gutu West National Assembly in Masvingo Province and Hurungwe Rural District Council (RDC) Ward 24, Kusile RDC Ward 13, Nkayi RDC Ward 11, Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23 Local Authority by-elections on 11 November 2023. The by-elections in which the ruling party won all except Kusile RDC Ward 13, were held after vacancies arose following the death of nominated candidates - Christopher Mutohori Rwodzi, Gutu West Constituency Independent candidate; Muganhiri Richard, Zvimba Ward 23, Mtangi Myambo Vungu Ward 14, Nyoni Lisbert Sabelo Kusile Ward 13, Mpofu Jabulani, Nkayi Ward 11 and the death of the elected Councillor Faro Kuyelukana Hurungwe Ward 24.

Legal Framework

The by-elections were held under Sections 50 and 121A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13) for the National Assembly and Local Authority Councillors following the passing on of the candidates and incumbent respectively. The Nomination Court sat on 10 October 2023 to consider nominations for by-elections in Hurungwe RDC Ward 24, Kusile RDC Ward 13, Nkayi RDC Ward 11, Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward as well as Gutu West Constituency. For Gutu West constituency, Kurwa Robson (NCA), Morudu Ephraem (CCC), Mudzingwa Martin Sebastine (Independent) and Paradza John (ZANU-PF) were duly nominated as candidates. For Hurungwe RDC Ward 24, Kasirowe Ezekiel (CCC), Makumbe Jerry (ZANU-PF) were duly nominated, whilst for the Kusile RDC Ward 13 by-election, Gama Michael (ZAPU), Moyo Busani Kembo (UZA), Ncube Mthelisi (ZANU-PF) and Qonda Tarcissius (CCC) were successfully nominated as candidates. In Nkayi Ward 11, Khumalo Mubonisii (CCC), Mpofu Mzila (ZAPU), Ncube Mandla (ZANU-PF) and Ndlovu Philip (MDC-T) were nominated as candidates. In Vungu Ward 14, the Nomination Court approved the candidature of Matambiko

Annah Chipso (CCC) and Muchemwa Aaron (ZANU-PF), while in Zvimba RDC Chinanzvavana Manuel (CCC), Gomani Pamellah (Independent), Muganhiri Ceccillia (ZANU-PF) and Rabu Enock Junior (NCA) were duly nominated as candidates for the by-elections.

Observation methodology

In order to effectively gather, disseminate and communicate objective information about the by-elections, ZESN trained and deployed 65 static observers and seven (7) mobile observers in the National Assembly by-election in Gutu West Constituency, Masvingo Province and in Hurungwe Rural District Council (RDC) Ward 24, Kusile RDC Ward 13, Nkayi RDC Ward, 11 Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23 Local Authority By-elections. Of the 65 observers, 35 were deployed to Gutu West Constituency, 9 were deployed in Hurungwe RDC Ward 24, 5 in Kusile RDC Ward 13, 5 in Zvimba RDC Ward 23, 5 in Nkayi RDC Ward 11 and 6 in Vungu RDC Ward 14. The observer deployment strategy ensured that ZESN had observers covering all the Collation Centres at the respective wards and Constituency, in addition to selected polling stations.

The findings and recommendations of this preliminary statement are made in reference to the Electoral Laws of Zimbabwe, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Principles and Guidelines Governing the Conduct of Democratic Elections as well as other regional and African election guidelines and principles. This preliminary statement is based on reports received from the ZESN observers.

Pre-election Observations

The political environment in the run-up to the November 11 by-election was relatively peaceful and calm for most of the areas. There were no major incidents of violence that observers reported. The environment allowed for electoral contestants across the political divide to canvass for votes. The lone exception was the report of intimidation that was reported in Jotsholo Village 13 of Kusile Ward 13, where it was reported that ZANU-PF allegedly threatened to confiscate seed and fertilizer donations from villagers suspected of supporting the CCC party.

