

IYWD and Alliance of Community Based Organisations (ACBOs) ZANU PF primary elections Observation Report

The Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD) and the Alliance of Community Based Organisations (ACBOs) continued to observe the primary elections of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), which commenced on the 29th to the 30th of April 2018. IYWD and ACBOs community observation of primary elections in rural, farming, mining and peri-urban communities will continue as other political parties carry out their own primary elections in preparation of the General Election to be held later this year.

Objective

The objectives of the primary elections observation by IYWD and ACBOs was to take note of the developments happening during the ZANU PF primary election and also make an independent assessment of the process paying attention to freedom of choice, freedom of expression, women and marginalised groups participation as well as the general environment. We also intend to use the information and developing events in communities to engage the political parties, civil society as well as the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) and other stakeholders to increase free and meaningful participation of citizens in rural, farming, mining and peri-urban communities.

Methodology

The observation was conducted by IYWD and Alliance's *Dandemuntande* (Web) Champions, which are part of a community-based elections initiative using organic structures of mobilisation, and socially embedded educational approaches. *Dandemuntande* (Web) Model uses peer-to-peer grassroots-oriented community mobilisation and voter education initiative which mimics network marketing models leveraging on socially-embedded activities, with an aim to encourage young women and men to register as voters and promote their participation pre, during and post elections. Primary information and reports were gathered from the *Dandemuntande* (Web) Champions and ACBOs members embedded in communities across the country. Other sources of information included meetings with civil society organisations, media and interviews with ZANU PF officials and aspiring candidates.

Election Management and Preparedness

The primary election was characterized by logistical and management challenges which included late delivery and opening of the ballots. We noted in most centers the process was paralyzed by failure to deliver ballots papers timeously resulted in people queuing for a long time without food and toilets and other centers deferring voting to the next day (30 April 2018). We noted the hype of the primary election across the country. In some areas officials ended up improvising for example using their own ballot boxes to conduct the election. We noted that in some areas the primary elections will be redone owing to reports of vote rigging, bussing of supporters' intimidation, violence and mismanagement of the election by losing candidates submitted to district and provincial offices. Some areas including Zvimba North, Chinhoyi, Makonde East among others are likely to redo the primary election.

General Campaign

Aspiring candidates campaigned freely and raised posters in their communities and on social media. Aspiring candidates had unfettered access to their constituencies and electorate. Additionally the campaigning period was characterized by the following reports:

Vote Buying: There were reported cases of buying voters with rice, mealie meal, cooking oil, cash and alcohol. On the 29th of April 2018, in Chipinge South Constituency candidates utilized delays to buy votes using lunch to the already gathered hungry voters. Vote buying was also witnessed in Ward 5 Bindura North Constituency where some candidates also took advantage of election delay on 29 April and started to buy votes, promising to buy people food hampers if they vote for him.

Intimidation: Candidates and supporters were intimidated in Gutu and other areas. It was reported that during some aspiring candidates meetings, opposing candidates sent people to write names of those who had attended the meetings and then follow up threatening the supporters or luring them with freebies.

Violence: Case of violent disruptions were noted in some cases aspiring candidates had to be removed from the polling station. In Mazowe South, Ward 18, violence erupted on 30 April as people forced their way into the polling station having gathered as early as 8 am only for the election (postponed from the previous day) to begin in the afternoon. In Murehwa supporters sieged the polling station threatened officials before burning the ballot papers.

Media Coverage and Environment

The primary election received wide coverage from both the private and public media. Social media was also used to disseminate news on campaigns, incidents as well as election outcomes. We noted the infringement of the rights of journalists to access information for example the Daily News Editor, Gift Phiri¹ was arrested in the line of duty. Despite the increased access and updates of election developments on social media, IYWD and the Alliance noted the high prevalence of fake news. In some cases aspiring candidates were declared winners or losers before counting had been completed.

