



Ballot Update

Bulletin

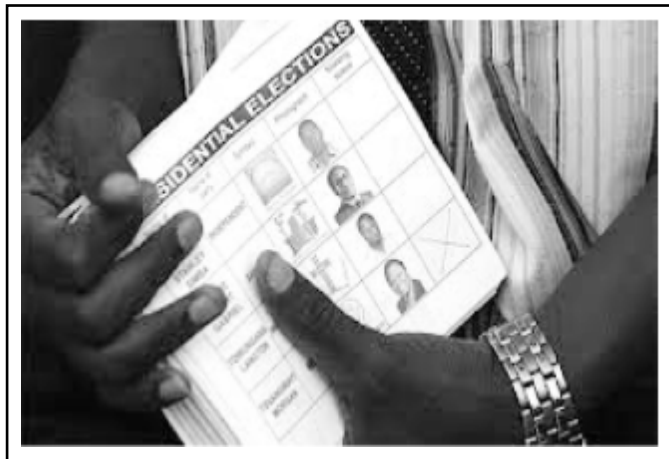
September 2012

A Newsletter of Zimbabwe Election Support Network Issue 8

FREE

Maonero eZESN pahurongwa hwekuda kuti sarudzo dziitwe munaKurume 2013

Chinyorwa ichi chakagadzirwa neboka reZESN



Zvakare zvikamu makumi mana neimwe chete kubva muzana(41%) havachagari munzvimbo dzine mazita avo uye kuti zvikamu makumi mapfumbamwe nemanomwe kubva muzana (97%) evanhu vakanyoresa kuvhota vakatama kubva panzvimbo dzavaimbogara. Naizvozvo ZESN irikuti,sarudzo hadzifaniri kuitwa gwaro remazita evanhu vanoda kuvhota risati ragadziriswa.

"Imwe pfungwa iri kuunzwa neZESN inoti, mitemo yakaita sePosa neAippa inofanira kugadziriswa nekuti inokanganisa kusununguka kwevanhu panyaya dzemafambiro, kuungana nekusununguka kutaura maonero evanhu".

Imwe pfungwa iri kuunzwa neZESN inoti, mitemo yakaita sePosa neAippa inofanira kugadziriswa nekuti inokanganisa kusununguka kwevanhu panyaya dzemafambiro, kuungana nekusununguka kutaura maonero evanhu. Zvakare masimba eMutungamiriri panyaya dzevesarudzo anofanira kubviswa. Chimwe chakakosha ndechekuti, mhirizhonga nekutyisidzirwa

kwevanhu kunofanira kupedzwa uye bumbiro remutemo rinofanira kushambadzirwa zvizere kuitira kuti vanhu vakwanise kurigamuchira kana kuriramba vachiziva zvirimo.

MunaGunyana, Mutungamiri wenyika vaRobert Mugabe vakabuditsa pfungwa yekuti panogona kuitwa sarudzo dzekugamuchira kana kuramba bumbiro remutemo muna Mbudzi pamwe nemubatanidzwa wesarudzo munaKurume 2013.

Kana takatarisa gadziriro dzinofanira kuitwa sarudzo dzisati dzaitwa, hazvigone kuti sarudzo dziitwe zvakanaka panguva idzi nekuda kwezvikonzero zvichakurururwa muchinyorwa chino.

Zimbabwe yagara ichiita sarudzo panguva dzakatarwa sezvakanyorwa mumutemo wenyika. Zvisinei sarudzo idzi dzange dzichitwa paine kubiridzira, kurwisana nekusagamuchirwa kwezvinobuda musarudzo nevanhu vemuZimbabwe nevekunze kwenyika.

Izvi zvaita kuti ruzhinji rusagamuchira hurumende dzinenge dzasarudzwa musarudzo idzi. Semuenzaniso, zvakabuda musarudzo dzakaitwa muna2008 hazvina kugamuchirwa nevanhu vemuZimbabwe. Izvi zvakaita kuti pazogadzirwa hurumende yemubatanidzwa.

SADC iri kuti zvakakosha kuti Zimbabwe itange yaita zvatarwa muchinyorwa chezvematontervo enyika dzepasi rese chinonziGPA isati yaita sarudzo. South Africa iri kutsigirawo pfungwa iyi ichikurudzira kuti bumbiro remitemo rinofanira kutanga rapedza kugadziriswa sarudza dzisati dzaitwa.

