



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

## *Press Statement*

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### **ZESN STATEMENT ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE ELECTION DATE**

**02-JUNE-2023-** The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) welcomes the Proclamation of the 2023 harmonised elections. Under Statutory Instrument 85 of 2023 President Emmerson Mnangangwa, fixed 23 August 2023 as polling day and June 21 as the date on which Nomination Courts would sit countrywide to accept applications by political parties and their candidates to take part in the polls.

The Network commends government for implementing some electoral reforms which include: the ratification of the African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections (ACDEG); the amendment of the Census and Statistics Act to push forward the population census to pave way for the delimitation of electoral boundaries, the amendment of the Constitution which saw the introduction of the Youth Quota in the National Assembly and the extension of the Women's Quota by a further ten years in the National Assembly.

ZESN is cognisant of Section 157 (5) of the Constitution, which provides that after an election has been proclaimed no change to the Electoral Law or any other law on elections will apply for that election. This means that 2023 elections are being held with no legal reforms given the fact that the Constitution requires election of everyone to be in accordance with the Electoral Law; which is the Electoral Act.

ZESN notes that the failure of the Electoral Amendment Bill to sail through before the proclamation was passed means the constitutional provisions on youth quota and proportional representation cannot be applied or implemented. The result is that the youth quota and the PR provisions fall away for now. They await implementation in 2028.

The Network also commends the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission for implementing the following administrative issues: ZEC now informs registrations who would have been removed from the voter's roll by publishing names in the government gazette. Another

positive change noted is that the ZEC is now cleaning the voter's roll continuously and voters roll inspection is now being done both physically and electronically as recommended by the observer missions. The Electoral Management Body now reviews and updates voter education manual before elections, and the posting of voters roll outside each polling station is now a reality in Zimbabwean elections.

However, there are some of the outstanding reforms which ZESN had anticipated to have been addressed ahead of the 2023 polls and these are: the need to create a conducive electoral environment that will see the effective participation of citizens without fear; availing of the Voter's Roll; the need for tactile ballot papers to ensure secrecy of the vote; a review of the accreditation fees and opening up the space to allow long term observation by domestic observers; the need to ensure there are punitive measures are put in place to address the violence that affects women's participation in politics and elections as well as implementation of the equality 50 / 50 constitutional provision.

In view of the foregoing, the Network implores government through the Justice Ministry, Parliamentary and Legal Affairs to consider provisions for the incorporation of the youth quota in the National Assembly and the women's quota in local authorities which are both products of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 2) Act as part of efforts to increase their representation and participation in electoral processes.

Furthermore, ZESN urges government to comply with the matrix they developed on Arrears Clearance and Debt Resolution in particular on electoral reforms to ensure peaceful and transparent elections. Under electoral reforms the strategy seeks to implement the following essential and accepted electoral reforms from, Reports of 2018 Election Observer Missions; the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD) and to strengthen and capacitate electoral institutions to deliver on their mandate. The matrix's targets and outcomes are; Enhanced Freedom of Assembly and Association; Enhanced Political Pluralism; Democratic Elections conducted regularly and Civil Society Activities promoted. ////ENDS

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