

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



THE SECRECY OF POSTAL VOTING MUST BE GUARANTEED - ZESN

Harare - 13 July 2018 - The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) expresses concern over the chaotic start of the postal voting process across the country. Reports emanating from Ross Camp in Bulawayo allege that junior members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) received their ballots from their superiors and voted in their presence. ZESN notes that these allegations are in violation of Section 75(1)(a) of the Electoral Act which guarantees the secrecy of the postal vote.

In the spirit of transparency and open data, ZESN is calling upon ZEC to publicize the regulations and procedures for postal voting in order to diffuse the confusion and speculation around the process. In addition, the specific number of ballot papers dispatched to the diplomatic corps, uniformed forces and electoral officers must be made public.

It is worrying that initially there were conflicting statements issued by the ZEC and ZRP regarding the commencement of the postal voting yesterday. Whereas ZEC dismissed reports of the postal voting as “hogwash” the ZRP confirmed that voting had indeed taken place in Bulawayo. This has further fueled doubts on the credibility of the entire process.

ZESN reiterates its calls for ZEC to ensure that secrecy of the vote and freedom of choice are respected and upheld given that voting by members of the uniformed forces under postal and special voting has always been contentious because it has traditionally been shrouded in secrecy amid allegations that junior members are commanded to vote in specific ways.

Furthermore, ZEC should extend invitations to observers and political parties to observe the postal voting to enhance public confidence in the electoral process. The absence of proper observation of such key electoral processes will only further fuel speculation.

ZESN remains committed to promoting credible elections and will continue monitoring electoral processes and the environment.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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