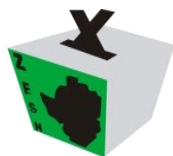


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## ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



### **Preliminary Statement on the Glen View South National Assembly, Mangwe National Assembly, and Masvingo Rural District Council Ward 1 Local Authority By-elections**

**08 September 2019 – Harare** – In pursuit of its mission to promote democratic elections in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) observed the Glen View South National Assembly, Mangwe National Assembly, and Masvingo Rural District Council Ward 1 by-elections. A total of 56 observers were deployed to observe the three by-elections. This preliminary statement is based on reports received from ZESN observers.

#### **Observation Methodology**

For the Glen View South by-election, ZESN trained and deployed a long term observer and a total of 27 static observers covering all polling stations and two roving teams on Election Day. In addition, ZESN observers observed at the two Ward Collation Centres and the Constituency Collation Centre. In Mangwe, ZESN deployed two long term observers ahead of the by-election. On Election Day, 15 static observers were deployed to observe polling throughout the day before proceeding to observe at the 15 Ward Collation Centres in the Constituency. ZESN had one roving team in the Mangwe Constituency. In Masvingo RDC Ward 1, ZESN deployed observers to three of the nine polling stations in in the by-election and at the Ward Collation Centre.

The findings and recommendations of this preliminary statement are made in reference to the Electoral Laws of Zimbabwe, the Revised Southern African Development Community (SADC) Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections as well as other regional and African election guidelines and principles governing the conduct of democratic elections.

#### **Pre-election Observations**

The pre-election environment in the three by-elections was peaceful, without reported cases of violence. However, other forms of malpractices were observed. In Glen View South, ZESN was concerned with the timing of the drilling of 15 boreholes by the District Development Fund (DDF) which ZANU-PF seemingly took advantage of during its campaigns ahead of a by-election as the party was observed officiating at some of the boreholes in the Constituency. DDF trucks carrying borehole rigs were observed moving in convoys with vehicles carrying ZANU-PF supporters in their full party regalia heading for

the borehole drilling sites. ZANU-PF also distributed rice in the Constituency until a day before the election. This amounts to vote buying or an attempt to influence voting preferences with an effect to make the electoral playing field uneven. ZESN observers reported on cases where ZANU-PF supporters allegedly pasted their candidate's posters on top of those of the MDC Alliance candidate and reports were received of ZANU-PF using government vehicles for its campaigns in Glen View South.

### **Set up and Opening of Polling Stations**

ZESN observers reported that ZEC posted the voters' roll outside all polling stations in all the three by-elections. This proposed administrative reform is commendable as it enables the easy identification of polling stations by voters. Polling stations were set up in accordance with the requirements of the law, in a manner that ensured that voters could mark their ballots in secrecy. ZESN observers also reported that essential voting materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, ZEC stamp, indelible marking pens, and biometric voters' roll were present at all polling stations observed in the three by-elections. Furthermore, observers reported that all the polling stations opened on time and had started processing voters by 7.15 am. All the polling stations were reported to be easily accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. On average, there were seven polling officers per polling station.

### **Voting Process and Procedures**

ZESN Observers reported that the voting process in the by-elections proceeded smoothly at all polling stations with procedures such as showing ballot boxes to be empty, checking voters' names against the voters' roll, examining voters' fingers for indelible ink and applying the ink, issuance of a stamped ballot papers and other key procedures being duly followed. In addition, observers reported that all voters were required to present identification documents before voting with those having defaced or invalid identification such as driver's licences and expired passports being turned away.

