

Delimitation constituencies and wards

It is the function of ZEC to delimit constituencies for elections for House of Assembly and Senate and wards for elections for local authorities. (Section 100C(1)(f) of the Constitution.)

By delimitation is meant the setting of the boundaries of the House of Assembly and Senate constituencies and the local government wards.

As regards Parliament, the Constitution presently provides that there are to be two hundred and ten House of Assembly seats and sixty elected Senatorial constituencies. Thus ZEC must set the boundaries for this number of House of Assembly and Senatorial seats.

As regards local government, ZEC determines into how many wards local authority areas will be divided.

Delimitation commences after Parliament has been dissolved by Presidential proclamation. It will be dissolved at the end of the five year Parliamentary term unless it is dissolved earlier.

ZEC must determine the boundaries for the constituencies and the wards no later than the date set by the President, which date must be no later than three months prior to the date fixed by proclamation as the date on which Parliament is dissolved. Before producing its final report, ZEC must produce a preliminary report no later than one month prior to the date fixed by proclamation as the date on which Parliament is dissolved.

Subject to the various other considerations that have to be taken into account when delimiting which are set out below, the boundaries of the House of Assembly constituencies must be such that at the time of delimitation the number of voters registered in each House of Assembly constituency is as nearly as may be equal to the number of voters registered in each of the other House of Assembly constituencies.

In delimiting the boundaries of wards, the Commission must ensure that no ward is divided between two or more local authority areas.

In delimiting the House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission must ensure that no ward is divided between two or more House of Assembly constituencies.

In dividing Zimbabwe into wards and House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission must give due consideration to—

- its physical features;
- the means of communication within the area;
- the geographical distribution of registered voters;
- any community of interest as between registered voters; and

- in the case of any delimitation after the first delimitation consequent upon an alteration in the number of House of Assembly constituencies, existing electoral boundaries.

Whenever it appears necessary to do so in order to give effect to these provisions in relation to House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission may depart from the requirement that the boundaries of the House of Assembly constituencies must be such that at the time of delimitation the number of voters registered in each House of Assembly constituency is as nearly as may be equal to the number of voters registered in each of the other House of Assembly constituencies. But it may do so in no case to any greater extent than twenty *per centum* more or less than the average number of registered voters in House of Assembly constituencies.

After delimiting the wards and House of Assembly constituencies, the Commission must divide each province into six senatorial constituencies by assigning to each senatorial constituency a House of Assembly constituency or two or more contiguous House of Assembly constituencies, and in so doing the Commission may be guided but not bound by any principle or consideration specified for House of Assembly constituencies.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission must submit to the President a preliminary report comprising—

- a list of wards and House of Assembly constituencies delimited by the Commission, with the names assigned to each and a description of their boundaries;
- a list of senatorial constituencies delimited by the Commission, with the names assigned to each and a description of their boundaries;
- a map or maps showing the wards and House of Assembly and senatorial constituencies into which Zimbabwe has been divided by the Commission; and
- any further information or particulars which the Commission considers necessary;

The President must cause this report to be laid before Parliament within the next seven days after he or she has received it.

No earlier than seven days after the President has caused the preliminary report of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to be laid before Parliament, the President may refer back to the Commission for its further consideration and final decision any matter arising out of its report.

If there appears to be any discrepancy between the description of the boundaries of any ward or House of Assembly constituency and the map or maps, the description will prevail.

Within fourteen days after receiving the Commission's final report the President must publish a proclamation in the *Gazette* declaring the names and boundaries of the wards and the House of Assembly and senatorial constituencies as finally determined by the Commission to be the wards and House of Assembly and senatorial constituencies of Zimbabwe, and those boundaries will have effect for the purposes of the next and any subsequent general election.