

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



ZESN CONDEMNS VOTE BUYING AND INTIMIDATION IN CHIMANIMANI WEST

Harare - 22 November, 2016- The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) a non-partisan network of 34 member organisations is concerned by vote buying using food aid and farming inputs and the alleged intimidation of voters in Chimanimani West Constituency ahead of the Chimanimani National Assembly by-election. The by-election which was necessitated by the expulsion of former MP Mr Munacho Mutezo is scheduled for Saturday 26 November 2016.

ZESN condemns the partisan distribution of food and farming inputs in a bid to secure an electoral victory for the ZANU PF candidate Nokuthula Matsikenyere. The use of gifts to procure votes is illegal according to Section 136 of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13), therefore it is critical that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission deals with vote buying as it amounts to undue influence.

At rallies held in wards 2, 3, 4 and 17 last week, villagers were given rice and informed that if they wanted to continue receiving food aid they should vote for the ZANU PF candidate or risk being side-lined. ZESN notes that under Section 77 (b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, it is the state's duty to provide food for all those in need. ZESN therefore calls upon the government to ensure that all citizens irrespective of political affiliation have access to food aid.

In addition, ZESN is concerned by reports of partisan activities by traditional leaders who are openly campaigning for the ruling party candidate by forcing villagers to attend rallies in the constituency. The partisan involvement of the traditional leaders in furthering the interests of a political party is in violation of Section 281 (2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

ZESN therefore calls upon ZEC, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to institute investigations into the vote buying and intimidation reports in Chimanimani West and to ensure that the electoral playing field is even for the conduct of a free, fair and credible by-election.

ZESN is committed to the promotion of democratic electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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