Zvizvarwa zvemuZimbabwe zvichiri kurangarira mhirizhonga nekudeuka kweropa kwakaitwa musarudzo dzakapfura pamwe nekushambadzirwa kwemashoko anokurudzira kuvengana kwaitwa panhepfenyuro. Vamwe vachiri kurangarira kuti sarudzo idzi hadzina kufambiswa zvakanaka, zvakare zvakabuda musarudzo dzakaitwa munaKurume 2008 zvakanonoka kushambadzirwa. Izvi zvakaita kuti vanhu vazhinji vabvumirane nepfungwa yekuti sarudzo idzi hadzina kufambiswa nenzira yakajeka negwara rakanaka.

Muongororo yakaitwa neZESN yegwara remazita evanhu vanoda kuvhota, zvakaonekwa kuti zvikamu makumi maviri nemanomwe kubva muzana (27%) yemazita ari mugwara iri ndeevanhu vakafa.

Mutemo unotaura nezvekuvhotera kugamuchira kana kuramba bumbiro remutemo unofanira kuongororwa kuti zvionekwe kuti unopa here vanhu vemuZimbabwe mukana wekupa pfungwa dzavo pakugadzirwa kwebumbiro iri. Zvakare, kana tikacherechedza matambudziko akasanganikwa nawo pasarudzo dzemugore ra2008, zvakakosha kuti pave nekomishoni yakazvimirira inoona nezvesarudzo.

Komishoni yeZEC ndiyo inofanira kukoka vaongorori vesarudzo vekunze kwenyika nevemunyika pamwe nekuvapa mvumo yekuongorora sarudzo. Inofanira kupihwa zvekushandisa zvakanakwana zvichibva muhomwe yezvesarudzo pakugadzirwa sarudzo, kudzidzisa vanhu nezvesarudzo nezvekanyoresa vanoda kuvhota. Parizvino, komishoni yeZEC hasati yapihwa zvekushandisa pakugadzirwa sarudzo.

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Election news quotes

*"We don't want to have another election with problems. We want elections that will produce a free and fair result!" President Jacob Zuma **Newsday 4 October 2012***

*"If elections are to be held there are certain conditions that have to be done such as leveling the playing field where people can campaign freely." MDC deputy spokesperson, Mr Kurauone Chihwayi. **The Herald 28 September 2012***

sms election related comments to: 0773 782 870

For feedback please E-mail: zesn@africaonline.co.zw / info@zesn.org.zw, Website: www.zesn.org.zw

Contact us
 sms comments to: 0773 782 870
 Website: www.zesn.org.zw
 P.O. Box BE 630, Belvedere, Harare
 Tel: 263 4 250736
 Email: info@zesn.org.zw
 Facebook: Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)
 Twitter: @ZESN1



Ballot Update Bulletin



Umbono we-ZESN ngamathuba okuqutshwa kokhetho ngoMbimbitho ka-2013

Kulotshwe yi- ZESN

Ngenyanga kaMpadula lonyaka, umongameli welizwe u-Robert Mugabe wafanisela ukuthi i-referendamu ingenziwa ngenyanga kaLwezi lonyaka, kuthi ukhetho luqutshwe ngenyanga kaMbimbitho ka-2013. Ngokunanzelela ukuthi kuseselezinto ezinengi kakhulu okumele zikhangeliswe njalo kusamele kudingwe izindleko zokuqhuba lolokhetho ukuze ukhetho luqutshwe ngendlela ehlonipha intando kazulu, kungaba nzima ukuthi lolokhetho lalayo referendamu ibekhona ngezikhathi ezibethwe lapha.

Izimbabwe yandise ukuba lalo ukhetho ngezikhathi ezibethwe emthethweni kodwa lolokhetho lwandise ukungabi lempumela eqotho. Ukudlebezelana lodlakela lokungemukeleki kwempumela kuhlezi kudala ukungemukeleki kukahulumende kweleZimbabwe lasemhlabeni wonke jikelele. Ukhetho lomnyaka ka-2008 ngolunye lalo olungazange lube lempumela edala uhulumende owamukelekayo yikho nje kwadalwa uhulumende wokubambisana okhona khathezi ngesivumelwano se-Global Political Agreement (GPA).

