

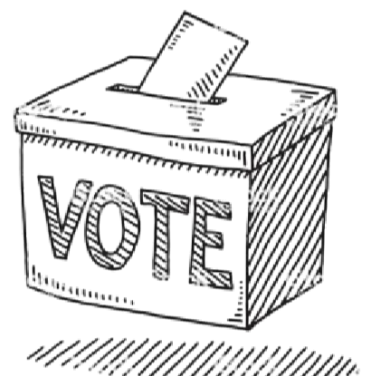


**Zimbabwe Election
Support Network** ■
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

By Election Report

11 November 2023

2023



Acronyms

CCC	Citizens Coalition for Change
LTOs	Long-Term Observers
MDC-A	Movement for Democratic Change Alliance
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
RDC	Rural District Council
STOs	Short-Term Observers
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe Africa National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Elections Support Network

1 Executive Summary

November 11 by-elections were held to fill vacancies in five (5) Local Authority Wards and one (1) National Assembly Constituency. By-elections were held for the National Assembly and Local Authority following the deaths of candidates and incumbent respectively. Nomination Courts sat on October 10 to consider candidates in respective Local Authorities and in Masvingo for the National Assembly Constituency.

In the run-up to the by-elections ZESN deployed Long-Term Observers (LTOs and Short-Term Observers (STOs) to observe the political environment and other key electoral related processes. The observations established that the environment was largely peaceful, with isolated cases of violations. In its observations, ZESN focused on, among other things, the campaigns, voter education, polling day processes, counting, collation and announcement of results.

Campaigns were conducted, observers noted greater electoral and political activity in Gutu West Constituency while the Local Authority Wards were not politically charged. It was observed that ZANU-PF pulled larger crowds at rallies in Gutu West whereas the main opposition CCC mainly conducted door-to-door visits to galvanize support.

On Election Day, ZESN deployed 65 static and mobile observers who observed that the election was well administered. Polling started on time in almost all the observed polling stations. ZEC followed most of the due processes, the voters' rolls were displayed outside to enable the electorate to check their names. This lessened the number of redirected and turned-away voters on polling day. Polling procedures were also followed in accordance with the law.

Announced results indicate no new inroads by either party, ZANU-PF retained dominance in areas it won in 2018 while opposition CCC won one (1) Ward, formerly won by MDC-A in 2018. Of the five (5) Local Authority elections, ZANU-PF won four (4) and CCC won one (1). ZANU-PF also retained the Gutu West Constituency.

The by-elections established that marginalization of women continues as evidenced by very few women who were vying for positions. Except for Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23, all other Local Authorities and the Gutu West Constituency were dominated by male candidates.

2 Introduction and background to the elections

Zimbabwe held by-elections in five (5) Local Authority Wards and one (1) National Assembly constituency on November 11. These by-elections were necessitated by the deaths of candidates in affected Wards before August 23, 2023, Harmonized Elections. Deaths of candidates occurred in Kusile RDC Ward 13, Nkayi RDC Ward 11, Vungu RDC Ward 14, Hurungwe Ward 24 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23. At National Assembly level, a vacancy arose in Gutu West. The President ordered a by-election in this constituency through Statutory Instrument (SI) 157 of 2023 following the death of the aspiring candidate ahead of the August 2023 Harmonized Elections.

The Nomination Court sat on October 10 for the purposes of receiving nominations of candidates to the vacant public offices. For Local Authority Councilors, nominations were received at the respective Local Authorities while nomination papers for the Gutu West Constituency were received at Masvingo Magistrates Court. In terms of Section 125 (4) (b) of the Electoral Act, the number of duly nominated candidates exceeded the number of vacancies to be filled at the election hence, an election date was fixed.

Table 1: Causes of vacancies where by-elections were held.

Ward/Constituency	Candidate	Sex	Party	Cause of vacancy
Hurungwe RDC Ward 24	Kuyerukani Faro	M	ZANU-PF	Death
Kusile RDC 13	Nyoni Lisbert Sabelo	M	MDC-T	Death
Nkayi RDC 11	Mpofu Jabulani	M	MDC-T	Death
Vungu RDC 14	Mtangi Muyambo	M	ZANU-PF	Death
Zvimba RDC 23	Muganhiri Richard	M	ZANU-PF	Death
Gutu West Constituency	Christopher Mutonhori Rwodzi	M	Independent	Death

3 Legal Framework

The legal framework for by-elections in Zimbabwe consists of the 2013 Constitution, the Electoral Act as well as the Subsidiary legislation. This legal framework governs the conditions under which by-elections are to be held and the electoral system to be used.

