

## ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



### **Situational Statement on Chimanimani Rural District Council Ward 16 and Mangwe Rural District Council Ward 17 Local Authority By-elections**

**14 March 2020** – The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) is observing the Chimanimani Rural District Council Ward 16 and Mangwe Rural District Council Ward 17 Local Authority by-elections. The Chimanimani Ward 16 Local Authority, which covers areas such as Gwindingwi, Silverstream and Duri among other villages, fell vacant following the death of ZANU-PF Councillor, Tendai Nyabaya, in December 2019. The Mangwe Ward 17 seat fell vacant following the death of ZANU-PF Councillor, Majahana Alfred Clement, in January 2020. The by-elections are being held in accordance with Section 121A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13).

The Nomination Courts sat on Friday 14 February 2020 to receive nominations of prospective candidates to fill the Local Authority seats vacancies. ZANU-PF's Chinamira Charles and Murada Erasmus Brighton of the MDC Alliance, were duly nominated to contest the Chimanimani Ward 16 seat, whilst Ndlovu Onthibile of ZANU-PF and Phuthi Sindisiwe of MDC Alliance were duly nominated to contest the Mangwe RDC Ward 17 seat.

ZESN trained and deployed volunteers to observe polling proceedings at selected polling stations in the Chimanimani Rural District Council (RDC) Ward 16 and Mangwe RDC Ward 17 Local Authority by-elections. In Chimanimani Ward 16, ZESN has static observers at 5 out of 11 polling stations while in Mangwe RDC Ward 17, ZESN has a static observer at 1 of the 4 polling stations and a roving team that is covering the remaining 3 polling stations. ZESN also deployed observers at the Ward Collation Centres in both by-elections. By midday, these observers had reported the following:

#### **Political environment**

The political environment in the Wards had been reported to be serene with no incidents of violence or malpractices having been observed and reported.

#### **Displaying of the voters' roll**

ZESN observers reported that the voters' rolls were displayed outside the polling stations to allow voters to check their names before polling day in both Mangwe and Chimanimani and this was done at least 2 days ahead of the by-elections.

### **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 six polling officers at the time of opening, the majority were female.

### **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 deployed party agents to track the polling process at all the polling stations where ZESN observers have been deployed, in both Chimanimani and Mangwe. However, the MDC Alliance did not deploy party agents comprehensively. MDC Alliance party agents were reported to be present in 3 of the 5 polling stations where ZESN has observers in Chimanimani.

### **Assisted voters**

The numbers of assisted voters were significantly lower in both Chimanimani ward 17 and Mangwe ward 16 local authority by-elections. Of the approximately 250 people that had voted by 12 noon at Tiya Primary School in Chimanimani about 12 people, 11 females and one male had been assisted to vote, due to illiteracy while six people, two visually impaired males and four illiterate females were assisted to vote at Makorokoro Primary School in Mangwe.

### **Turned away and redirected voters**

Some people were turned away because they were not on the voters' roll, for example 10 people whose names were not on the voters' roll were turned away at Nyabamba Secondary School polling station in Chimanimani. In Mangwe, 2 people were turned away at Makorokoro Primary school polling station because one had no identification particulars and the other one is not a registered voter in the ward. At Tjedza Primary School polling station in Mangwe, 2 males were turned away because they did not have identification particulars and 4 females were turned away because their names did not appear on the voter's roll suggesting that they are not registered voters.

## Conclusion

ZESN will continue to observe and issue updates and a preliminary statement as well as a report of the by-elections with appropriate recommendations. The Network urges all registered voters in Chimanimani Ward 16 and Mangwe Ward 17 to exercise their constitutional right by going out to cast their vote in peace since voting is continuing until 1900 hours in the evening. ZESN remains committed to promoting democratic elections in Zimbabwe. /Ends

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

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