Inhlanganiso yamazwe emkhonweni wangezansi kweAfrica, i-SADC layo isikhombise intshukuntshu yayo ngokuma ngelokuthi iGPA ayipheleliswe, umsebenzi kahulumende odalwe nge-GPA kawufezwe kungakayiva kukhetho. Ilizwe le-South Africa elingumtshutshisi edabeni lweZimbabwe lalo seliveze isifiso salo sokuba ukhetho luqutshwe ngemva kokuba isisekelo sombuso sesilotshwe njalo i-GPA isifezwe ngokuphelela kwayo ekweluseni umsebenzi kahulumende womanyano lo. Unkosazana Maite Nkoana-Mashabane nguye owaphumisela umbono we-south Africa wokuthi ukhetho kumele lwenziwe nxa isisekelo sombuso sesilotshwe.

Izizalwane zeZimbabwe zilokhu zikhumbula kakuhle ukhetho olwenziwa kuleli. Abantu balokhe bekhumbula udlakela olwalukhona olwadala ukufa kwabantu, abezindaba ababesekela amabandla thile njalo bechothoza amanye njalo lokuthi ukhetho aluqutshwanga ngendlela eqotho. Ukwehulwa kwempumela yokhetho lukaMbimbitho, 2008 kwathatha isikhathi eside kakhulu okuyikho okaveza sobala ukuthi ukhetho aluqutshwanga ngendlela eqotho. Ukuswelakala kobuqotho ekuphathweni koluhlu lwamabizo alabo ababhalisela ukuvota lakho sokudale ukhophelwe lokusweleka kwethemba lokuthi ukhetho lungaqutshwa kuhle.

Ukukholwa koluhlu lwamabizo abavotayo (voters' roll) okwenziwa yi-ZESN ngomnyaka ka-2011 kwaveza ukuthi uluhlu lusadinga ukukhangeliswa kakuhle. Isilinganiso se-27% salabo abalamabizo akulolo luhlu ngabantu asebafoy, i-41% njalo ngeyabantu abangasahlali lapho ababahlala khona ngesikhathi bebhalisela ukuvota, besekusithi isilinganiso se-97% asebatshutshayo bayahlala kwezinye izindawo kodwa balokhu belamakheli akudala. Izigwenxa lezi zishengisa ukuthi kusamele kusetshenzwe nzima ukuthi kulungiswe lokho kungakabi lokhetho. I-ZESN ikholwa ukuthi akumelanga ukhetho lwenziwe kungakalungiswa amaphutha la lamanye njalo amqoka angaqanjwanga lapha.

Amaphutha okumele alungiswe andubana kuqutshwe ukhetho ngafana lokuqondiswa kwemithetho encindezela uzulu efanana le-POSA, AIPPA yona ehluकुला अमलुंगेलो कडुलु ओकुलुगलनल ओकुलुलेकिले लुकुझलबेलल सलतलंडु ओललवलनल. ओकुनये नलओ ओकुमेले कुलुंगलसलसेवल यलकुवलमलंडल कलमलंगलमेली वेललसे अलथलhelane लेओकुथेओ. ओकुनये नलओ ओकुमगुओ यलकुभलडलललवल कुवलमलंगुंबु अडलल उडलकलकुओ कुओ नुओके ललडलवुओ वेललसे. नुओगुओ उमललंगलन ओकुलुहु ओकुलुहु वलसेबलल वलमललंगु अलथलहेके ओकुलुथुवेलनल कुवलसेकेले सुंबुसु (Second All-Stakeholders Conference) ललवु उओकुवलनल कुयुनलने लनगल, कुमेले लसेकेले सुंबुसु एसलवलवलनल सलधलवे उडुलु नुओगुनलंगल कुके अलसेओ अडुबलनल अवुते कु-रेलरलडलमु.

Kulo daba lomthetho ophathelene lokuqutshwa kwe-referendamu (ukhetho lokuvuma kumbe ukwala isisekelo sombuso) omele ukhangeliswe ukuthi usengumthetho onganika uzulu amathuba angela kuthandabuzwa okuphatheka ekwenzeni izinqumo ezimqoka zelizwe namhlanje lakusasa. Ngenxa yalokhu okubethwe ngaphambilini kulo umbhalo, njalo kunanzelelwa ukungaphathwa kuhle kokhetho ikakhulu ngomnyaka ka-2008, kumele izimbabwe ibe leKhomishini ezimele yodwa ezaphatha ukhetho ngobuqotho kuleli njalo izehlisa kuzulu, ibika imisebenzi yayo ePhalamente.

