



ZIMBABWE 2023 HARMONIZED ELECTION DAILY MONITORING REPORT 14 AUGUST 2023 - Day 1

1.0 Introduction

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (the Forum) consistently monitors the human rights environment in Zimbabwe and analyses trends, in keeping with its mandate of coordinating the human rights agenda in Zimbabwe. Through its various members, the Forum collates and verifies human rights violations and designs advocacy strategies to promote and protect all human rights of all people in Zimbabwe. The Forum had, in this regard, commenced a weekly monitoring and documentation exercise of the pre-electoral environment in the lead-up to the 23 August 2023 harmonised election. This exercise commenced on 31 May 2023 (the day that President Emmerson Mnangagwa proclaimed the election date) and ended on 13 August 2023. The 14 August 2023 daily monitoring report is the first edition of the Forum's Harmonised Election Daily Monitoring Report and will run for one week prior to the August 23 poll, from 14 to 22 August 2023. The Forum will provide hourly updates pertaining to electoral-related human rights violations on election day.

2.0 Methodology

Information contained in this report is derived from verified media reports, information from members of the Forum and civil society reports.

3.0 Highlights of the Week

- CCC application for an interdict for up-to-date voter's roll dismissed as not urgent
- Nation commemorates Heroes Day

4.0 Emerging Issues

4.1 CCC application for an interdict for up-to-date voter's roll dismissed as not urgent

On 14 August, the application made by CCC demanding an up-to-date voters roll and final list of polling stations ahead of the August 23 harmonised elections was dismissed. In the urgent application, CCC and its secretary for elections Ian Makone, who are the applicants, argued that ZEC had furnished its candidates with a voters' roll whose details did not match information published by the commission. In his founding affidavit, Makone argued that CCC had written to ZEC several times complaining that its candidates had not been provided with the voters roll to be used in the August 23 polls, but the electoral management body did not respond. According to documents filed at the High Court recently, CCC wrote four times this year to ZEC complaining about the voters' roll, on July 14, August 3, August 8, and August 10. In the application, Makone cited various irregularities on the voter's roll, which included that the names of polling stations published by ZEC were not the same as those on the voter's roll provided to party candidates. Makone also argued further that the list of polling stations availed to CCC

candidates was not complete, adding that the number of polling stations on the voter's roll was different from those published by ZEC.

However, Justice Never Chitiyo dismissed the application on the grounds that the matter was not urgent. This is nine days before the August 23 harmonised elections. Thereafter, CCC approached the High Court, seeking an urgent audience with Justice Never Chitiyo after he ruled that the party's urgent application for an interdict to compel the ZEC to avail the final voters' roll was not urgent. The High Court will sit on 16 August to address the issue of the urgency in the application made by CCC to compel ZEC to avail the final voter's roll.

4.2 Nation Commemorates Heroes Day

On 14 August 2023, President Emerson Mnangagwa led the nation in commemorating the 2023 National Heroes Day at the National Heroes Acre. The commemorations were preceded by the burial of two national heroes: former Attorney General and Zimbabwe's Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Johannes Tomana as well as the Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services Commission, Milton Siziba.

This year's commemorations were held under the theme: "Remembering our Heroes - Nyika Inovakwa Nevene Vayo/Ilizwe Lakhiwa Ngabanikazi Balo". President Mnangagwa made a declaration that Zimbabwe will never be ruled by puppets of the West.

Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) said this year's celebrations were of special significance as they were being held on the eve of the harmonised elections. ZCC, however, bemoaned the political violence, violence against women in politics, hate speech, polarisation, intolerance and hostilities in the run-up to the August 23 polls. ZCC called on political parties to uphold the ideals of justice, openness and the rule of law and promote unity.

