



**Zimbabwe Election  
Support Network**

Promoting Democratic  
Elections In Zimbabwe

## ***Press Statement***

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### **ZESN REFUTES ALLEGATIONS ON TRAINING OF POLLING AGENTS**

**22-JUNE-2023-** The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) refutes allegations levelled against it by the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) Finance Department on training of polling agents that will participate in the upcoming 23 August 2023 elections.

It is alleged in the ZANU-PF Finance Department Press Statement that was issued and signed by the Treasurer General Patrick Chinamasa yesterday (20 June 2023) that...*“It has come to the notice of the ZANU-PF Department of Finance that the UK, France, Australia, USAID, Sweden, Japan, the US Embassy in Harare, the US based National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the EU, USA and the UK funded Zimbabwe Election Support network (ZESN) and Election Resource Centre (ERC) have announced that they are putting together a donation of US\$10m for the training of 12,500 election agents for each of the political parties participating the forthcoming harmonised elections.*

*“I wish it to make it abundantly clear that such offer of funding is illegal and in direct violation of section 6 of the Political Parties (Finance) Act chapter 2:11 which provides that ‘no political party, member of a political party or candidate shall accept any foreign donation whether directly or from a donor or through a third person’.”*

ZESN would like to categorically state that it does not train political party agents and has not received donor funding for the purposes of training any political party agents or candidates.

The Network’s mandate is to promote democratic elections in Zimbabwe through domestic oversight on all electoral processes such as voter registration, nomination, pre and post electoral environment and polling day processes among others. Further, ZESN undertakes advocacy interventions on electoral reforms in a bid to create a conducive electoral environment and to enhance credibility and integrity of electoral processes; conducts civic and voter education and strives to provide credible electoral information to the electorate and key electoral stakeholders.

Over the years, the Network has always shared its observation reports with all key electoral stakeholders including the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) as required by **Section 40 G (1) (d) of the Electoral Act** on the Functions of Accredited Observers. The Section provides that; Persons who are accredited by the Commission as observers of an election shall be entitled to do all or any of the following... *to provide the Commission with*

*a comprehensive review of the election taking into account all relevant circumstances, including— (i) the degree of impartiality shown by the Commission; and (ii) the degree of freedom of political parties to organise, move, assemble and express their views publicly; and (iii) the opportunity for political parties to have their agents observe all aspects of the electoral process; and (iv) the fairness of access afforded to political parties to the national media and other resources of the State; and (v) the proper conduct of the polling and the counting of the votes at the election; and (vi) any other issue concerning the essential freedom and fairness of the election.*

ZESN therefore pursues its work guided by the Zimbabwe Constitutional dictates, the Electoral Act, the ZEC Code of Conduct for Observers and its values and principles as an independent and non-partisan organisation. Further, the Network observes and is guided by SADC Principles and Guidelines on the Conduct of Democratic Elections and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) which Zimbabwe is signatory to.

ZESN reiterates that it does not and will not finance and or train any political party agents as this is not part of its core business and mandate, neither does ZESN support or endorse any political party or candidate in Zimbabwe. // ENDS

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## **PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)

Chairperson: +263 772 234 891

Executive Director: +263 712 415 902

+263 (242) 791443, 798193, 791803, 250736

[info@zesn.net](mailto:info@zesn.net) or [zesn2011@zesn.net](mailto:zesn2011@zesn.net)

or visit [www.zesn.org.zw](http://www.zesn.org.zw)

Twitter: @ZESN1

Facebook: Zimbabwe-Election-Support-Network (ZESN)