

## ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



### ZESN STATEMENT ON REPORTS OF INTIMIDATION IN HURUNGWE WEST

**8 May 2015-** The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) is dismayed by comments made by the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development Honourable Ignatius Chombo at a rally in Hurungwe West. In a video recording of the meeting and subsequent news reports carried in the press, the minister addressed headmen and chiefs in the constituency rolling out strategies to ensure electoral victory for ZANU PF in the forthcoming by-election. The Minister revealed how various mechanisms to monitor and disrupt campaigns and movement of independent candidate and former MP Temba Mliswa ahead of the by-elections slated for June 10.

The Hurungwe West seat became vacant following the expulsion from ZANU PF and subsequent recalling from parliament of Temba Mliswa.

The utterances by Minister Chombo which are unfortunate and a direct attack on Constitutional provisions in Section 67 that guarantees the electorate freedom to form, join and to participate in the activities of a political party of their choice; and to campaign freely and peacefully for a political party or cause.

ZESN notes with concern the reported threats and incidences of violence and intimidation in the province and the abuse of traditional leaders in closing down the democratic space for free campaigning by the independent candidate in the constituency to ensure electoral victory for the ruling party candidate.

ZESN notes with concern the reported threats and incidences of violence and intimidation in the province and the abuse of traditional leaders who are being instructed to campaign for ZANU PF. This is not only inappropriate but constitutes an offence as section 45(2) of the Traditional Leaders Act does not permit traditional leaders to canvass or serve as an election agent or manager for any candidate, or nominate any candidate, for election as state President, Members of Parliament or councillor in any local authority. In addition the traditional leaders are not supposed to be influenced by political affiliation in the discharge of their duties.

ZESN encourages political leaders and their supporters to exercise restraint and greater tolerance of divergent political views and reminds political actors that the Electoral Act requires them to take all appropriate measures to prevent politically-motivated violence and any electoral malpractices before, during and after the election period.

ZESN therefore calls upon the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to investigate the reported incidents of intimidation and abuse of traditional leaders in order to create an environment that will allow for the holding of free, fair and credible by-elections in the constituency. ZESN remains committed to promoting democratic and credible elections in Zimbabwe.

**PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

*FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT*

*Tel: 263 4 250736/791443/798193/791803, Mobile: [+263712415902](tel:+263712415902),*

*Fax: 263 4 250735*

*Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Election-Support-NetworkZESN/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Election-Support-NetworkZESN/)*

*Twitter handle: ZESN1*

*Email: [info@zesn.net](mailto:info@zesn.net) / [zesn2011@zesn.net](mailto:zesn2011@zesn.net), Website: [www.zesn.org.zw](http://www.zesn.org.zw)*