Sections 158 (3) and 159 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and Section 39 of the Electoral Act stipulate that whenever a vacancy occurs, it must be filled through a by-election. And, whereas it is provided by Section 50 (1) (a) of the Electoral Act {Chapter 2:13}, *that when a duly nominated candidate for election for a constituency dies before the poll commences, the Chief Election Officer shall, so far as concerns that constituency, declare that all proceedings relating to that election are void and all proceedings in relation to that election shall be commenced afresh in the same manner as if a vacancy had occurred.* The Electoral Act further states that polling day or the last polling day of the election to fill the vacancy shall not be more than ninety (90) days after the vacancy occurred.

The Electoral Act outlines the key procedures for candidate nomination, voting, counting and announcement of the results of the said by-election. ZEC, as mandated by the Constitution to conduct by-elections, was in charge and supervised the by-elections. The body used a voters roll based on a register the Institution compiles and maintains. Voting was done by secret ballot and counting done at each polling station and results collated at ward/constituency level before final announcement.

4 Pre-election Observations

To effectively gather, disseminate and communicate objective information about the by-elections, ZESN trained and deployed 65 static observers and seven (7) mobile observers in the National Assembly by-election in Gutu West Constituency and in Hurungwe Rural District Council (RDC) Ward 24, Kusile RDC Ward 13, Nkayi RDC Ward, 11 Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23 Local Authority By-elections. Of the 65 observers, 35 were deployed to Gutu West Constituency, 9 were deployed in Hurungwe RDC Ward 24, 5 in Kusile RDC Ward 13, 5 in Zvimba RDC Ward 23, 5 in Nkayi RDC Ward 11 and 6 in Vungu RDC Ward 14. The observer deployment strategy ensured that ZESN had observers covering all the Collation Centers at the respective wards and Constituency, in addition to selected polling stations.

Observers gathered information on the political environment and various key aspects of the electoral process including the sitting of Nomination Courts, campaigning, voting, counting and announcement of results. A standard reporting checklist was used for the purpose of data collection and reporting.

5 Electoral Environment

The political environment in the run-up to the November 11 by-elections was relatively peaceful and calm for most of the areas. Overall, there were no major incidences of violence recorded. It was observed that in Nkayi Ward 11 and Kusile Ward 13, political parties supporters managed to freely express their political preferences with very few and limited intimidation. Additionally, freedom of assembly was respected, members of the two (2) main political parties did not face major restrictions.

While the environment was very peaceful, violations of rights manifested through discriminations as recorded in Nkayi where farming inputs were allegedly distributed along party lines. Another isolated case of intimidation was also reported in Jotsholo Village 13 of Kusile Ward 13, where it was reported that ZANU-PF allegedly threatened to confiscate seed and fertilizer donations from villagers suspected of supporting the CCC party.

6 Campaigns

On 20 October, ZANU-PF conducted roadshows in Wards 5 and 6 of Gutu West Constituency. The party also flighted posters in most parts of the constituency. 21 October, the Zimbabwe Vice President Kembo Mohadi, who is also ZANU PF Second Secretary launched the party's campaign for the Gutu West National Assembly by-election¹ at Chivake Primary School in Gutu. ZANU-PF Secretary for Security, Lovemore Matuke also addressed the gathering at the launch. Other ministers such as Tinomuda Machakaire and Winston Chitando were present to drum up support for the John Paradza. The launch rolled the party into campaign mode, with subsequent meetings being conducted in the constituency to galvanize support. Distribution of presidential farming inputs was observed at the campaign launch, as was the case at subsequent meetings held by ZANU-PF.

Having won nine out of ten Wards in the constituency during the August 23 election, ZANU-PF vowed to win the Gutu West seat. In all its campaigns, ZANU-PF assured supporters of winning resoundingly. On 6 November, the first lady Dr Auxillia Mnangagwa drummed up support for John Paradza at a rally held at Chatsworth Secondary School. At the rally, the First Lady urged supporters to be disciplined and remain united. She emphasized the importance of unity, stability and progress for the constituency stating that the ZANU-PF government is committed to uplift the lives of ordinary citizens². At the same meeting, Dr Mnangagwa donated over 50 tonnes of maize-meal, 200 bags of cement for the construction of schools, clinics in the area, 30 tonnes of compound D, vegetable combo seeds, cow peas and sunflower seed and 5 tonnes of tick-grease.³

For Local Authority, ZANU-PF held a rally at Jotsholo Growth Point. Party members received fertilizers, seeds, and chemical sprayer pumps. In Vungu, no big rallies were conducted but small gatherings. It is important to note that there was much activity in Gutu West Constituency when compared to the Local Authority Wards. In Nkayi, observers reported that they did not see any campaign posters, and political parties mainly conducted door-to-door meetings. Kusile Ward 13 had a few posters.