Electoral watchdog Election Resource Centre (ERC) echoed similar sentiments, maintaining that the ideals of the liberation struggle had not been fully implemented despite being enshrined in the Constitution, with unresolved issues around free, fair and credible elections persisting. In a statement, ERC asserted that while the Constitution guaranteed the political and civil rights of Zimbabweans, it is in the implementation that there are many gaps. Zimbabweans in the diaspora, in prisons and hospitals cannot enjoy the right to vote. The statement went on further to say that Zimbabweans in the rural areas continue to feel harassed and intimidated from enjoying free association and participation in political activity of their choice, especially with alternative political formations and candidates apart from the current ruling party.

The CCC said that the party honoured the heroes and heroines, both past and present, who sacrificed their lives for freedom and that their legacy lives on as Zimbabwe prepares to vote on August 23.

Freedom Alliance secretary-general Nhlanhla Ncube said the day was a reminder that people in Matabeleland gallantly fought the white men only to be "raped, murdered and maimed by the North Korea-trained 5th Brigade soldiers during Gukurahundi". Ncube went on further to say that some of the so-called heroes being commemorated are, in fact, villains and genocidaires, who were being praised for their role in the Gukurahundi genocide.

Mthwakazi Republic Party president Mqondisi Moyo said there was nothing to celebrate about Heroes' Day as the day did not recognize the many ZIPRA cadres who died without committing any crimes but instead were killed by Gukurahundi.

Ibhetshu LikaZulu secretary-general Mbuso Fuzwayo said Heroes Day was important as a lot of people sacrificed their lives for minority rule. He bemoaned the rise in corruption which he said was impoverishing the majority of Zimbabweans.

4.3 Destruction of CCC campaign billboards

A suspected ZANU-PF youth was caught in Marondera in the process of attempting to burn opposition CCC campaign billboards. The ZANU-PF youth, Shaun Njere, who had been in the company of three other named individuals, admitted to receiving a deposit of USD \$5 with the promise of an additional US\$10 upon burning three billboards by an individual identified only as Lecturer Musa.

4.4 Case of political violence in Chitungwiza

The Forum, on 14 August 2023 received an alert of how political tensions had reached a boiling point in Chitungwiza North. Chitungwiza North Ward 19 aspiring independent councillor, Wendy Chiriri, had been going around distributing fliers and posters with her 15-member campaign. They then retreated to rest and had lunch at her house at around 12 in the afternoon. It was at this point that they were ambushed by assailants who were armed with stones, sjamboks, electric cables and knobkerries. The assailants were able to gain easy access to the premises as there is no gate, nor did they have a security wall or fence. They then began indiscriminately attacking Chisiri and her campaign team using stones and physically assaulting them all over their bodies. This resulted in three, all of whom are women, being critically injured. The assailants are said to be part of a pressure group known as "Black Vendetta." The victims reported that the perpetrators who are known members of ZANU-PF who operate a terror group called the Black Vendetta targeting citizens and opposition political activists in Chitungwiza.

4.5 SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to deploy members countrywide

The SADC Secretariat communicated that its team arrived in Harare on 10 August 2023 to prepare logistics for the launch of the SEOM. The launch is tabled to take place at the Rainbow Towers Hotel in Harare on 18 August 2023. The SEOM will be deployed in all ten provinces to observe the pre- and post-election phases and the polling day. The team will be led by Dr Never Sekwila Mumba who was selected by SADC as the Head of the SEOM to Zimbabwe.

5.0 Conclusion

The Forum is highly concerned by continued instances of political intolerance as highlighted in the examples above just nine days away from the scheduled 23 August 2023 poll. The Forum reiterates that Zimbabwe is a multi-party democracy that is founded upon respect for all political parties as espoused under section 2 of the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe. Section 67 further protects the right to make political choices freely. The Forum accordingly urgently calls for citizens to heed the call for peace and unity ahead of the elections that have been repeatedly made by President Emmerson Mnangagwa and for political parties to continue preaching peace and

tolerance to their political supporters as well as call out and openly condemn any instances of electoral-related violence.