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Ikhomishini ebona ngezokhetho i-Zimbabwe Electoral Commission-ZEC, kumele ibe yiyo enxusa abantu bakuleli labakwamanye amazwe abahlola ukuqutshwa kokhetho. Okunye njalo okumele kwenziwe yikuthi, i-ZEC kumele itholiswe imali ivela esikhwameni esimiselwe ezokhetho, yokulungiselela ukhetho okubalisa lokufundisa uzulu ngokhetho (voter education) lokubhalisa abafuna ukuvota.

I-ZEC kumele njalo ibe lobuqotho, ikhulumisane lozulu masinyane njalo yenelise ukuthola ukhlonitshwa nguzulu ukhetho lungakenziwa. I-ZEC ilokhu ingakaphiwa isikhwama semali ukuze iqale ukulungiselela lanxa nje kumele ukuthi ngabe kudala kwenziwa lokhu. Labo abahlola ukuqutshwa kokhetho abavela kwamanye amazwe labakhona kuleli kumele banxuswe njalo bafike kusasele inyanga ezintathu ukuthi ukhetho lwenziwe. Lokhu kumqoka kakhulu nxa sikhanga udlakela olwenzakala kukhetho olwedlulayo. Ngokwenjayelo, udlakela lolu lwandise ukwenzakala ukhetho lungakenziwa lanxa soluphelile. Yikho-nje kumele labo abahlola ukuqutshwa kokhetho kumele bafike masinyane ukuze bahlolisise umumo wezepolitiki njalo banelise ukhlonitshwa ngemva kokhetho, kuyadingeka-ke ukuthi baze ngokuphangisa ukuze babhalise njalo baye endaweni ezehlukeneyo zelizwe.

Kuvamile ukuthi labo abahlola ukuqutshwa kokhetho babandlulule kuthi abanye bangavunyelwa ukhlonitshwa, lokhu kumele kwenqatshelwe ngazo zonke indlela. I-ZEC (IKhomitshini ebona ngokhetho) kumele iphiwe umlandu wokuxusa laba bahloli njalo ibe leqiniso ukuthi bayafinyelele izindawana zonke kanye lezisemaphandleni, ukuvikeleka kwabo kumele kube nguulandukalulumente. Ikhomishini yiyo okumele iphe abahlola ukhetho laba izimiso okumele bazilandele ekufezeni umsebenzi wabo. Kumele kube lobuqotho njalo ekubhalweni kwamaphepha okuvotela (ballot papers), ukubalwa kwamavoti athunyeziweyo kanye lokuphathwa kwempumela ukuze uzulu aluthembe lolokhetho njalo ahloniphe impumela yalo. Kumele impumela ivezwe masinyane kulandelwa umthetho kuthi labo abephula lowomthetho bajezise.

Okunye njalo okumele kwenzakale ukhetho lungakaphutshwa yikumisa ngokusethethweni lokho okuzenziwa nxa impumela ingavunyelwana kumbe kulengxabano eziphathelane lokhetho njalo kukhangeliswe ukuthi kungenziwa njani ukuthi ukuthethwa kwamacala aphaathelene lokhetho kwenziwe masinyane. Nxa kungalingiswanga lokhu okulotshwe lapha, ithemba lokuthi ukhetho lungaphathwa kuhle kuleli kalikho njalo ukhetho lungadala ukuxabana lokungahlaliseki kweZimbabwe labomakhelwane bayo.--ZESN

Maonero eZESN pahurongwa hwekuda kuti sarudzo dziitwe muna Kurume 2013

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Vaongorori vesarudzo vanofanira kukokwa mwedzi mitatu sarudzo dzisati dzatanga uye vanofanira kuzogara kwemwedzi wese sarudzo dzichinge dzapera. Izvi zvakakosha kunyanya takatarisa mhirizhonga inowanzoitika sarudzo dzisati dzaitwa uye dzichinge dzapera. Pasarudzo dzakaitwa munguva dzakapfuura, vaongorori vesarudzo vaingosarudzwa pasina nzira yakatsarukana yekusarudza nayo.