### **Redirected and Turned Away Voters**

While the posting of the voters' roll outside polling stations as done in the by-elections is commendable, significant numbers of redirected voters continued to be observed. There is therefore need for ZEC to assign to an officer at the polling station the role to inform voters that they need to check their names on the voters' roll displayed outside polling stations. The Commission could also notify voters whose registration would have been changed ahead of time, for example via text messages. Some polling stations also recorded high numbers of turned away voters. Glen View 9B Primary polling station notably recorded 55, followed by 53 at turned away voters at Glen View 9A Primary as of 6.00 pm. Many of these people were however from Glen Norah Constituency, which borders with Glen View South. During the 2018 harmonized election the same polling station (whose unique IDs 6301HRE2807 B and 6301HRE2807 A) were used for Glen Norah

Constituency and this may have contributed to the confusion resulting in persons from Glen Norah showing up to vote. The numbers of redirected voters were much lower in Mangwe and Masvingo. For instance the highest recorded in Mangwe as at 6.00 pm was seven.

There was one incident of a ZANU-PF supporter who was turned away for showing up wearing the party regalia on Election Day at Glen View 3BB polling station. The Electoral Code of Conduct for Political Parties under Schedule 7 (1)(d) on conduct during polling period stipulates that “No political party or candidate may, from midnight twenty-four hours before polling day in any election or referendum until polling stations are closed on that day—campaign or display campaign material within 300 metres of a polling station or counting centre. ZESN commends ZEC for the action they took in keeping with the provisions of the Code of Conduct as well as Section 146 of the Electoral Act which also prohibits the wearing of party symbols on polling day.

### **Assisted Voters**

Relatively low numbers of assisted voters were recorded in Glen View South Constituency. By contrast, the number of assisted voters was high in Mangwe, especially on account of old age and visual impairment. ZESN observers reported that, almost 100 voters had been assisted to vote on account of visual impairment as at 6.00 pm at 15 polling stations in Mangwe. The network calls for the introduction of tactile braille packets to allow visually impaired voters to vote on their own.

### **Election Agents**

In terms of the law, political parties and candidates can deploy one election agent inside the polling station and an additional agent within the vicinity of a polling station. ZESN continues to encourage political parties to comprehensively deploy agents to observe electoral processes on their behalf. ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance deployed party agents comprehensively in Glen View South Constituency while the other parties deployed to selected polling stations. For Mangwe, ZANU-PF and MDC Alliance deployed party agents at all polling stations where ZESN had observers while the MDC-T and other political parties deployed to some of the polling stations.

### **Election Day Political Environment**

The political environment on Election Day was generally serene; this is commendable given the large number of electoral contestants and the high stakes particularly in the Glen View South by-election.

### **Voter Turnout**

Voter turnout in the three by-elections was low with Glen View South Constituency recording a voter turnout of 25%. Perhaps the low turnout can be attributed to the cold, windy and cloudy weather conditions that prevailed across the country yesterday and the

general apathy that ZESN has consistently observed in by-elections. ZESN implores political parties to deliberately educate their supporters on the importance of participating in by-elections.

### Counting and Results Collation

ZESN observers were permitted to observe counting and results collation at all polling stations where they were stations. Tables 1, 2, and 3 below compare the by-elections with the previous (2018) elections results for Glen View South Constituency, Mangwe Constituency, and Ward 1 of Masvingo RDC.

**Table 1: Glenview South Constituency Election Results**

2019 By-election Results				2018 Election Results			
Candidate	Sex	Political party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Political party	Votes
<b>Tsvangirayi Vincent</b>	M	<b>MDC Alliance</b>	3474	<b>Tsvangirayi Java Vimbayi</b>	F	<b>MDC Alliance</b>	9942
Muchuwe Offard	M	ZANU-PF	1534	Chipango Dumisani	M	ZANU-PF	3248
Ndengu Phillip Chamunorwa	M	Independent	64	Hakata Grandmore	M	Independent	3315
Milton Edwin	M	LEAD	58	Kahari Joseph	M	MDC-T	452
Zisani Ellah	F	UANC	34	Kasema Maxwell	M	Independent	130
Nyamayedenga Rosemary	F	Free Zim Congress	31	Felizardo Penlodge	M	BZA	112
Rateiwa Crispen	M	ZAPU	17	Rateiwa Crispen	M	ZIPP	100
Kasema Maxwell	M	Independent	14	Huta Norleen	F	CODE	74
Pikelele Parlington	M	UANC	8	Million Edwin	M	PRC	39
				Howera Hilarion	M	NCA	34

