



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

**REPORT ON THE 22 OCTOBER 2022 LOCAL AUTHORITY
BY-ELECTIONS**

IN

**BUHERA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL (RDC) WARD 24, GURUVE RDC WARD 4, INSIZA
RDC WARD 4, MATOBO RDC WARD 2, MUTARE MUNICIPALITY WARD 18 AND
TAKAWIRA RDC WARD 6**

1. Introduction

Election observation is imperative in the gathering of information regarding an electoral process, to assess whether the electoral process was conducted in accordance with the laws of the country, regional or international principles, standards and best practices. The information gathered provides an impartial and accurate appraisal of the electoral environment and recommendations for improving electoral processes.

As part of its efforts to promote democratic elections in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) deployed trained observers to observe Local Authority by-elections on 22 October 2022 in Buhera Rural District Council (RDC) Ward 24, Guruve RDC Ward 4, Insiza RDC Ward 4, Matobo RDC Ward 2, Mutare Municipality Ward 18 and Takawira RDC Ward 6. The by-elections were held in accordance with Section 121 A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13) following the passing on of councillors Saimon Chingwidze (ZANU-PF) of Ward 24 Buhera RDC; Tom Moyo (ZANU-PF) of Ward 2 Matobo RDC, Kudakwashe Chisango (MDC-A) of Ward 18 Mutare Municipality; Lencio Kafungura (ZANU-PF) of Ward 4 Guruve RDC, Johannes Kohli (ZANU-PF) of Takawira Ward 6 RDC and Lawrence Maphosa (ZANU-PF) of Insiza Ward 4 RDC.

2. Observation Methodology

ZESN trained and deployed 19 observers, with an average of two (2) static observers in each Ward and four (4) mobile observers in Matobo and Takawira. All the ZESN observers were accredited by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and were trained by ZESN before being deployed to 17 polling stations. In addition to Election Day, the observer reported on the electoral and political developments in their respective wards during the week that the by-elections were held. The findings and recommendations of this report are made based on reports submitted by ZESN observers and the recommendations are made in reference to Zimbabwe's Electoral Laws, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Principles and Guidelines Governing the Conduct of Democratic Elections as well as other regional and African election guidelines and principles.

3. The Pre-Election Environment

3.1 Nomination Court

The Nomination Court sat at the respective district offices on 7, 20 and 21 September 2022 to consider nominations for the by-elections. Table 1 below shows a list of the candidates who were successfully nominated.

Table 1. Results of the Nomination Court Sitting.

Local Authority	Ward	Candidate's Name	Sex	Political Party
Buhera RDC	24	Muzamba Joram	M	CCC
		Muzokomba Enest	M	ZANU-PF
Guruve RDC	4	Chiguma Stephen	M	ZANU-PF
		Kudyahakudadirwe Wonder Francis	M	CCC
Insiza RDC	4	Dube Daniel	M	ZANU-PF
		Gumede Augustine	M	CCC
Matobo RDC	2	Ngwenya Sindiso	M	CCC
		Nyirongo Liberty	M	ZAPU
		Siwela Fadreck	M	ZANU-PF
Mutare Municipality	18	Chiwashira Loveness	F	ZANU-PF
		Machekeche Nyasha	M	NCA
		Murindashaka Blessing	M	CCC
Takawira RDC	6	Dzingira Winny Netsai	F	ZANU-PF
		Marevegwa Amosi	M	CCC

As shown in the table above, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) contested in the by-elections. ZANU-PF and CCC contested in all six (6) wards, NCA contested in Mutare whilst ZAPU had a candidate in Matobo ward 2. Political parties did not field any female candidates, save for ZANU-PF which fielded two (2) female candidates in two (2) of the six (6) by-elections. The need to ensure gender equality and inclusiveness in political spheres requires not only a comprehensive legal

framework, but political will to ensure increased participation of women in electoral processes by political parties.