All other contesting political parties reached out to the electorate using different modes, CCC, Independent and NCA used the door-to-door campaign technique in Gutu West. While parties held campaign meetings, it was observed that CCC had low attendance when compared to ZANU PF.

7 Candidates Nomination

Nomination Courts sat on 10 October 2023. Candidates were free to submit nomination papers in advance, however, no candidate filed in advance of the sitting of the Nomination Court. At the end of the nomination, 16 candidates were duly nominated for election as

¹ [The Chronicle - Breaking news](#)

² [Massive turnout as ZANU-PF supporters rally behind Paradza in Gutu West \(hararepost.co.zw\)](#)

³ [The Herald - Breaking news.](#)

illustrated by Table 2 below. Six political parties (ZANU-PF, CCC, ZAPU, MDC-T NCA and UZA) fielded candidates to contest the office of councilors in these Wards and one candidate participated as an independent. ZANU-PF and CCC fielded candidates in all wards.

Table 2: Names of Nominated Candidates

Local Authority	Ward	Candidate's Name	Political Party
Hurungwe RDC	24	Kasirowe Ezekiel	CCC
		Makumbe Jerry	ZANU-PF
Kusile RDC	13	Gama Michael	ZAPU
		Moyo Busani Kembo	UZA
		Ncube Mthelisi	ZANU-PF
		Qonda Tarcissius	CCC
Nkayi RDC	11	Khumalo Mubonisi	CCC
		Mpofu Mzila	ZAPU
		Ncube Mandla	ZANU-PF
		Ndlovu Philip	MDC-T
Vungu RDC	14	Matambiko Annah Chipso	CCC
		Muchemwa Aaron	ZANU PF
Zvimba RDC	23	Gomani Pamellah	INDEPENDENT
		Chinanzvavana Pamella	CCC
		Muganhiri Ceccillia	ZANU-PF
		Rabu Enock Junior	NCA

Originally scheduled for 23 August, the Gutu West National Assembly election was postponed due to the death of Christopher Mutohori Rwodzi who was contesting the seat as an independent candidate. S.I 157 of 2023, Proclamation 6 of 2023 fixed Tuesday 10 October as the date on which Nomination Court would sit. In accordance with section 48 of the Electoral Act {Chapter 2:13} at the close of the sitting of the Nomination Court, four (4) candidates were duly nominated for election to the National Assembly representing Gutu West Constituency as presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Gutu West National Assembly by election duly nominated candidates.

Constituency	Candidate's Name	Political Party
Gutu West	John Paradza	ZANU PF
	Ephraem Morudu	CCC
	Robson Kurwa	NCA
	Martin Sebastian Mudzingwa	Independent

In October, when Nomination Courts sat, there was an increase in number of candidates submitting nomination papers. On June 21, when Nomination Court sat to receive papers for the Gutu West Constituency, three (3) prospective candidates submitted their nomination papers and were duly nominated for election on August 23 Harmonised Elections. However, the October 10 Nomination saw an increase in number, with

Independent Mudzingwa Martin Sebastine and NCA Kurwa Robson candidates coming on board.

8 Voter Education

The ZEC conducted voter education for the by-elections. However, observers noted that these were largely limited to business centres. Nkayi and Kusile observers recorded no voter education efforts from the civil society organizations.

ZESN Observers in Gutu West Constituency stated that the ZEC conducted voter education in the constituency ahead of the by-election. In Ward two (2) of Gutu West Constituency, ZEC voter educators moved around, informing people of the by-election and the importance of exercising the democratic right of choosing representatives. The voter educators also educated people on voting requirements and the proper documentation to carry along on voting day.

On 4 November, ZESN held a voter education and Vote in Peace Campaign Roadshow at Chiriga Township in Gutu. The event was held to sensitize citizens about electoral issues and democracy. ZESN and ZEC collaborated on this event to provide voter education. ZESN focused on encouraging people to vote in peace while ZEC alerted citizens about voting procedures such as where to vote, opening and closing times, requirements for one to vote, the voting process, prohibited activities in the vicinity of polling stations and closure of polling and announcement of results.