Izvi hazvifaniri kuramba zvichitwa. ZEC ndiyo inofanira kusarudza vaongorori pamwe nekuvatumira kunzvimbo dzese uye inofanira kuona kuti vaongorori vakachengeteka zvakana. Zvakare, basa revaongorori rinofanira kujekeswa. Zvakakosha kuti pave nenzira dzakajeka dzekufambisa nadzo sarudzo pakudhindwa kwemapapa esarudzo,

kufambiswa kwavo, kufambiswa kwemavhoti anotumirwa neposvo nemavhoti akatsanangurika pamwe nekufambiswa zvakana kwezvinobuda musarudzo.

Zvabuda musarudzo zvinofanira kushambadziwa nekukasika uye panofanira kuiswa mitemo yekuranga vanoita kuti zvabuda musarudzo zvinonoke kushambadziwa.

Panofanira zvakare kuve nematare anokasika kugadzirisa makatanwa ane chekuita nekufambiswa kwesarudzo. ZESN iri kuti, kutadza kugadzirisa mitemo yezvekuvhota kunotadzisa kuti sarudzo dziitwe murunyararo uye zvinogona kuunza kuSagadzika na muZimbabwe, munyika dzakatikomberedza nepasi tenderere.

Ballot Update feedback

I attended a workshop hosted by ZESN in Kambuzuma and it was both informative and educative, we have 6 sections and are requesting 100 sheets or more of your ballot News Bulletin
Jimmie, Hre

How do we access copies of the Newsletter in Hwange?
Newton



Ballot Update

Bulletin

AN ANALYSIS OF SEPTEMBER 2012:

Introduction

The period under review was characterised by a number of political developments including the 4th Anniversary of the GPA. While the GPA celebrated 4 years of existence, the political environment in Zimbabwe remains unstable, characterised by frequent conflict between the parties in the GNU and inability to move reforms forward.

While by the GPA marked the 4th anniversary, it was envisaged that by now, Zimbabwe would have gone to a referendum and would be preparing for general elections, this has not been the case as parties continue to squabble and there are stops and starts to the constitution making process.

The GPA

The 15th of September 2012 marked the 4th anniversary of the signing of the Global Political agreement. ZESN has noted that the anniversary of the GPA comes at a time when parties to the GNU face a deadlock over the constitution making process. This has resulted in the further stalling of the constitution making process creating more uncertainty about the possibility of reform before elections in Zimbabwe.

The parties seem set on elections and these proclamations do not provide confidence for free and fair elections given the stalled reform process. ZESN continues to advocate for reforms before elections are conducted to ensure a more level playing field. The constitutional deadlock has increased tension among parties and insecurity over the conduct of the 2nd All Stakeholders' Conference. ➔ to page 4

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



ZESN'S COMMENT ON ELECTION DATES

HARARE - 27 September 2012- Mindful of the importance of elections, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) has learnt that harmonised elections and referendum might be held next year in March and this year in November respectively.

It is with great concern that the network has noted that these revelations come against a backdrop of a constitution making process that has remained unclear and stagnated. ZESN remains adamant that logistically it is impossible to hold a referendum in November and elections in March. There are a number of important issues that needs to be dealt with and these include;

- Resourcing ZEC with adequate funds to prepare for the elections
- Adequate publicising of the draft constitution before it is put up for referendum
- Revising of the Referendum Act (since the law is outdated)
- Effecting a number of technical changes in the Electoral bill if it is gazetted into law
- Updating and cleaning the Voter's Roll.

Holding democratic elections is critical for Zimbabwe thus ZESN believes that the reforms form a solid foundation for the creation of a conducive environment and fair playing field in the electoral process. ZESN reiterates that there is need for fundamental reforms that will pave way for a conducive electoral environment. ZESN has consistently advised and cautioned against rushing into elections before addressing the following preconditions:-

CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Reformed Electoral Legislative Framework and repressive legislation (POSA, AIPPA) including removal of Presidential Powers in respect of elections
An end to violence and intimidation
Dismantling of all structures of violence
Respect and upholding of fundamental freedoms (freedom of movement, association, expression and assembly)

VOTERS' ROLL

Registration of eligible citizens [birth certificates, IDs, lost identity documents]
Cleaning and audit of the current voters' roll

Relaxation of strict registration requirements [e.g. proof of residence]

Adequate dissemination of information on the voters' registration process including the inspection of the roll

Access to the electronic and other formats of the voters' roll at no cost at any time by all stakeholders.