3.2 Campaigns

The pre-electoral environment was quite contrasting with peace prevailing in half of the wards whilst in the other wards campaigns were marred by incidents of violence. The campaigns were relatively peaceful in Buhera Ward 24, Guruve Ward 4 and Mutare Municipality Ward 18. However, the same was not the case in Takawira Ward 6, Insiza Ward 4 and Matobo Ward 2 where campaigns were marked by a varying degree of political violence.

In Matobo, there were reported conflicts which escalated on 16 October 2022 following a clash between ZANU-PF and CCC members who were campaigning in the same neighbourhood. As a result of the conflict, several people were injured and property - including vehicles and houses - were damaged. What followed were accusations and counter-accusations between ZANU-PF and CCC members. A day after the Matobo clashes, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) issued a statement stating that investigations were underway following reports by both ZANU-PF and CCC. Several organizations including ZESN¹ and the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)² issued statements denouncing and urging stakeholders to contribute to violence-free political processes in Zimbabwe.

Campaigns were mostly door-to-door, ward-based rallies, poster distribution and street processions. ZANU-PF had a rally in Mutare Ward 18 two days before Election Day which was addressed by ZANU-PF Central Committee Member Esau Mupfumi. On the same day, the party had a roadshow which ran until late hours of the night. Nyasha Machekeche, NCA council candidate, reportedly went around canvassing for votes through hailers on the eve of the by-election, while in Mutare, CCC primarily adopted the door-to-door approach.

¹<https://www.zesn.org.zw/foster-peace-ahead-of-the-2023-elections-to-enhance-electoral-integrity/press-statement/5942/32/01/10/18/10/2022/ashley/>

² <https://www.263chat.com/?s=civic+groups+condemn+matobo+violence+>
<https://www.voazimbabwe.com/a/6793624.html>



Picture 1. Collage showing campaign posters for Mutare Municipality Ward 18 candidates.

In Buhera RDC Ward 24, CCC had door-to-door campaigns in areas around Mabhoko, Matsakanure, Nyadi and Mushongwi. ZANU-PF candidate Earnest Muzokomba, working closely with ZANU-PF aspiring MP candidate, Ngonidzashwe Mudekunya reportedly convened a public meeting at Matsakanure Primary School where they handed over mealie-meal to some of the attendants. The current Member of Parliament for Buhera South, Hon Joseph Chinotimba, also reportedly supported Enerst Muzokomba’s campaign by distributing agricultural inputs such as maize seed and fertilizer in the Ward, three days before Election Day. The timing of the distribution of the inputs raises questions on the sincerity of the donation in light of Section 136 of the Electoral Act which outlaws the use of gifts to procure votes.

3.3 Displaying of the voters’ roll

At all the polling stations where ZESN had observers, the voters’ roll was displayed outside the polling station. At these polling stations, the voters’ roll was posted at least two (2) days before polling day with the only exception being Chimufombo Primary School where the voters’ roll was posted a day before. The voter’s rolls at Nyamauru and Joshua Dube Primary Schools were however not user-friendly as the names on the rolls were not alphabetically listed, making it difficult for voters to quickly identify their names.



Picture 2. People checking for their names on the Voters' Roll at Tudi Primary School in Matobo on Election Day.

4. ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

4.1 Set up and Opening of Polling Stations

At polling stations where ZESN had observers, polling stations were set up in accordance with the requirements of the law to ensure that voters mark their ballots in secrecy. Further, essential voting materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, ZEC stamps, indelible marking pens, and biometric voters' rolls were available at these polling stations. All the polling stations opened on time and by 7:15 had started processing voters. Most of the polling stations were reported to be easily accessible to everyone, including people with physical disabilities.

4.2 Election Day Political Environment

The political environment on voting day was reported to be calm and peaceful at the polling stations as well as in the neighbourhood in Ward 18 Mutare Municipality, Guruve Ward 4 and Buhera Ward 24. A few disturbances were observed and reported in Matobo Ward 2 and Ward 6 Takawira RDC. One such incident was reported at Sinkamaswe Primary School in Ward 2 Matobo, a few hours after polling started, ZANU-PF members reportedly mounted a desk with their party campaign materials less than 300 metres from the polling station in violation of the Paragraph 7 (d); Electoral Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates which prohibits political parties and candidates from campaigning or displaying campaign materials within a 300 metres radius of a polling station or counting centre. Following the intervention of ZEC officials and the Police details manning the polling station, the desk was removed and the group was dismissed. In Takawira RDC, the ZRP were also dispersing political activities that were congregating within the 300 meters radius of polling stations.



