

ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK



BALLOT UPDATE

Issue 10: October to November 2012

INTRODUCTION

This update presents a summary description of some political developments in the constituencies. Committee set up to deal with areas of disagreements in the 2nd All Stakeholders conference. The three principals have tasked a three member cabinet team, which will be drawn from ZANU PF, two MDC formations, joined in group discussions by the three COPAC co-chairs Hon. Edward Mkhosi, Hon. Mangwana and Hon. Mwonzora and chaired by Hon Minister Eric Matinenga. The MDC-led by Prof Ncube was excluded from the meeting and it has since said that it does not recognize the committee and has since written to the facilitator to intervene. This latest stalemate has raised doubts about Zimbabwe ability to get the draft to a referendum in time for elections which the President says will be held in March 2013

The Minister of Finance as he presented the budget said the Constitutional Referendum and Elections would exceed US\$150 million way above the proposed amount which was budgeted. In line with these he appealed to donors and well-wishers to fund the processes.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network remains dedicated to the promotion of democratic elections in Zimbabwe. In line with this objective, we continue to analyse the political environment in the 210 constituencies where observers are deployed. This update is informed by observations from these constituencies and broadly captures national political developments in Zimbabwe.

ISSUE	COMMENT
GPA	The GNU continues to be plunged into turmoil with several issues threatening its aptitude. The looming primary elections have caused furore within political parties fuelling squabbles and infighting. The deliberate exclusion of the GPA principal and leader to the MDC Professor Welshman Ncube in the COPAC meeting which sought to map a way forward to the referendum has brought to attention how leaders are deliberately ignoring the decision reached at the SADC Troika Summit which recognised Professor Ncube as the principal of the GPA and leader to the MDC. The period also witnessed tension mounting between Deputy Prime Minister Professor Arthur Mutambara and Professor Welshman Ncube over the dismissal of legislators and councillors thus intensifying rivalry between them.
Constitution making process	The constitution making process is in motion with the formation of a committee set to produce a report which will be reviewed in parliament and set pace for the referendum. ZESN has observed that this effort comes amidst the deadlock reached after the just ended 2nd All Stakeholders' Conference. ZESN has noted that the committee has been set up as an attempt to unravel the impasse amongst principals in the GNU over the constitution making process. ZESN observes that the committee comprises of a three member cabinet team drawn from ZANU PF and the two MDC formations which will be joined in group discussions by the three COPAC co-chairs and Honourable Edward Mkhosi, Honourable Paul Mangwana and Honourable Douglas Mwonzora. ZESN reiterates its call to the principals urging them to finalize the constitution making as the country's future hinges upon the constitution. The constitution is the supreme law of the land and is meant to benefit future generations hence leaders ought to put their self-seeking interests aside and advance the cause of the nation.
Political tensions within the MDCs	ZESN has noted with apprehension the tension mounting between the MDC leader Professor Welshman Ncube and the Deputy Prime Minister Professor Arthur Mutambara over the dismissal of legislators and councillors. The Herald of Wednesday 21 November 2012 reported that Professor Ncube fired 8 legislators and 49 councillors for indiscipline and floor crossing to the MDC-T formation. ZESN observes that the relations between Professor Mutambara and Professor Ncube have since soured during the course of the year when the former lost MDC leadership to the latter during a supreme court ruling last year. The feud between the two gentlemen escalated even further when the SADC Troika meeting recognised Professor Ncube as the true principal to the GPA hence excluding professor Mutambara from the discussions. ZESN expresses profound disapproval over this power wrangle and views it as an attention seeking strategy and a platform whereby politicians are trying to exercise their political muscle to gain leverage over national matters. Politicians should desist from plunging the nation into unwarranted commotion and tension which is uncalled for. ZESN thus warns leaders to be wary of investing in squabbles which have potential of
Primary elections :source of conflict for parties	

