

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



Voters' Roll Inspection UPDATE - NUMBER 1

23 May 2018 –As part of its oversight role on electoral processes, ZESN has been closely tracking developments related to the ongoing inspection of the Provisional Voters' Roll (PVR) exercise which commenced on 19 May 2018 and scheduled to end on 29 May 2018. This update is based on reports from ZESN's 210 Observers deployed to the National Assembly Constituencies and covers the period 19th to the 22nd of May 2018.

General Environment

The general environment has remained calm and peaceful and no cases of violence or disturbances have been recorded by ZESN observers.

Observer Accreditation

ZESN commends ZEC for creating mechanisms that allow for observers to be accredited for a longer period. The ZEC informed stakeholders that all observers who were accredited to observe the BVR exercise will need to pay an additional two dollars for them to be issued with new accreditation that would allow them to observe all electoral processes that will be conducted until after the harmonized elections. Any new observer accreditation will also cover the same period. However, the conduct of inspection officials regarding how they treated observers varied with some facilitating the observer's work by providing clarity when needed while other inspection officials refused to grant access to observers even after the observers had furnished them with their accreditation cards for BVR.

Voter Inspection Procedures

In addition to the static centers that ZEC opened for the purposes of voters' roll inspection; it is commendable that the ZEC has also employed inexpensive ways of facilitating the inspection of the voters' roll. Short Message Service (SMS), (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) USSD code and a secure internet portal has been created by the Commission to allow for voters to check the accuracy of their details these platforms. This innovation further decongests inspection centers.

719387 had checked their registration details as of the 22nd of May 2018 using the USSD code during the past 4 days while 3 256 440 bulk SMS were sent by ZEC to registrants who supplied their mobile numbers during registration

ZEC Preparedness

Deployment of inspection officials and materials was delayed. In some cases the voters roll was not available for inspection when the inspection centers opened for instance at Zimuto

Mission Secondary School, in Masvingo North Constituency, the correct voters' roll was delivered on the evening of the third day since the commencement of the voters' inspection, thus all the voters that turned up at that inspection center were turned away during the first three days.

ZESN received reports of some Inspection officers who were not applying the regulations uniformly. At some centres registrants would sign after checking their names on the voters' roll, at some centres registrants were not signing and at some centers inspection officers were writing that the registrant had availed themselves for registration. For instance at Zengeza East at the Aquatic Complex, registrants were not signing after confirming their details on the voter register.

Inconsistencies regarding the list of inspection Centers

ZESN notes with concern that there is a variance of over 1,000 centers between the publicized inspection centers and the centers that the ZEC Chairperson announced during a meeting with stakeholders on 7 May 2018. To allay stakeholder fears there is need for ZEC to release an updated list of inspection centers that include all the centers. Currently the ZEC website has a list of inspection centers totaling 9,425 as opposed to 10,807 which was reported in the Herald edition of 19 May 2018

Recommendations:

1. There is need for ZEC head office to provide clarity to provincial and district officers on the validity of BVR accreditation cards.
2. There is need for greater publicity regarding the online and SMS platforms that ZEC has availed to allow for voters to check the accuracy of their registration details.
3. ZEC need to sustain its voter education efforts to ensure that voters are aware of the various platforms that are available for them to inspect the accuracy of the registration details.

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