Source: ZEC

**Table 2: Mangwe Constituency Election Results**

2019 By-election Results				2018 By-election Results			
Candidate	Sex	Political party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Political party	Votes
<b>Hlanani Mguni</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>ZANU PF</b>	<b>4 553</b>	<b>Mguni Obedingwa</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>ZANU-PF</b>	<b>7 744</b>
Sihlalo Vincent	M	MDC Alliance	2210	Sihlalo Vincent	M	MDC Alliance	4536

Kositsile George Raphael	M	MDC T	266	Nyathi Thembinkosi Elexio	F	MDC-T	1335
Sibanda	Mathew	ZAPU	148	Mangoye Dhlamini Nketha	M	ANSA	639
Ncube Zinkabi Tommy	M	Independent	110				
Nleya Edmand	M	MRP	60				
Phiri Varaidzo Phumuzile	F	LEAD	49				
Dlomo Lizwe	M	NCA	45				

Source: ZEC

**Table 3: Masvingo RDC Ward 1 Election Results**

2019 By-election Results				2018 Election Results			
Candidate	Sex	Political party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Political party	Votes
Murambiwa Kudakwashe Richard	M	ZANU-PF	1166	Maridza Sellina	F	MDC Alliance	1014
Chawatama Escort	M	MDC Alliance	334	Mundondo Garcia	M	ZANU-PF	835
				Muzenda Rungamai	M	PRC	110
				Kondowera Thomas Dimingo	M	Independent	28
				Nyirenda Kondwelani	M	UDA	20

Source: ZEC

### Analysis of Results

MDC Alliance retained the Glen View South National Assembly Seat, but however the figures have dwindled by 35% compared to votes garnered by MDC Alliance during the 2018 harmonized elections. ZANU PF votes declined by 47.22% compared to 2018 results. ZANU-PF retained the Mangwe National Assembly Seat having garnered 4553 votes which is 3191 less compared to the 2018 results. The drop in figures of the votes cast during the Glen View South and Mangwe National Assembly by-election for both ZANU-PF and MDC Alliance are a clear indication of voter apathy associated with by elections. ZANU PF won the local authority seat in Masvingo RDC Ward 1 against the MDC Alliance with a margin of 152 votes compared to the 2018 harmonized elections when MDC A won the seat by 1014.

## Conclusion

It is apparent from ZESN's observations that voters are not giving due importance to by-elections as evidenced by the significantly lower turnouts that are evident in by-elections held after the 2018 harmonised elections. Further, as highlighted in the statement, ZESN continues to note electoral malpractices, such as vote buying, that affect the integrity of electoral processes as well as areas where elections administration could be done better.

## Recommendations

- i. ZESN implores the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission to investigate reports of vote buying that were reported in the Glen View South by-election, as well as in previous by-elections that were held post 2018 harmonized elections.
- ii. The ZEC should adopt the displaying of voters' rolls outside polling stations in the future elections to enable easy identification of voters' correct polling stations. Currently, this practice is still at the pilot phase.
- iii. ZESN urges political parties to create structures, mechanisms and policies that facilitate the nomination of a more diverse range of candidates during the internal party primaries. This will make the process more inclusive.
- iv. Political parties should invest in the recruitment, training and deployment of their party agents to allow parties to comment authoritatively on Election Day processes.
- v. Political parties should improve the quality of their campaign efforts to support improvement in the turnout of voters during the by-elections.
- vi. Tactile braille templates should be developed to facilitate enjoyment of secrecy of the vote by persons with visual impairments.//Ends

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### PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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