Polling day political environment

Polling day environment was largely peaceful in all the places where by-elections were held with the exception of one incident, which observers in Gutu West reported, where two (2) CCC supporters from Gutu Central attempted to disrupt the work of party agents stationed at Chitepo Primary School. It was reported that a CCC Member of Parliament for Chiredzi Central came in the company of Gutu Central Councillor Benard Chimwango, at Chitepo Primary School demanding that the ZANU-PF and Independent party agents leave the school where

they were stationed. It was reported that the Presiding Officer at the school swiftly intervened to resolve the commotion and ensured that no party agent left the school.

Another incident that was reported to have occurred at Chiroti Primary School, in Hurungwe Ward 24, where a complaint was lodged by a CCC member that a dozen people were gathered at a car parked within the 300 meter radius of the primary school. The Presiding Officer at the Primary school responded by ordering those gathered to disburse. The Group then moved to a nearby school (Chiroti Secondary School).

Set up and opening of polling stations

Prior to the setting up of polling stations, voters' rolls were displayed outside to enable the electorate to check their names, a good practice from the ZEC that serves to lessen the number of redirected and turned-away voters on polling day. ZESN observers reported that at the polling stations observed, they were opened on time with all the essential polling materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, indelible finger markers, voters' rolls and the ZEC official stamps available.

Political parties' agents

ZANU-PF deployed party agents comprehensively across all polling stations in all by-elections. CCC had party agents in many polling stations although it did not cover all. NCA, which fielded National Assembly candidates in Gutu West and a Local Authority candidate in Zvimba RDC Ward 23, also had party agents in a few polling stations in the Constituency and Ward. ZAPU had party agents in Nkayi and Kusile. ZESN observers noted the presence of ZAPU party agents in a few polling stations including at Jotsholo Clinic and Manganganga Primary School polling stations. ZESN commends political parties and independent candidates for fielding party agents as this allows them to track polling processes and their ability to make any informed interventions where necessary.

Polling officials, Voting process and procedures

On average, each polling station was staffed by six (6) polling officers. ZESN observers noted that many polling stations had male presiding officers. However, there was balanced gender parity with regards to polling officers deployed. Polling procedures were duly followed in accordance 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.

Assisted Voters

The highest number of assisted voters was recorded at Chiguhune Primary School in Gutu West, where 67 out of 270 people were assisted, translating to 25% assisted voters at this

particular polling station. In the same constituency, 51 out of 378 voters at Mbirikira Primary School, 11 out of 122 voters at Ingogo Farm Tent, 8 out of 137 voters at Chindida, and 11 out of 154 voters at Rufaro High School were assisted in casting their ballots.

In Hurungwe RDC ward 24, the number of assisted voters was relatively low. At Tashinga Primary School in Hurungwe RDC ward 24, 18 out of 144 were assisted whilst at Chiroti Primary School, 14 out of 250 had been assisted by midday.

Assisted voting on account of illiteracy and visual impairment was mostly done by polling officials in the presence of the police in line with Section 59 of the Electoral Act on voting by illiterate or physically handicapped voters.

Voter turnout

In Gutu West, voter turnout stood at 60.2% after 15 460 out of 25 674 registered voters turned out to vote.

In Kusile RDC Ward 13, voter turnout stood at just over 40% with the majority of persons casting their votes before midday. As of midday, ZESN observers noted that across the five (5) polling stations in Kusile RDC ward 13, voter turnout stood at 32%. 87 had voted at Gundwane Primary School, 37 at Jotsholo Clinic, 98 at Jotsholo Primary School, 130 Manganganga Primary School and 94 at St George Primary School.

At Chiroti Primary School in Hurungwe RDC ward 24, 29% that is 250 out of 861 voted. Across all the polling stations where ZESN had observers in Hurungwe RDC, voter turnout stood between 25 % and 30 % as at midday.

In Nkayi RDC Ward 11, voter turnout stood at 40% after 578 out of 1 452 registered voters voted. ZESN continues to encourage registered voters' participation and voting in peace in all National Assembly and Local Authority elections as these are important and accord voters the opportunity to choose leaders of their choice who will be responsible for service delivery in their areas.

Redirected and turned away voters

The number of turned away voters was very low, for instance, at Gondwi Primary School in Gutu West, two (2) people were turned away, and at Gundwane Primary School in Kusile RDC ward 13, 2 people were turned away.

