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## ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



### **Alleged Vote-buying Ahead of Glenview South Constituency By-election**

**29-08-2019 (Harare)** - The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) notes with concern the timing of the drilling of 15 boreholes by the District Development Fund (DDF) in Glen View South which ZANU-PF seems to have taken advantage of in its campaigns ahead of a by-election scheduled to be held on 7 September 2019 in the Constituency.

While ZESN acknowledges that Section 77 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe requires the State to take reasonable legislative and other measures within the limits of the resources available to it, to achieve progressive realization of the right to food and water, it appears the prioritisation of the service delivery has been influenced by political considerations. ZESN observers have reported on the official opening of some of the boreholes by ZANU-PF during its ongoing campaigns in the Constituency. They have also observed DDF trucks carrying borehole rigs moving in convoys with vehicles carrying ZANU-PF supporters in their full party regalia heading for the borehole drilling sites. This can be viewed as a form of vote buying or attempts to influence voting preferences.

Vote buying, according to, The Electoral Knowledge Network (ace) includes promising, offering or giving money; goods; services and/or other inducements (such as promises of employment or special favours or treatment) to voters and/or others, including voters' families or communities in the run-up to an election, after an election has been announced, or during the campaign, by a political party candidate or others (agents) operating on their behalf in a way which is intended or reasonably could be expected to influence how voters cast their vote or would likely do so. Whenever it happens, vote buying has the effect of making the playing field uneven. Yet, critical for a free and fair electoral context is a pre-election environment devoid of irregularities and malpractices that include vote buying.

The act is also in contravention of, among others, Section 4.1.4 of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections which stipulates that "*Member States shall take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent corruption, bribery, favouritism, political violence, intolerance and intimidation.*"

The Network is concerned with the timing of the drilling of the 15 boreholes in an area that is scheduled to have a by-election soon when there are so many other areas in Harare and other cities and towns that are facing rampant water shortages and erratic water supplies. It is also disturbing that essential service delivery now seems to be tied to electoral campaigns. This perception is reinforced by another incident that was observed by ZESN on 11 May 2019 in Ward 10 of Mutasa Rural District Council by-election where a borehole

was drilled on the actual polling day. Further, concerns about vote buying were also raised in the Lupane East National Assembly by-election when a letter replying favourably to a request, by the ruling party, for medicines to be supplied to Lupane in support of the party's campaign was leaked. This letter widely circulated on social media during the run up to the by-election and its contents were not refuted.

The Network reiterates the need for clear legislative measures prohibiting vote buying as well as the enforcement of Section 156 (c) (i) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe that requires ZEC to ensure the establishment of appropriate systems and mechanisms to eliminate vote buying muds the pre-election environment.

ZESN remains committed to support the promotion of democratic electoral processes that are in line with best practices outlined in regional and international instruments governing the conduct of democratic elections. //Ends

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#### **PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

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