Reform of external voting provisions to enable voting by all eligible Zimbabweans in the Diaspora; coupled with adequate checks and balance to ensure transparency and integrity

ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY

Truly independent Electoral Commission, fully responsible for all electoral related and activities, accountable to the people through Parliament. For example ZEC should be in charge of inviting and accrediting observers [local, regional and international]
ZEC should be provided with adequate resources for running the election including preparation and voter education.
ZEC to be open and communicate timeously with the public and other stakeholders.

OBSERVERS

Observers (international, regional and local) should be invited early to enable deployment three (3) months before and one (1) month after the elections
Preliminary assessment teams should be allowed access now to assess the political environment and to do post election follow-up.
SADC observers to be Monitors as opposed to Observers, with the ability to play an interventionist role on Polling day
Regional civic observers should also be invited and accredited on time
No cherry-picking of observers
Full access to all electoral processes especially in the rural areas
Decentralized registration and accreditation of local observers
Security of observers must be guaranteed by the State
Clear guidelines for the observers should be drawn up

MEDIA

Equitable Access to the public media by all political parties and candidates-free airtime for political parties during prime time viewing
Reasonable charges for airtime for political parties

ZEC to enforce the public broadcaster on its role and that it gives equitable coverage of all political players, non negative coverage, hate speech
ZEC must enforce advertising ethics-code of conduct for political parties and the public broadcaster (content and structure of adverts and political messages)

ZEC to monitor public media to observe non partisan reportage during elections.

TRANSPARENCY IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Transparency in all processes including distribution of ballot papers, processing of special votes, postal votes, and results management
Timely announcement of results within the confines of the law and punitive measures to be enforced for non compliance
Respect of the will of the people

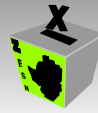
DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Timely dispute resolution mechanisms including the speedy resolution of election related litigation

ZESN urges the government to ensure that Zimbabwe conducts its elections in accordance with the regionally and internationally accepted Guidelines and Principles governing democratic elections as the benchmark that Zimbabwe is signatory to. With a vision of improving future elections, ZESN notes that failure to implement any significant reforms will have damning effects on peace and security in Zimbabwe and the region at large. ZESN therefore calls for political will in ensuring that electoral reforms are out in place and implemented. ZESN is also calling for clear time frames that can be respected and guide all political parties and involved stakeholders in their planning.

In conclusion we urge SADC to continue making clear demands for minimum reforms ahead of any future elections in Zimbabwe. Ends//

Promoting Democratic Elections in Zimbabwe



Ballot Update

Bulletin

AN ANALYSIS OF SEPTEMBER 2012:

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Constitution making process

ZESN continues to monitor the constitution making process and notes that the MDC formations have openly declared a deadlock since ZANU PF proposed its own draft with a raft of amendments to the COPAC draft. ZESN remains concerned over the delays in concluding the process which shows a clear lack of political will on the part of the parties to a new constitutional regime for Zimbabwe. The lack of political will does not give any Zimbabweans hope that the politicians are serious about resolving the problems facing Zimbabwe and that they prioritise citizens above their interests. ZESN continues to advocate for guarantees by political parties in the GPA that they will be professional in their conduct and that they will not disrupt the process as happened in the first stakeholders conference and many other processes that have taken place. ZESN remains concerned over a number of issues regarding the 2nd all stakeholders conference and these include:

- The lack of publicity of the draft to citizens in accessible formats so that citizens are able to engage with the draft
- The lack of clarity on the manner in which submissions from citizens will be handled at the conference
- The conflicting numbers on the participation of civil society organisations and the way in which their input will be taken into account
- The lack of conflict resolution mechanisms in the event of a deadlock in the discussion
- The lack of clarity on how CSOs representatives will be chosen to attend

International Day of Peace and the Organ of national healing and reconciliation

ZESN remains concerned about the delayed action of the Organ of National Healing and Reconciliation to resolve the political polarisation in the country as well as underlying tensions in communities that could escalate to violence and conflict if left unresolved. The non action comes in the wake of the celebration of the international day of peace in which the organ should have taken centre stage in advocating for peace and reconciliation in the country which is balanced with justice. ZESN recognises that for sustainable development to be realised, sustainable peace is a critical factor. The organ needs to be evaluated against the objectives of its formation and what it has achieved to date. The fact that observers note that discrimination still remains rife in many constituencies is a clear indication that healing and reconciliation are yet to take place. As we draw closer to a referendum and a general election, ZESN notes that memories of the 2008 violence are still vivid and fresh and continue to haunt and traumatize citizens. ZESN recognises that healing and reconciliation are not an event but a process which if it had kicked off would have started bearing fruit by now. According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu "True reconciliation is never cheap, for it is based on forgiveness which is costly. Forgiveness in turn depends on repentance, which has to be based on an acknowledgement of what was done wrong and therefore on disclosure of the truth. You cannot forgive what you do not know..."

