

HOME AFFAIRS

Serving Zimbabweans efficiently without delay

THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Since it has been used extensively for political purposes, the senior staff of the Office will be subject to an immediate review by the new minister. The new Registrar-General will thereafter be given instructions that will result in the following:

-  Birth, death and marriage certificates will be issued expeditiously at all administrative offices throughout the country. Delays in serving applicants will not be tolerated, and regular surveys of customer satisfaction will be conducted by an independent agency to determine the levels of service being achieved.
-  All persons born in Zimbabwe will automatically receive the right to citizenship, which will be for life and may not be revoked under any circumstances.
-  All persons who have held the right of permanent residence for five years shall be eligible to apply for citizenship by registration.
-  All persons marrying a person with Zimbabwe citizenship shall be entitled to citizenship by registration.
-  All citizens will have the right to travel documents. Such documents will be reasonably priced in relation to their cost and be made available without difficulty by post or in person at all administrative offices of the Registrar-General. Application forms will be made readily available without charge and all applications dealt with expeditiously.
-  All citizens will have the responsibility to register with the Registrar-General's office and will receive a National Registration Number. This will be associated with a Registration Card that will be acceptable as a means of identity throughout the country. Registration and the subsequent issuance of the appropriate documentation will be completed in a single exercise and within a reasonable time frame that will not exceed two hours.

National Registration and the Voters' Roll

Upon achieving citizenship, all citizens will be required to register with the Registrar-General's Office at the administrative office nearest to their homes. Upon registration, the full details of every citizen will be captured on a national database that will then form the basis of a voters' roll. All citizens will be required to update the information on the national database every time there is a significant change to the details required, such as a change of name, change of address or emigration.

All deaths will be formally registered with the local police, who will not permit

burial until the appropriate death certificate and permission to bury has been issued. All such registered deaths will be notified to the Registrar-General's office within fourteen days. All deaths will be automatically recorded in the national database and the voters' roll amended accordingly. The voters' roll will be maintained in such a way that it can provide a full list of all voters in any electoral district in the country at any time.

Access to the National Register for all citizens will be possible by simply securing access via the Internet and using their ID number. However, only the Registrar-General's office will have the right to update the National Register and database.

THE POLICE SERVICE

The provision of a comprehensive national police service to ensure safety and security of person and property is one of the most important roles of government. The Zimbabwe Republic Police has a proud record of service and achievement and has in the past been recognized as one of the best police services in Africa.

Today an insidious process of politicization, low pay and poor working conditions, as well as a decline in both training and the provision of essential support services, are spoiling this record. As a consequence community support and recognition – so crucial to an effective policing system – are breaking down and crime is not being tackled effectively.

To remedy matters it will be necessary to restructure the service and to enhance the support systems that are essential for its effectiveness. In particular the Police Act – long the foundation stone of the ZRP – will be revisited and restored as the guide to policing in Zimbabwe. It will be necessary to add the word Service to the name of the police. It will be called the Zimbabwe Republic Police Service (ZRPS).

Leadership and Senior Staff Appointments

Because it is critical for the restoration of the ZRPS as an apolitical and professional organization, all police promotion will be on merit only.

The ZRPS has lost two thirds of its experienced and properly trained officers in the past five years and a massive recruitment and training programme is required to bring it up to strength. This will be achieved by seeking a special relationship with police services in countries with a similar historical and legal background. As a part of that relationship the MDC government will request assistance with staff to enhance the capacity of the Police College in Harare. It may also be necessary to recall retired police officers to active duty and to request the assignment of senior staff from other police services elsewhere in the world.

In addition to this emergency staffing programme the MDC government will undertake a comprehensive review of the staffing needs of the police. This will include the restructuring of the senior ranks, where it is considered that there is some overstaffing at present. It will also examine the role played by the various police auxiliary forces, such as Reserve officers and the Support Unit. The militia will not be required. These roles will be redefined and levels of staffing established. The primary focus will remain on the establishment of the regular service at all levels and in all specialist departments.