9 Election Day Observations

9.1 Polling day political environment

Polling day environment was largely peaceful in all the places where by-elections were held except for isolated incidents, which observers in Gutu West reported, where two (2) CCC supporters from Gutu Central attempted to disrupt the work of party agents stationed at Chitepo Primary School. It was further reported that a CCC Member of Parliament for Chiredzi Central came in the company of Gutu Central Councilor Benard Chimwango, at Chitepo Primary School demanding that the ZANU-PF and Independent party agents leave the school where they were stationed. It was reported that the Presiding Officer at the school swiftly intervened to resolve the commotion and ensured that no party agent left the school. Another incident that was reported to have occurred at Chiroti Primary School, in Hurungwe Ward 24, where a complaint was lodged by a CCC member that a dozen people were gathered at a car park within the 300-meter radius of the primary school. The Presiding Officer at the Primary School responded by ordering those gathered to disburse. The group then moved to a nearby school (Chiroti Secondary School).

Observers reported another incident as having occurred at Chiroti Primary School, in Hurungwe Ward 24. A complaint was lodged by a CCC member that a dozen people were gathered at a car parked within the 300-meter radius of the primary school. The Presiding Officer at the Primary school responded by ordering those gathered to disburse. The Group then moved to a nearby school (Chiroti Secondary School).

9.2 Set up and opening of polling stations

It is commendable that prior to the setting up of polling stations, voters' rolls were displayed outside to enable the electorate to check their names. This is a good practice from the ZEC that managed to lessen the number of redirected and turned-away voters on polling day. ZESN observers reported that at the polling stations observed, they opened on time. Importantly, all the essential polling materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, indelible finger markers, voters' rolls and the ZEC official stamps available.

9.3 Political parties' agents

Political parties deployed party agents, with ZANU-PF deploying comprehensively across all polling stations in all by-elections. CCC had party agents in most of the polling stations although it did not cover all. NCA, which fielded National Assembly candidate in Gutu West and a Local Authority candidate in Zvimba RDC Ward 23, also had party agents in a few polling stations in the Constituency and Ward. ZAPU had party agents in Nkayi and Kusile. ZESN observers noted the presence of ZAPU party agents in a few polling stations including at Jotsholo Clinic and Manganganga Primary School polling stations. ZESN commends political parties and independent candidates for fielding party agents as this allows them to track polling processes and their ability to assess the credibility of the elections.

9.4 Polling officials, Voting process and procedures

On average, each polling station was staffed by six (6) polling officers. ZESN observers noted that many polling stations had male presiding officers. However, there was balanced gender parity with regards to polling officers deployed. Polling procedures were duly followed in accordance with the law, for example, checking voters' names on the voters' roll and checking their fingers for ink before they could be allowed to vote. Ballot papers were stamped with an official ZEC stamp before being issued to voters.

9.5 Assisted Voters

The highest number of assisted voters was recorded at Chiguhune Primary School in Gutu West, where 67 out of 270 people were assisted, translating to 25% assisted voters at this polling station. In the same constituency, 51 out of 378 voters at Mbirikira Primary School, 11 out of 122 voters at Ingogo Farm Tent, 8 out of 137 voters at Chindida, and 11 out of 154 voters at Rufaro High School were assisted in casting their ballots. In Hurungwe RDC ward 24, the number of assisted voters was relatively low. At Tashinga Primary School in Hurungwe RDC ward 24, 18 out of 144 were assisted whilst at Chiroti Primary School, 14 out of 250 had been assisted.

Assisted voting on account of illiteracy and visual impairment was mostly done by polling officials in the presence of the police in line with Section 59 of the Electoral Act on voting by illiterate or physically handicapped voters.

9.6 Voter turnout

In Gutu West, voter turnout stood at 60.2% after 15 460 out of 25 674 registered voters turned out to vote. In Kusile RDC Ward 13, voter turnout for the Ward stood at 42%. In Nkayi RDC Ward 11, voter turnout stood at 40% after 578 out of 1 452 registered voters voted. In Zvimba Ward 23, voter turnout was high as it stood at 61%.

9.7 Redirected and turned away voters

The number of turned away voters was very low, for instance, at Gondwi Primary School in Gutu West, three (3) people were turned away and two (2) were redirected, at Gundwane Primary School in Kusile RDC ward 13, three (3) people were turned away.