Human rights and fundamental freedoms

Observers in the constituencies continue to report very low levels of covert violence in their respective constituencies. While the levels are low for most provinces, observers in the Mashonaland Central have reported 23 per cent; Mashonaland west recorded a prevalence of 25 per cent and Matebeleland south recorded 25 per cent incidence of violence in the constituencies within these provinces. This shows that while there some areas are calm; there remain indications of various forms of violence in a number of constituencies a fact that is most disturbing as the country prepares for the general election and the referendum.

Observers report mixed findings as regards to freedom of speech in the various constituencies. There are some provinces in which repression seems higher than others and these provinces include Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Matebeleland North and Mashonaland East. Freedom of a speech is a fundamental right that enables citizens to make choices without feeling pressure to vote in particular ways. ZESN recognises the importance of protecting freedom of speech which enables citizens to mobilise and canvass for support, to share and disseminate their opinions. Vibrant democracies protect this right before and after speech. Observers also reported that citizens in their areas of residence do not have much trust in private or state media. The polarisation in the media and the lack of objectivity in reporting has eroded the trust of citizens in the media as sources of reliable information. While in the last update,

ZESN recorded that in a number of provinces citizens were victimized for reading papers of their choice, there has been a marked improvement during this period with increased observers reporting residents in their constituencies are free to read newspapers of their choice save for places such as parts of Manicaland province which reported 73 per cent, Mashonaland east which reported 54 per cent, Mashonaland west reporting 68 per cent showing lack of freedom to read newspapers of their own choice. Since the print media has opened up, citizens need to be allowed to read newspapers of their choice in order to hear alternative voices.

Observers continue to report the practice of people being forced to attend political meetings by parties although the practice is not as widespread as it is during peak election times. ZESN is disturbed by this occurrence as it denies people the freedom to choose which meetings to attend and which not to and decide for themselves the party they would like to support. Political parties need to sell their programmes to people and motivate people to attend their meetings and this excludes coercing people to attend meetings.

ZESN joins the world in commemorating the International day of Peace, against a back drop of incidents of lack of tolerance and inability to tolerate diversity within communities. While some provinces have reported high levels of political tolerance and peaceful coexistence, problems of intolerance continue to be reported in some constituencies in the following provinces; Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Matebeleland South. ZESN envisaged that the formation of the inclusive government would have prioritised political tolerance and peaceful co-existence among Zimbabweans. The organ on national healing and reconciliation has not been able to create an environment that promotes tolerance and peaceful coexistence between people from diverse backgrounds. Tolerance is a crucial component in electoral processes as it allows people share their views, opinions and beliefs without fear of the consequences.

Conclusion

ZESN remains committed to monitoring Zimbabwe's political environment and analysing their implications for the conduct of elections in Zimbabwe. While some areas in Zimbabwe are experiencing human rights violations in various ways, observers have also noted areas where people's rights are respected. ZESN envisages a Zimbabwe where people's rights are respected and protected. In pursuance of our mandate of promoting a democratic Zimbabwe where free and fair elections are conducted, ZESN advocates for these minimum conditions:

- The creation of a violent-free environment where freedom of assembly, association and speech among others are upheld.
- Election observation forms a critical element in any election, ZESN calls for the opening up of election observation to all interested stakeholders and for the invitation to be given by ZEC and not an executive arm of government.
- Furthermore, ZESN remains concerned about the state of the voters' roll and calls for the production of a fresh voters' roll.
- ZESN advocates that ZEC should be independent of executive influence and report to Parliament, be well resourced and be given its full mandate in the management of the election.

ZESN believes that for elections to be free and fair there is need for transparency in all processes of the elections which include among others results management, transparency in the processing of postal.



Ballot Newsletter

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