



Press Statement

ZESN SITUATIONAL STATEMENT ON THE GWERU MUNICIPALITY WARDS 4, 5 & 18 AND BINGA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL WARD 20 LOCAL AUTHORITY BY-ELECTIONS

03-December-2022- The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) has deployed seventeen (17) static observers and three (3) mobile observers to observe local authority by-elections in Binga Rural District Council (RDC) Ward 20 and Gweru Municipality Wards 4, 5 and 18. The law, particularly Section 121 A of the Electoral Act (Chapter 2:13) provides for the filling of vacancies that arise in councils. Vacancies arose in Binga RDC Ward 20 and Gweru Municipality Wards 4, 5 and 18 following the recall of sitting councillors by the Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T).

Nomination Court

The Nomination Court convened separately on Thursday 3 November 2022 at the offices of the Chief Executive Officer for Binga Rural District Council and also at office of the Town Clerk for Gweru Municipality in Gweru to receive nominations of candidates for elections as councillors for the vacant wards. In Ward 20, Binga RDC, Muleya Chrispen (CCC) and Muleya Luyando (ZANU-PF) were successfully nominated as candidates. Whilst in Gweru Municipality, Chingwidza Gibson (ZANU-PF) and Chivhoko Martin (CCC) were nominated as candidates for Ward 4 by-election; whilst Ndahwi Leon of Emmanuel Party, Mafa Kwanisai (ZANU-PF) and Shiri Cleopas (CCC) were nominated for Ward 5. In Ward 18, Gweru Municipality Makwalo Walter (ZANU-PF) and Manyundwa John (CCC) were duly nominated.

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 at all the five (5) polling stations in Binga RDC Ward 20 and at twelve (12) polling stations in Ward 4, 5 and 18 of Gweru Municipality the voters' rolls were posted outside to ensure that voters easily identify their names before polling.

Set up and opening of polling stations

By 7 am, all polling stations had been opened and polling commenced immediately after. ZESN observers confirmed that the polling stations set up complied with the requirements of the law on ensuring secrecy of the ballot. Essential voting materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, ZEC stamps and indelible marking were reported to be present at all polling stations.

COVID-19 Protocols

In Binga Ward 20, no mask no entry policy is being implemented for all polling officials, voters, observers and visitors as well as hand washing and sanitization in line with COVID-19 protocols at all polling stations. Furthermore there is a COVID-19 tracing register. While for the Gweru Municipality Wards 4, 5 and 18; COVID-19 protocols have been relaxed with seldom wearing of masks.

Polling officials

Each of the polling stations was manned by an average of eight polling officers at the time of opening. At all the seventeen (17) polling stations observed, the Presiding officers were reported to be predominantly male.

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

ZANU-PF and CCC have deployed their party agents to track the polling process at all the polling stations where their candidates are contesting in the by-election.

Assisted voters

A number of voters had been assisted to vote on account of illiteracy, old age and visual impairment as of midday. For instance, about two voters had been assisted to vote at Senga Primary School Polling Station A in Gweru Ward 5 by 11:00 hours and about twenty-six had been assisted at Lubimbi 2 Primary School in Binga Ward 20 around the same time.

Turned away and redirected voters

A few people were turned away either because their names were not on the voters' roll or they could not produce valid identification documents. As of 11:00 hours, about 4 people had been turned away at Open Space Southview Tent B polling station in Gweru Ward 4 for not presenting Identification Document (ID) card, showing up at wrong polling station and others were not in the voter's roll. At Lubimbi 2 Primary School (Ward 20) polling station in Binga, 18 people were turned away 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 females.

Conclusion

Voting continues until 1900 hours in the evening. ZESN will continue to observe and issue updates and an end of day statement as well as a report of the by-election with its recommendations. ///ENDS

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

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