

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



Mid-morning statement on the local government by-elections

Harare, 25 January 2014 –The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) is observing the three local government by-elections in Harare, Karoi and Zaka. Observers have reported that voting is taking place in a calm and peaceful environment. Most polling stations opened on time with adequate voting materials available. In all polling stations, political parties are represented by their party agents except for independent candidate in Harare's ward 12 who has no party agents representing him.

While voting is taking place peacefully and voters are trickling in, ZESN observers have reported the occurrence of critical incidents in some polling stations.

- ZESN observers have reported the deployment of riot police in Mbare at Stodart Hall in particular. ZESN is concerned about this deployment which has the capacity to agitate voters. In addition, the Zimbabwe Republic Police has already deployed at least 5 officers at each polling station. The heavy presence of the police can be intimidating.
- ZESN observers have also reported some voters whose names were not appearing in the voters roll voting on the basis of voter registration slips dated as far back as June 2013. This is a matter of concern as almost 6 months have elapsed since the last election and the Registrar-General's office have not been updating the voters roll. The voting slips cannot be authenticated hence voters not resident in the particular ward holding the by election can vote.
- ZESN observers have reported that in some polling stations the police are outside the polling station while in some stations the police office is sitting inside the polling station.
- ZESN observers have reported inconsistent application of the law that provides for assisted voters. ZESN observers have noted that even when a voter who needs assistance has brought in a person of their choice to assist, the presiding officer is also present which erodes the secrecy of the vote.
- ZESN observers in Harare's ward 12 have reported that some people who voted in the harmonized election in 2013 and whose names were appearing in the voters roll have been turned away on the basis of their names not appearing in the voters roll. This brings questions on which voters roll is being used for this by-election.

ZESN continues to observe the by-elections and will be providing regular updates as the day progresses.

Citizens can participate and receive regular updates on the by elections on the official ZESN social media platforms; <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zimbabwe-Election-Support-Network> ZESN and Twitter handle: [@ZESN1](https://twitter.com/ZESN1)

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT

Dr. Solmon Zwana ZESN Chair at +263 774198938

Rindai Chipfunde-Vava ZESN National Director - +263 771692039 / +263 712415902

zesn@africaonline.co.zw zesn@africaonline.co.zw / info@zesn.org.zw / zesninfo2013@gmail.com or
visit

www.zesn.org.zw