



ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK

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FACT SHEET

Constituency delimitation: How to maintain equity and representation

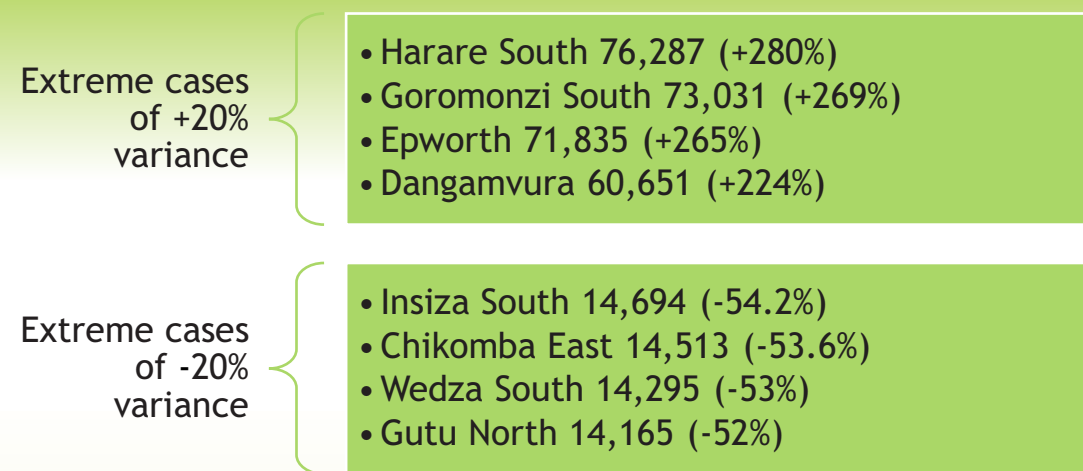
Delimitation is the process of dividing constituencies for the purposes of elections. It divides the country into constituencies and wards for the purposes of elections of persons to constituency seats in the National Assembly and of councilors to local authorities. It is important to note that delimitation is a fundamental process of the Electoral Cycle. The importance of demarcating boundaries is important in ensuring fair representation of the electorate. Delimitation is a technical process hence it is important that it is understood by all stakeholders. It is imperative that principles of the delimitation process which include; impartiality, equality of the vote, non-discrimination, representativeness and transparency are embedded in the legal framework, process and procedures of delimitation of electoral boundaries.

History of Delimitation in Zimbabwe

Delimitation in 2000 led to 120 Constituencies
Undertaken by Delimitation Commission appointed by President
Late submission of report (3-weeks before elections)
Non inclusive process leading to lack of trust on the outcome

Delimitation in 2005 undertaken by Delimitation Commission
Criticism on manipulating electoral boundaries
Allegations of gerrymandering of election boundaries
Report contrary to census statistics

Delimitation in 2008 was undertaken by Zimbabwe Electoral Commission following Constitutional Amendment
Delimitation process was not sufficiently consultative & participatory
Report finalized late leaving no time for discussion and voter education
Demographic changes have left the 2008 delimitation irrelevant with large variations in Constituencies with 106 constituencies out of 210 not conforming to + / - 20% variance



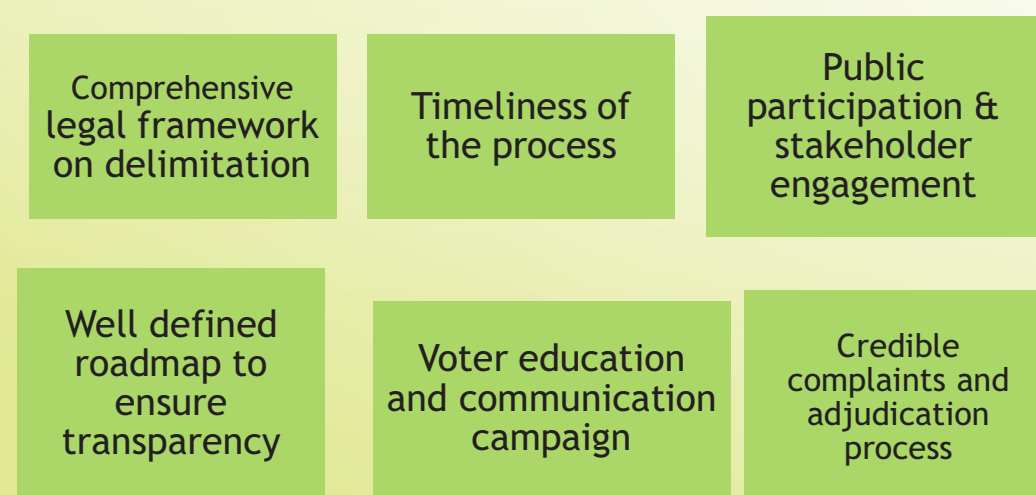
Challenges for Constituency Delimitation Exercise

Legal framework not being comprehensive: There are limited provisions to ensure participation of stakeholders in the delimitation process, no provisions on handling complaints / appeal process and no referral to judicial authorities in case of an unresolved dispute in the process. Urban and Rural Council Acts are not aligned to the Constitution as they contain provisions allowing the President to divide local authority into wards.

Citizen Perceptions: Citizens largely lack knowledge of the delimitation process, ZEC should ensure consultation with stakeholders on delimitation, and government to provide adequate financial resources and roadmap is needed for delimitation.

Timeframe of Delimitation: The Constitution provides for delimitation to take place immediately after a census. The census is conducted every 10 years and the last census was undertaken in 2012 with the next one being planned in 2022 leaving very limited time for ZEC to undertake Constituency Delimitation, which as per the Constitution needs to be completed 6 months before the Election Day. This requires bringing the census earlier than the 2022 enabling ZEC to undertake the process well within the time frame.

Factors affecting Delimitation



The Way Forward

Boundary Delimitation Linked to Registered Voters: As delimitation is based on the number of registered voters as per the Zimbabwe constitution, therefore, low levels of registration in Bulawayo, Matebeland North and Matebeland South will result in loss of seats thereby effecting citizens' representation in Parliament. There will be a need to undertake a renewed registration drive to enhance registration in under-registered provinces.

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