Picture 3. A police officer and ZEC official dispersing people who had gathered less than 300m from Sinkamaswe Polling station in Matobo Ward 2.

4.3 Voting Process and Procedures

Across all the polling stations where ZESN observed, voting was done in accordance with the laid down procedures such as checking voters' names on the voters' roll, checking their fingers for ink before they could be allowed to vote and ballot papers were stamped with an official ZEC stamp before being issued to voters. Each of the polling stations was manned by an average of eight (8) polling officers at the time of opening. Eleven (11) out of the 17 polling stations which ZESN observed had male presiding officers. In light of the applicable COVID-19 protocols³, voters and accredited observers, political party agents and ZEC officials who entered polling stations were required to properly wear masks and no one was allowed to enter the polling station without a mask. At almost every polling station, voters had their hands sanitized or washed before entering the polling station.

4.4 Political Parties' Agents

At all the 17 polling stations where ZESN observers were stationed, ZANU-PF and CCC had party agents observing the electoral processes on behalf of their candidates. NCA also deployed candidates in Mutare Municipality Ward 18 where the party had a candidate. ZAPU contested in Ward 2 Matobo and had party agents at all four (4) polling stations. It is commendable that political parties are realizing the importance of having party agents as this

³ [1] Public Health (COVID-19 Prevention, Containment and Treatment) (National Lockdown) (No. 2) (Amendment) Order, 2022 (No. 42)

does not only benefit the parties concerned, but may go a long way in enhancing transparency and boosting the credibility of electoral processes.

4.5 Assisted Voters

ZESN observers reported that at most of the polling stations visited or observed, there were assisted voters. The highest number of assisted voters was recorded at Edwaleni Primary School in Insiza RDC where 36 out of 207 people were assisted to vote. In Takawira Ward 6, at Hwata Primary School 10 out of 90 were assisted, whilst 21 out of 271 were assisted at Holy Cross Mission in the same ward. At Munanzvi Business Centre Tent, 218 people voted, of these 22 were assisted. In Buhera at Zvakare Primary School, 24 were assisted whilst at Mukwenya Primary School in Guruve Ward 4, 18 out of the 187 people were assisted. At Chimufombo Primary School in Guruve, 280 turned out to vote, of these, 13 were assisted. Illiteracy and poor sight were some of the most commonly cited reasons for seeking assistance. At Joshua Dube Primary School A in Mutare Ward 18 only two people were assisted to vote out of 72 who voted. Several reasons were cited for assistance, including visual impairment, poor eyesight and illiteracy. Concerns have been raised in previous elections of people who pretend to be illiterate which constitutes an abuse of provisions for assisted voters.

4.6 Voter Turnout

Voter turnout was particularly low in Ward 18 Mutare Municipality where 1 209 out of the 6 754 people voted translating to a mere 17.9% voter turnout. The highest voter turnout was recorded in Insiza where 62.45% of the voter population turned up to cast their vote. Buhera, Matobo and Takawira also had relatively high voter turnouts of 52.4%, 57.93% and 58.5% respectively.



Picture 4. Voters queuing outside waiting for their turn to vote at Tudi Primary School polling station in Ward 2 Matobo RDC

4.7 Turned Away and Redirected Voters

Some people were turned away for turning up without proper identification details or their names not being found on the voter's roll. At Muzokomba Primary School in Buhera RDC, 10 were turned away because their names could not be found in the voters' roll. At Edwaleni in Insiza, eight (8) voters were turned away.

Some people were redirected especially at polling centres where there was more than one polling station, for instance at Joshua Dube Primary School in Mutare and also at Dry Paddock in Matobo. At such centres voters were simply being redirected to the correct voting booth without taking down their details. ZESN urges voters to inspect the voters' roll that is pasted outside the polling stations so as to identify the polling station where they are supposed to cast their vote.

