

Zimbabwe Election Support Network



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Support Network ■
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

Long Term Election Observation Update

August 2022 Update

INTRODUCTION

At regular intervals, the Zimbabwe Elections Support Network receives updates from Long Term Observers (LTOs) who are deployed in constituencies across the country. Through the updates by the LTOs, ZESN continuously assesses the evolving electoral environment. This report covers the reporting period of August 2022.

DELIMITATION PROCESS

In line with the provisions of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is expected to commence the delimitation exercise anytime this year. Pre-delimitation activities were reportedly ongoing in some areas such as Makoni Central, and Chitungwiza among other districts.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Political activity was relatively high in constituencies or wards where by-elections were scheduled to take place. For instance in Bulilima and Chipinge. In Ward 24 of Buhera Rural District Council political campaigns had already commenced following the death of the serving Councilor.

Across the country, regular small-scale political meetings were ongoing. Chief among these were gatherings by either ZANU-PF or CCC. In areas such as Sadza, and Mutoko ZANU-PF had cell verification programs.

There were also isolated huge rallies including a CCC **'Thank You'** rally in Kariba's Nyamhunga Stadium which was addressed by party leader Nelson Chamisa following the CCC victory in a Local Authority by-elections held in Kariba's ward 5 on the 23rd of July. Earlier on, in May, CCC also won in 3 wards in by election in Kariba.

MOBILE CIVIL REGISTRATION EXERCISE

In March 2022, the Civil Registry Department announced that it would be conducting a national mobile registration exercise from April 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022.

During the reporting period, the mobile civil registration exercise was ongoing and ZESN LTOs confirmed the visibility of the civil registry teams in their various constituencies.

VOTER EDUCATION

Civil society Organizations including ZESN remained quite visible in various communities conducting voter education work. Just to mention a few, National Youth Development Trust (NYDT) offered training to voter registration mobilizers in Magwegwe, Bulawayo; ZimRights and Vote263 had voter education campaigns in Chiredzi; whilst RUCET¹ had voter education sessions in Lupane.



Community members going through the Ballot Newsletter, a ZESN Publication.

ZESN had voter education programmes in Kotwa, Mashonaland East; Magunje, Mashonaland West and also offered civic and voter education at Matebeleland South as well as at Harare Agricultural Show.



Part of the participants at the community meeting convened by ZESN in Magunje.

Voter education radio programs facilitated mostly by civil society organizations such as ZESN and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) were ongoing.

ZESN also conducted a number of virtual voter education seminars sensitizing various stakeholders on electoral

¹ Rural Communities Empowerment Trust

processes such as voter registration as well as the forthcoming delimitation exercise.

VOTER REGISTRATION

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) offices remain across 63 districts and 10 provincial centres. In August, ZEC briefly deployed voter registration teams to public spaces including at the Matabeleland South Agricultural Show in Gwanda and the Zimbabwe Agricultural Show in Harare.

Some indications were that aspiring, as well as incumbent Members of Parliament and Councilors in some constituencies, were facilitating or encouraging people to register to vote through various interventions including providing transport. The turnout for voter registration, however, remains low.

At the Harare Agricultural Show, ZEC had a stand where it exhibited the work of the Commission, had a voter registration team on site, and conducted a survey on whether political parties should be registered and regulated in Zimbabwe. This could be an indication that the electoral reform discourse is part of the ZEC agenda as the nation prepares for the 2023 harmonised elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings in this report ZESN recommends the following;

1. There is a need to ensure the decentralization of voter registration from the district and provincial offices to strategic places where large numbers of people gather.
2. Civic and voter education primarily focusing on peaceful co-existence and peacebuilding may prove vital in ensuring the maintenance of peace.
3. In light of the forthcoming delimitation process, there is a need for ZEC and other electoral stakeholders to embark on intensive voter education programs particularly focused on delimitation.