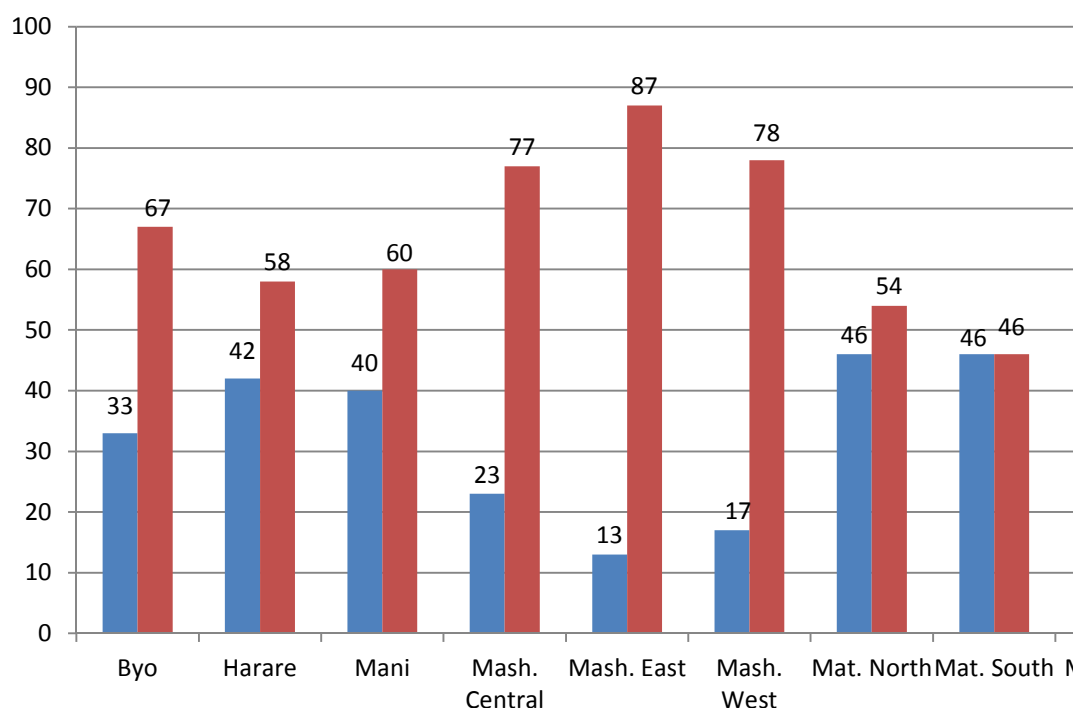
Human rights and fundamental freedoms

shipwrecking their political careers

ZESN has noted that the looming primary elections have severed relations within political parties and resulted in great strife arising within parties threatening party structures and functionality. Relations have soured within political parties as controversy has arisen over the need to allow for new candidates within their party to contest for the primary elections or retain sitting legislators. ZESN has noted that political parties are merely politicking and trying hold on to the reins of power. ZESN believes that these squabbles threaten intraparty democracy having potential to derail party structures resulting in unnecessary fractures and instability which have potential of collapsing party cohesion.

The freeness and fairness of an election is gauged by the extent to which freedoms of assembly, association, expression and movement are upheld. In citizens' private spaces or the communities they live this is gauged by their ability to say what they want, to freely attend rallies without fear or coercion and on election day the extent to which they vote freely. Governments also have a duty and prerogative to ensure that these freedoms are respected by upholding the constitution and more fundamentally by ensuring that there is rule of law.

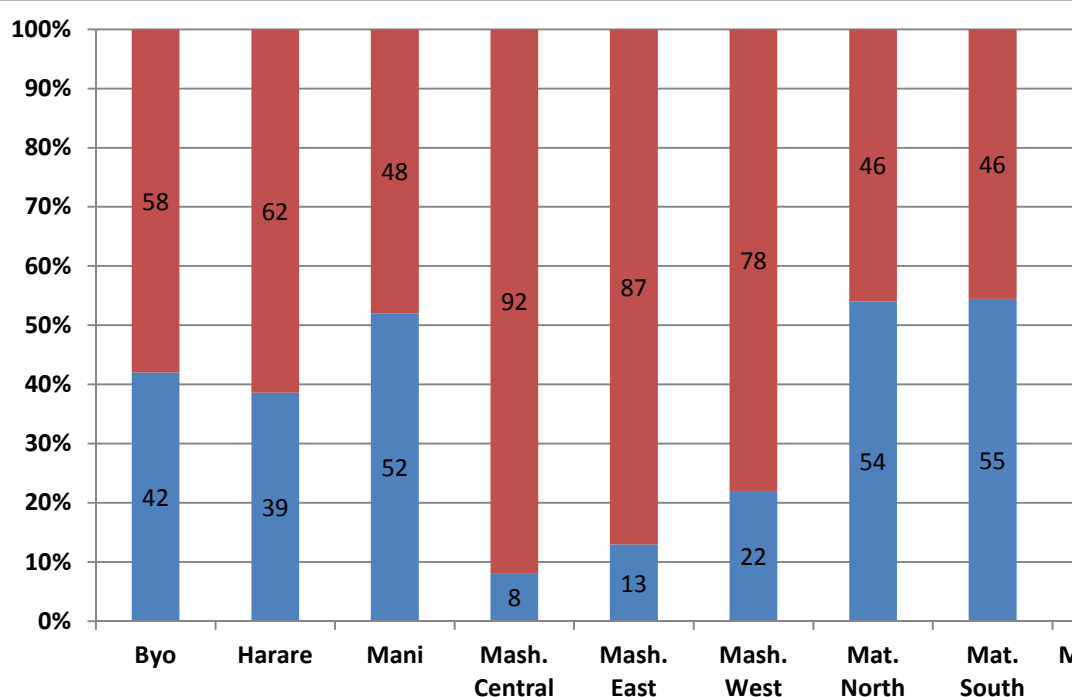
Fig 1: Respect for Human Rights in the Constituencies