5. BY-ELECTIONS RESULTS

ZANU-PF won five (5) out of six (6) local authority seats that were being contested whilst CCC won in one (1) Ward. ZANU-PF and CCC retained the seats that they had won in the previous 2018 Harmonized elections. The tables below show the results of the by-elections.

Table 2. 22 October by-election results

BUHERA RDC WARD 24							
2022 By-Elections				2018 Harmonized Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Muzokomba Enest	M	ZANU-PF	1265	Chingwidze Saimon Karirai	M	ZANU-PF	1822
Muzamba Joram	M	CCC	692	Muzamba Joram	M	MDC-A	1346
GURUVE RDC WARD 4							
2022 By-Elections				2018 Harmonized Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Chiguma Stephen	M	ZANU-PF	1135	Kafungura Lencio	M	ZANU-PF	1634
Kudyahakudadirwe Wonder Francis	M	CCC	114	Kudyahakudadirwe Wonder Francis	M	MDC-A	184
				Moyana Tinashe	M	PRC	24
INSIZA RDC WARD 4							
2022 By-Elections				2018 Harmonized Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Dube Daniel	M	ZANU-PF	578	Maphosa Lawrence	M	ZANU-PF	813
Gumede Augustine	M	CCC	415	Ncube Albert Enock	M	MDC-A	381
				Dube Trollip	M	RPZ	31
				Ndlovu Polani	M	ZAPU	37
MATOBO RDC WARD 2							

2022 By-Elections				2018 Harmonized Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Siwela Fadreck	M	ZANU-PF	934	Moyo Tom	M	ZANU-PF	1196
Ngwenya Sindiso	M	CCC	270	Phiri Craidon Bizwork	M	MDC-A	331
Nyirongo Liberty	M	ZAPU	25	Nyathi Alfred	M	ZAPU	65
				Ngwenya Thandoluhle	F	MDC-T	92

MUTARE MUNICIPALITY WARD 18

2022 By-Elections				2018 Harmonized Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Murindashaka Blessing	M	CCC	711	Chisango Kudakwashe	M	CCC	3390
Chiwashira Loveness	F	ZANU-PF	478	Garwe David Kudzaishe	M	ZANU-PF	1285
Machekeche Nyasha	M	NCA	18				
				Borerwe Monica Perpetua	F	Independent	523
				Dondo Nyasha Abel	M	ZIPP	29
				Nhondo Kufa	M	PRC	21

TAKAWIRA RDC WARD 6

2022 By-Elections				2018 Harmonized Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Dzingira Winny Netsai	F	ZANU-PF	594	Kohli Johanes	M	ZANU-PF	877
Marevegwa Amosi	M	CCC	314	Chamahwinya Anton Urayai	M	MDC-A	424

				Mhakure Ranganai	Sylavanos	M	FZC	19
				Ndiya Octavia		F	PRC	19

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Elections for local authorities are essential because they provide citizens with a chance to choose the people who will oversee the provision of basic social services in their respective communities. In light of that, ZESN commends all voters who took the time to cast their vote during the 22 October 2022 local authority by-elections. ZESN has a strong inclination towards peaceful elections and thus abhors the political tensions and violence that flared up in Matobo ward 2, Insiza ward 4 and Takawira ward 6. In order to improve the pre-polling and post-electoral periods in future elections ZESN recommends the following;

- Political party leaders must continue to call on their supporters to be tolerant of divergent political views to ensure respect and enjoyment of civil and political rights by all Zimbabweans as provided for in the Constitution of Zimbabwe.
- Political parties should encourage their supporters to observe electoral laws and deter from campaigning on Election Day and gathering within the vicinity of polling stations.
- The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) should educate political party leaders and their supporters to respect civil and political rights, in particular freedom of association.
- The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) should investigate the incidents of electoral violence and ensure that perpetrators of political and any other forms of violence are brought to book.
- ZEC and other accredited electoral stakeholders should do more civic and voter education in order to encourage voters to turn out to vote, including in by-elections.///ENDS