

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



Press Statement

CIVIL REGISTRY OFFICE SHOULD EXPEDITE THE ISSUANCE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS

26 November 2021 – The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has postponed the Mobile Voter Registration which was scheduled to commence on 6 December 2021 to February 2022, after realising that the Registrar General's Office is currently not in a position to issue out national identity cards (IDs), citing lack of resources. ZEC has said that it cannot conduct its massive voter registration blitz, unless and until eligible voters have acquired national identity cards (IDs), which are a prerequisite for voter registration. Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) implores government to resource the Civil Registry in order to empower it to conduct an inclusive exercise of issuing national identity cards to eligible citizens.

Voting is a democratic right which only those who are registered to vote can enjoy. A national ID or valid passport is a requirement for one to be able to register to vote. Young people, citizens who lost IDs and those who have become eligible have been finding it difficult to get the IDs, threatening their disenfranchisement in electoral processes. Given that young people constitute the biggest demographic group in Zimbabwe, their participation in elections is critical as democracy is essentially about the participation of the majority.

The Network hopes that the Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage will heed to President Emmerson Mnangangwa's call, while addressing his party supporters in Gokwe earlier this month, to decentralise the process of acquiring birth certificates and national identity cards so that everyone can easily register to vote.

ZESN calls upon the government to address challenges that affect meaningful participation of youths in democratic electoral processes, chief among them the ease of getting national identity particulars. Further, there is need to decentralize the issuance of national documents to enable all citizens and youths, including those in High Schools who have attained the voting age, to take part in voter registration which is a key electoral process that bears on the overall credibility of an election.

The Network reiterates its call to government to avail adequate resources to the Civil Registry's office to enable them to procure the necessary materials needed for processing national documents. ZESN envisages that by February 2022 when ZEC is set to commence the voter registration blitz ahead of by-elections and the boundary delimitation exercise, the Civil Registry would have complemented ZEC through issuance of the relevant national documents to the eligible voters to ensure their participation in the key electoral processes.

The Network has also taken cognizance of the efforts by ZEC in cleaning and updating of the voter's roll in which 22 656 people registered as deceased were removed from

the voters' roll between September 2017 and September 2019. It is the Network's hope that by 2023, when the country holds its harmonized elections, the voters' roll will be up to date. Furthermore, ZESN encourages ZEC to avail its full calendar of activities to enable stakeholders to plan their activities on time. Voter registration is a continuous process, citizens are encouraged to register to vote at their nearest ZEC district and provincial offices now and to take advantage of the voter registration blitz early next year to ensure that they register as voters ahead of the 2023 Harmonised General Elections. //ENDS

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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