



ZESN Press Statement on the Harare Municipality (Kuwadzana) Ward 44 and Mwenezi Rural District Council Ward 15 By-elections

08 February 2020 – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) trained and deployed observers to observe polling proceedings at polling stations in Harare Municipality (Kuwadzana) Ward 44 and Ward 15 of Mwenezi Rural District Council (RDC). Observers were deployed at six out of 12 polling stations in Harare Ward 44 and six out of 11 in the Mwenezi Ward 15 RDC by-elections. ZESN also deployed observers at the Ward Collation Centres for both by-elections. The Harare Ward 44 local authority, which covers Kuwadzana and Kuwadzana Extension, fell vacant following the death of MDC Alliance Councillor Renias Masunda while the Mwenezi Ward 15 council seat fell vacant following the death of ZANU-PF Councillor Edson Chauke in November 2019. The by-elections are being held in accordance with section 121A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13).

The Nomination Courts sat on Friday 13 December 2019 to receive nominations of prospective candidates to fill the local authority seats vacancies. Three candidates, Makurwe Lloyd of ZANU-PF, Ndoya Wenell of NCA and Shoko Adonis of the MDC Alliance, were duly nominated to contest for the Harare Ward 44 Municipality seat, whilst Dzuda Shepherd Tiripamwe of MDC Alliance and Kwinika Samuel of ZANU-PF were duly nominated to contest for the Mwenezi RDC Ward 15 seat at the close of sitting of the Nomination Court.

By midday, ZESN observers had reported the following:

Political environment

As of midday, the political environment in the Wards had been reported to be peaceful. No incidents of violence or malpractices have been observed and reported so far.

Displaying of the voters' roll

ZESN observers reported that the voters' rolls are displayed outside the polling stations to allow voters to check their names before polling day in both Mwenezi and Kuwadzana.

Set up and opening of polling stations

The polling stations opened on time and all the essential polling materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, indelible finger markers, voters' roll, the ZEC official stamp, were available at all polling stations where ZESN had observers.

Polling officials

On average, each of the polling stations where ZESN observers were deployed had seven polling officers at the time of opening the majority were male.

Voting process and procedures

At all polling stations where ZESN is observing, voting has been proceeding well, with all polling procedures being duly followed in accordance with the law.

Political Parties' agents

ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance deployed party agents to track the polling process at all the polling stations where ZESN observers have been deployed, in both Mwenezi and Kuwadzana. However, in Kuwadzana, NCA Party is also contesting but did not deploy party agents.

Assisted voters

Assisted voters were significantly higher in Mwenezi than in Kuwadzana. At least 44 people, 38 females and 6 males had been assisted to vote due to illiteracy as at 12.00 hours at Sosonye 2 tent in Mwenezi while at Valley primary school 26 people are assisted also because of illiteracy. In Kuwadzana only one observer reported witnessing assisted voters (Kuwadzana High School 3A, two people were assisted, one female was visually impaired and the other male was illiterate).

Turned away and redirected voters

Some people were turned away either because they could not produce valid identification documents, for example two people who had a photocopy of an ID and a driver's licence were turned away at Kuwadzana High 3C polling station. Two people were turned away at Vezvi Primary School in Mwenezi because one had no ID and the other produced a driver's licence. As of 1200 hours, at Kuwadzana High 3A polling station, two people had been turned away because they had driver's licence.

Conclusion

ZESN urges all registered voters to go out and exercise their Constitutional right by casting their vote in peace since voting is continuing until 1900 hours in the evening. ZESN will continue to observe and issue updates and a preliminary statement as well as a report of the by-election with its recommendations.

ZESN remains committed to promoting democratic elections in Zimbabwe. //Ends

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

Zimbabwe Election Support Network

ZESN Chairperson: +263772234891

Acting National Director: +263772219462
+263 (242) 791443, 798193, 791803, 250736
info@zesn.net or zesn2011@zesn.net or visit www.zesn.org.zw
Facebook: Zimbabwe-Election-Support-Network (ZESN)
Twitter: @ZESN1