Across most polling stations, no redirected voters were recorded. In cases where voters were redirected, the numbers were very low. ZESN observers noted that redirected voters

were mostly recorded at polling centres and were stationed at the same facility, for instance at Whawha Open Space where three tents were stationed. At Kuwadzana Community Hall polling station AA, in Zvimba RDC Ward 23, seven (7) people were redirected, at Whawha Open Space Tent A A in Vungu RDC 14, were redirected.

By-Election Results

ZANU-PF won the Gutu West National Assembly seat. ZANU-PF also won Nkayi RDC Ward 11, Hurungwe RDC Ward 24, Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23. While CCC emerged victorious in Kusile RDC Ward 13, thus ZANU-PF won the National Assembly by-elections and Four (4) out of the Five (5) Local Authority by-elections that were held on 11 November 2023. The tables below show the results of the by-elections.

Table 1. Gutu West National Assembly

GUTU WEST								
2023 By-elections					2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Paradza John	M	ZANU-PF	12147		Paradza John	M	ZANU-PF	14 139
Morudu Ephream	M	CCC	1258		Manguma Stanley			2998
Kurwa Robson	M	NCA	138					
Mudzingwa Sebastian. M	M	Indpnt	1775					
					Mupini Knowledge	M	MDC-T	536
					Chinama Tauya	M	PRC	442

Table 2. Local Authority

HURUNGWE RDC WARD 24								
2023 By-elections					2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Makumbe Jerry	M	ZANU-PF	1 685		Kuyerukani Faro	M	ZANU-PF	2024
Kasirowe Ezekiel	M	CCC	442		Tizai Mary	F	MDC A	1088
KUSILE RDC WARD 13								
2023 By-elections					2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Gama Michael	M	ZAPU	25		Mpofu Richard Edwin	M	ZAPU	32
Ncube Mthelisi	M	ZANU-PF	238		Ncube Mthelisi	M	ZANU-PF	547
Qonda Tarcissius	M	CCC	305		Nyoni Libert Sabelo	M	MDC-A	671
Moyo Busani Kembo	M	UZA	7					
					Moyo Thembelani	M	MDC-T	133
NKAYI RDC WARD 11								
2023 By-elections					2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Khumalo Mubonisii	M	CCC	124		Khumalo Mubonisii	M	MDC-T	305

Mpofu Mzila	M	ZAPU	50					
Ncube Mandla	M	ZANU-PF	406		Ncube Mandla	M	ZANU-PF	417
Ndlovu Philip	M	MDC-T	26					
VUNGU RDC WARD 14								
2023 By-elections					2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Matambiko Annah Chipso	F	CCC	130		Matambiko Annah Chipso	F	MDC-A	1175
Muchemwa Aaron	M	ZANU-PF	793		Mawere Collet	M	ZANU-PF	2213
ZVIMBA RDC WARD 23								
2023 By-elections					2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Chinanzvavana Manuel	M	CCC	701		Katandika Florence	F	MDC-A	528
Muganhiri Ceccillia	F	ZANU-PF	949		Muganhiri Richard	M	ZANU-PF	904
Rabu Enock Junior	M	NCA	18					
Gomani Pamellah	F	Indpnt.	63					
					Gwamure Juliet	F	PRC	33

Conclusion and Recommendations

ZESN commends voters who took time off to cast their vote in peace during the by-elections
 Women in Zimbabwean politics are traditionally marginalized. In light of that, ZESN

commends the two parties and the Vungu and Zvimba communities for fielding female candidates in the by-elections.

The Network, therefore, proffers the following recommendations to improve the pre, polling and post-electoral periods in future elections.

- Political parties should make efforts to increase the political literacy of their supporters so as to raise the level of interest in local authority elections. The turnout during the by-elections clearly indicates that voters seemed to have less interest in local authority by-elections.
- Political parties should adhere to the provisions of the code of code of conduct, including campaigning within the stipulated time frame (the official campaign season), and to desist from gathering within the 300 meters radius from polling stations..//ENDS

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