



**Zimbabwe Election
Support Network** ■
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

Press Statement

**ZESN SITUATIONAL STATEMENT ON THE MBERENGWA RDC WARD 15 & NYANGA RDC
WARD 27 LOCAL AUTHORITY BY-ELECTIONS**

08-October-2022- The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) has deployed 6 static observers in Mberengwa Ward 15 and Nyanga Ward 27 as well as observers at the Ward Collation Centres and a roving team to the local authority by-elections. The by-elections are being held in accordance with Section 121 A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13) following the death of the incumbent councillors for Mberengwa Ward 15 Ravasingadi Zhou of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and Collins Matongo of ZANU-PF party for Nyanga Ward 27 respectively.

Nomination Court

The Nomination Court sat on Friday 19 August 2022 to receive nominations of prospective candidates. Two candidates, Nkondo Albenias of ZANU-PF, and Conias Dhongijena of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) were duly nominated as candidates for Mberengwa Ward 15, while Taurai Artwell Tichiwangani of the CCC and Simon Nyazenga of ZANU-PF, as candidates for Nyanga Ward 27 at the close of sitting of the Nomination Court.

Political environment

As of midday, the political environment in the respective Wards has been reported to be peaceful. No incidents had been observed and reported during the polling process so far.

Displaying of the voters' roll

ZESN observers reported that the voters' rolls were displayed two days before polling day to allow voters to check their names before polling day. ZESN implores the electorate to make use of the voters' roll that is displayed outside polling stations to properly identify the polling station where they are supposed to cast their vote.

Set up and opening of polling stations

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

Polling officials

Each of the polling stations was manned by an average of eight polling officers at the time of opening. At five (5) of the six (6) polling stations observed, the Presiding officers were reported to be men.

Adherence to COVID-19 protocols

Social distancing was observed especially in polling stations where there was space. Voters and all other stakeholders, including observers and election officials who entered polling stations, had their masks on and no one was allowed to enter the polling station without a mask. Voters also had their hands sanitized or washed at almost every polling station. All visitors to the polling stations were also required to register their names and contact details, presumably for COVID-19 tracing.

Voting process and procedures

At both polling stations, ZESN observers reported that voting is proceeding well, with all polling procedures being duly followed in accordance with the law.

Party agents

The two (2) contesting parties; ZANU-PF and CCC deployed their party agents to track the polling process at all the polling stations in the by-elections.

Assisted voters

High numbers of assisted voters on account of illiteracy and visual impairment induced by old age were observed at some polling stations as of midday. For instance, in Mberengwa Ward 15 by 11:00 hours, 24 voters had been assisted at Ruzengwe polling station; 19 at Chegato Secondary School polling station; nine (9) at Magavakava Primary School polling station and 14 at Rubweruchena Tent polling station due to illiteracy. In Nyanga Ward 27 at Raudzi Primary School polling station, 1 voter was assisted and 5 voters were assisted at Nyanzou Primary School polling station.

Turned away and redirected voters

Some people were turned away because their names were not on the voters' roll or they could not produce valid identification documents in both by-elections. As of 11:00 hours, about 12 people had been turned away at Chegato Secondary School polling station; out of the 12 people that had been turned away whose names were not in the voters' roll, one had no Identify Document (ID), one (1) was redirected to Rubweruchena Tent polling station; and 10 people were turned away at Magavakava Primary School polling station as they were not in the voter's roll while eight (8) were turned away and one (1) redirected to Ruzengwe polling station and one (1) had presented a torn ID. At Raudzi Primary School polling station in Nyanga, five (5) voters were turned away while eight (8) people were turned away from voting at Nyanzou Primary for the same reasons.

Voter turnout

ZESN observers have reported that around 11:00 hours, most of the voters who were turning up to vote were predominantly women followed by elderly persons. The participation of youths in the by-elections was noticeably low.

Conclusion

Voting is continuing until 1900 hours in the evening. ZESN will continue to observe and will issue a comprehensive preliminary statement as well as a report of the two (2) by-elections.//ENDS

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