

Introduction

Mudzi West constituency is located in Mashonaland East Province. It comprises of Shanga, Suswe, Mudzi, Musarakufa and Chiunye. Mudzi West constituency falls under Mudzi Rural District Council. It comprises of five wards.

Population and demographics

Mashonaland East has a total population of 1 344 955. The male population is 651 781 and female population is 693 174. According to the Parliament of Zimbabwe¹ the constituency had about 38 298 people, comprising of 17 934 males and 20 364 females in 2008. The constituency also has 8 7104 households

Background

The by-election for Mudzi West Constituency will be held on the 24th of July 2015. The seat fell vacant following the death of Katsande Aqualinah. Section 158 (3) of the Constitution provides that polling in by-elections to Parliament and local authorities must take place within ninety days after the vacancies occurred unless the vacancies occur nine months before a general election. Hence proclamation was made in accordance with Section 39 (2) of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13).

Previous results

1. Referendum Results

During the constitutional referendum 13 695 voted in favour of the Constitution, 208 voted no, 302 votes were rejected and 14 205 total votes were cast². The percentage poll for the Yes vote was 96%.

2. Election Results

In 2000 Ray Kaukonde of ZANU PF won and from 2005 Katsande Aqualinah has been winning in the Constituency. In 2013 Katsande of ZANU PF obtained 93% of the total votes

¹ Parliament of Zimbabwe; Research Department available at <<http://www.parlzim.gov.zw/attachments/article/130/Mudzi%20West.pdf>>

² Zimbabwe Electoral Commission available at <www.zec.gov.zw>

cast, whilst the other candidates from MDC-T and MDC obtained 5% and 1% of the votes respectively. In 2008 ZANU PF won with a huge margin of 6 999 votes against the MDC-T. The percentage poll in the constituency in 2008 was 51.22%³. The opposition political parties have performed poorly in this constituency which has remained a ZANU PF stronghold.

Table 1: 2008 and 2013 Harmonised Elections Results

| Year | Candidates | Political Party | Number of Votes |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2008 Harmonised Election | Chengahomwe Simon | MDC-T | 2408 |
| | Katsande Aqualinah | ZANU PF | 9407 |
| | Dzike Oswell | MDC | 953 |
| 2013 Harmonised Elections | Ushe Mennard P | MDC-T | 733 |
| | Katsande Aqualinah | ZANU PF | 14266 |
| | Mutasa Daimurimi | MDC | 267 |

Source: www.zec.gov.zw

Registered voters'

Section 239 (c) of the Constitution, provides for the ZEC to conduct voter registration. Voter registration is continuous. According to the 2008 ZEC Delimitation Report, the constituency had 23 951 registered voters, making up 62% of the total population. Each ward had an average of 4790 voters. In 2013⁴ the registered voters for the Constituency increased to 26 987, a percentage increase of 13%. Voter registration ended on the 2nd of June 2015, 12 days after nomination as provided for in the law. The Commission was using the 2013 Harmonised Elections Voters' rolls and therefore was updating the voters' roll, with only the first time voters being registered. Inspection was conducted from 19 to 23 June 2015.

³ Zimbabwe Election Support Network; Report on the Zimbabwe 29 March 2008 Harmonised Elections and 27 June Presidential Run-off

⁴ Note: the voters' roll being referred to was obtained on 19 June 2013, therefore is not representative of the actual registered voters after the Mobile Voter Registration Exercise

Nomination process

The nomination was conducted on 21 May 2015 at the Magistrates Court in Marondera in accordance with Section 46 of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13). Two candidates were duly nominated as candidates for Mudzi West constituency, representing ZANU PF and the NCA. The candidates are Kawadza George of the NCA and Mudyiwa Magna ZANU PF⁵. In by-elections held on 10 June 2015, 4 percent of the candidates were women⁶.

Table 2: Contesting Candidates: Mudzi West Constituency

| Candidate Name | Political Party | Gender |
|----------------|-----------------|--------|
| Kawadza George | NCA | Male |
| Mudyiwa Magna | ZANU PF | Female |

Voter education

The Electoral Law stipulates that voter education provided by the ZEC should be adequate, accurate and unbiased; and to ensure that voter education provided by other persons is adequate and not misleading or biased in favour of any political party. The Commission usually invites civil society organisations to assist in conducting voter education. Voter education commenced soon after proclamation and will end on 16 July 2015.

Conclusion

ZESN urges the political parties and candidates contesting in the by election to observe peace and tolerate divergent views. ZESN calls upon the government to finalise the process of alignment of Electoral provisions to the Constitution.

⁵ Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Thursday 21 May 2015 available at < <http://www.zbc.co.zw/news-categories/local-news/56531-mudzi-west-by-election-set-for-july>>

⁶ Zimbabwe Election Support Network; Report on the June 10, 2015 Parliamentary By-elections