As shown by in the figure above, there is no respect for fundamental freedoms in some of the constituencies. This is more prevalent in the Mashonaland provinces, Harare and Manicaland.

Observers continue to report that people are not able to exercise their freedom of speech in the constituencies. The ability of citizens to express themselves is paramount for a free and fair election.

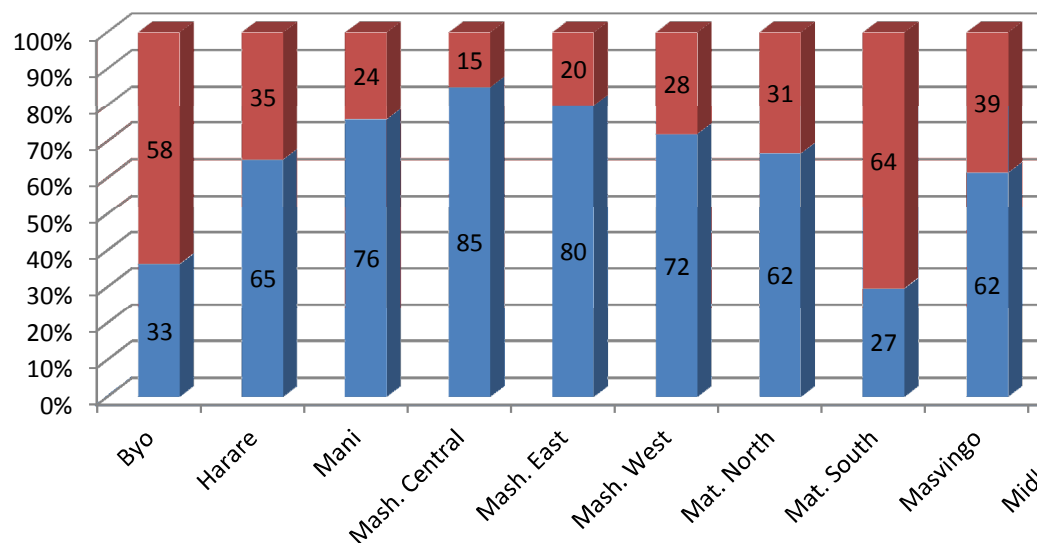
Fig. 2: Are people able to express their freedom of speech



The three Mashonaland provinces are the highest when it comes to disregarding people's freedom of speech.

Observers report that citizens in the constituencies, experience discrimination by political party. Reports from the media show that the political parties are in campaign mode, especially after the announcement by the President that elections will be held in March. ZANU PF was reported to be also distributing farming inputs to its members through the 20million dollar presidential agricultural scheme. As the country heads towards an impending referendum and elections this discrimination is likely to increase.

Fig. 3: Discrimination by Political Party



Discrimination by political party is more prevalent in Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Manicaland, Mashonaland West and Harare.

Ominously citizens are not free to wear party regalia without experiencing any problems. Observers report that the forms of media are not dependable and balanced. The least trusted sources are the state controlled newspapers. Observers report that citizens are constrained from reading newspapers of their choice but this is predominant in Mashonaland Central (69%) and Mashonaland Central (60%).

The statement by the President that elections will be conducted has put the country in electoral mode. Equally in the communities there is more discussion about electoral reforms as Zimbabwe moves towards an impending election. SADC has said that Zimbabwe can only have elections upon putting in place the prerequisites for free and fair election. The earliest time Zimbabwe can have an election according to SADC would be June 2013. Observers reported that in the constituencies 51% of the citizens are having discussions about electoral reforms. There is a new Electoral law, which introduces clauses that will go a long way in ensuring that elections are free and fair.

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:

Conclusion	• <i>The creation of a violent-free environment where freedom of assembly, association and speech among others are upheld.</i> • <i>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.</i> • <i>Furthermore, ZESN remains concerned about the state of the voters' roll and calls for the production of a fresh voters' roll.</i> • <i>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.</i> • <i>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</i>
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