Employment Conditions

One of the key issues to be faced by the incoming government will be the enhancement of the general living conditions of the police and the improvement of staff housing and amenities. To secure these aspects as quickly as possible, and to ensure that a sound consultative review process is put in place to maintain the competitive character of the police conditions of service, the MDC government will require all serving officers to join the Police Association, which will later be elevated to the position of an employees' association.

This will be accompanied by the establishment of a National Employment Council (NEC) for the Service, where the very senior Ranks of Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners, assisted by the Public Service Commission, will act as the employer. The Public Service Commission, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Home Affairs, will establish the salaries and working conditions for these very senior ranks in the service.

The general working conditions for the Service, as well as grades and salaries, will be negotiated in the NEC, where the employer and employees will enjoy equal representation. The police service is regarded as an elite service and working conditions and remuneration will be set accordingly. This is regarded as essential in order to retain staff and ensure the integrity of the service down to the lowest ranks.

The Police Service Commission will be completely overhauled and new members appointed in consultation with the new leadership of the Service. The Commission will then oversee senior staff appointments and employment conditions for all staff in the ZRPS.

Housing

At present police housing is of a generally inferior standard throughout the country. In the larger urban centres, police officers above the rank of sergeant will be encouraged to buy their own homes, and government guarantees for 100 per cent

of the purchase price will be made available. The purpose of this measure is to encourage stability in the Service as well as greater integration with the community. It will also give greater long-term security to police officers.

Junior ranks and police serving in rural areas will be provided with accommodation, and a comprehensive programme designed to upgrade all police housing units will be initiated immediately, the purpose being to provide family accommodation of a reasonable standard for all ranks.

Transport

Historically, the ZRPS has used the Land Rover as the basic transport unit. Given the size of the service and the need for reliable transport at all levels, the MDC government will establish the capacity to produce a standard police vehicle at a local assembly plant. This will be designed in conjunction with the police and be made as robust and versatile as possible. Rural police stations will receive an allocation of 4-wheel-drive vehicles of the same make.

The use of luxury sedans as a means of road patrols will be discontinued altogether and replaced by utility vehicles of an appropriate design. The role of the motorcycle will be increased to reduce costs and these will be imported.

Forensic Laboratories

Forensic science is regarded as being a critical component in the fight against crime of all kinds and the establishment of forensic laboratories in the five major cities will enhance the capacity of the Service. These will be staffed with specialists trained for this purpose, assisted in the first instance by officers and specialists from other police services elsewhere in the world, who will be seconded to the laboratories in an advisory capacity in the early stages.

Scholarships

The ZRPS will control a scholarship programme designed to assist promising young officers who want to take up police studies at university level. These scholarships will be offered only to officers who have been through basic training at the Police College and who have completed two years of satisfactory service with the Service. Such graduates will have to serve a period of service with the police after graduation equal to the duration of the training programme undertaken.

Specialist Units

Specialist units, such as the Dog Section, the Riot Police and others, will be examined in depth to establish their relevance to the Service and its primary focus of maintaining law and order in the communities they serve, which will include close-

security services for leading dignitaries and visitors as well as the diplomatic service. (The amendment of the Public Order and Security Act to remove unacceptable sections is dealt with elsewhere in this document.) The use of the police to protect private property will be significantly curtailed from the present level, where literally hundreds of people have a regular police presence at their homes, even though this is not justified by any significant threat.

Integration with the Community

The ZRPS will be required at all levels to establish a close working relationship with the community leaders in the areas they are responsible for. Members-in-Charge will be required to establish a committee of local citizens elected for this purpose at an annual meeting of the community called by the police to brief members of the community on all questions that might concern their basic safety and security.

Such committees will meet on a regular basis with the Members-in-Charge and discuss all concerns and issues that might be raised. At urban level, the most senior ranks of the Service will be required to attend city or town council meetings and to brief councillors on any issues that might be of concern. In rural districts, the same principle will apply, with senior officers attending farmers' meetings and Rural District Council meetings for the same purpose.