Across most polling stations, no redirected observers were recorded. In cases where voters were redirected, the numbers were very low. ZESN observers noted that redirected voters were mostly recorded at polling centres and were stationed at the same facility, for instance at Whawha Open Space where three tents were stationed. At Kuwadzana Community Hall polling station A, in Zvimba RDC Ward 23, seven (7) people were redirected, at Whawha Open Space Tent Ain Vungu RDC 14, were redirected.

9.8 By-Election Results

ZANU-PF won the Gutu West National Assembly seat. ZANU-PF also won Nkayi RDC Ward 11, Hurungwe RDC Ward 24, Vungu RDC Ward 14 and Zvimba RDC Ward 23. While CCC won in Kusile RDC Ward 13. Thus, ZANU-PF won the National Assembly by-elections and four (4) out of the five (5) Local Authority by-elections.

The tables below show the results of the by-elections.

Table 4: Gutu West National Assembly

GUTU WEST							
2023 By-elections				2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Vote s
Paradza John	M	ZANU-PF	12147	Paradza John	M	ZANU-PF	14 139
Morudu Ephream	M	CCC	1258	Manguma Stanley			2998
Kurwa Robson	M	NCA	138				
Mudzingwa Sebastian. M	M	Independen t	1775				

					Mupini Knowledge	M	MDC-T	536
					Chinama Tauya	M	PRC	442

The battle for the Gutu West Constituency was fought by men only. Men have dominated the electoral landscape of Gutu West from 2018 as noted by an absence of women vying for the National Assembly position in this constituency. ZANU-PF retained the Gutu West Constituency, a seat it also won in 2018, as John Paradza garnered 12 147 votes.

Table 5. Local Authority

HURUNGWE RDC WARD 24								
2023 By-elections				2018 Harmonised Elections				
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Makumbe Jerry	M	ZANU-PF	1 685		Kuyerukani Faro	M	ZANU-PF	2024
Kasirowe Ezekiel	M	CCC	442		Tizai Mary	F	MDC A	1088
KUSILE RDC WARD 13								
2023 By-elections				2018 Harmonised Elections				
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes		Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Gama Michael	M	ZAPU	25		Mpofu Richard Edwin	M	ZAPU	32
Ncube Mthelisi	M	ZANU-PF	238		Ncube Mthelisi	M	ZANU-PF	547
Qonda Tarcissius	M	CCC	305		Nyoni Libert Sabelo	M	MDC-A	671
Moyo Busani Kembo	M	UZA	7					
					Moyo Thembelani	M	MDC-T	133

NKAYI RDC WARD 11							
2023 By-elections				2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Khumalo Mubonisii	M	CCC	124	Khumalo Mubonisii	M	MDC-T	305
Mpofu Mzila	M	ZAPU	50				
Ncube Mandla	M	ZANU-PF	406	Ncube Mandla	M	ZANU-PF	417
Ndlovu Philip	M	MDC-T	26				
VUNGU RDC WARD 14							
2023 By-elections				2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Matambiko Annah Chipso	F	CCC	130	Matambiko Annah Chipso	F	MDC-A	1175
Muchemwa Aaron	M	ZANU-PF	793	Mawere Collet	M	ZANU-PF	2213
ZVIMBA RDC WARD 23							
2023 By-elections				2018 Harmonised Elections			
Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes	Candidate	Sex	Party	Votes
Chinanzvavana Manuel	M	CCC	701	Katandika Florence	F	MDC-A	528
Muganhiri Ceccillia	F	ZANU-PF	949	Muganhiri Richard	M	ZANU-PF	904
Rabu Enock	M	NCA	18				

Junior								
Gomani Pamellah	F	Indpnt.	63					
					Gwamure Juliet	F	PRC	33

10 Conclusion and Recommendations

ZESN commends voters who took time off to cast their vote in peace during the by-elections, however, turnout in the by-elections reinforced the trend where voters seemed more interested in National Assembly by-elections and less in Local Authority by-elections.

The Network proffers the following recommendations to improve the pre-, polling and post-electoral periods in future elections.

- Political parties should make efforts to increase the political literacy of their supporters to raise the level of interest in Local Authority elections. The turnout during the by-elections clearly indicates that voters seemed to have less interest in Local Authority by-elections.
- Political parties should adhere to the code of conduct provisions, including campaigning within the stipulated time frame (the official campaign period), and desist from gathering within a 300-meter radius from polling stations.
- Political parties need to do more to support the participation of women as candidates in elections.