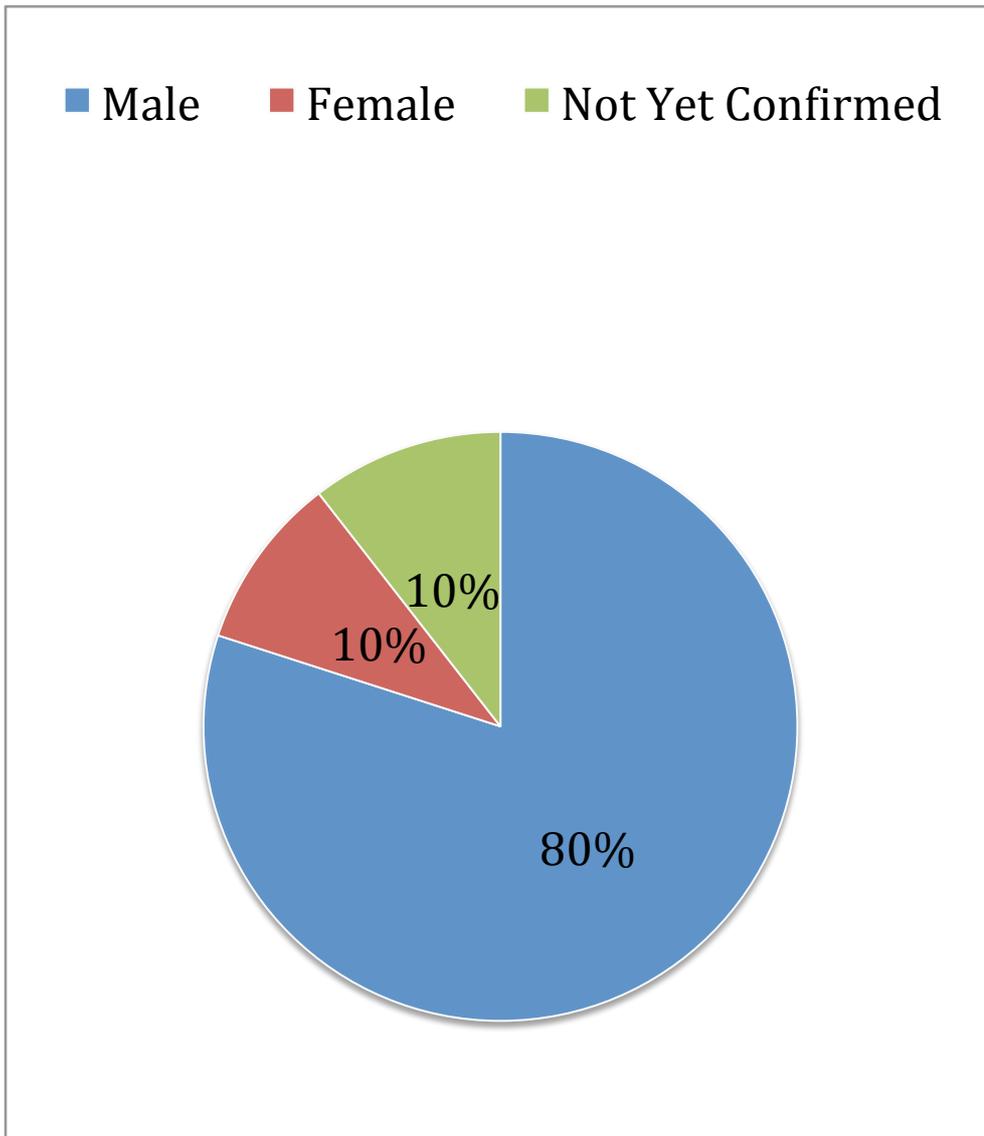
Women's Participation

IYWD and ACBOs noted participation of women as aspiring candidates, polling offices as well as voters in the primary election. An analysis of the results released by ZANU PF for the National Assembly representative indicate that 10% are female, 80% male and 10% yet to be announced. Even if the 10% of the pending results are to female it is still a far from achieving the 50/50 gender representation as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe specifically S17 and S56 that stipulates gender balance, equality and non-discrimination of all.

¹ <https://www.zimeye.net/2018/04/29/police-run-zanu-pf-primaries-news-editor->

<https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/04/30/zanu-pf-polls-a-total-disaster?src=ilaw>

Figure 1: ZANU PF Member of Parliament Representatives for 2018 General Election (Source: ZANUPF)



| Province | Female | Male | Not confirmed yet | Total of Constituencies |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Bulawayo | 1 | 11 | 0 | 12 |
| Harare | 1 | 26 | 3 | 30 |
| Manicaland | 4 | 20 | 1 | 25 |
| Mashonaland Central | 0 | 17 | 1 | 18 |
| Mashonaland East | 4 | 16 | 2 | 22 |
| Mashonaland West | 2 | 15 | 5 | 22 |
| Masvingo | 2 | 22 | 2 | 26 |
| Matabeleland North | 4 | 4 | 5 | 13 |
| Matabeleland South | 1 | 12 | 0 | 13 |
| Midlands | 1 | 25 | 3 | 29 |
| Total | 20 | 168 | 22 | 210 |

Table 1: ZANU PF Member of Parliament Representatives for 2018 General Election (Source: ZANUPF)

General Participating Environment

We observed that on 29 April and 30 April 2018 ZANU PF supporters went to the polling centers with anticipation and excitement to select candidates of their choice to represent their constituencies in the nation's general election. The voter turnout was lower as usually seen in the past elections. Reports of low voter turnout were reported in the majority of polls to include Guruve North Constituency, Masvingo (Gutu-Tongogara Constituency) and St Mary's Chitungwiza Constituency. We also noted

lose of senior officials of ZANU PF and pending electoral disputes which are before the party leadership.

We also noted that citizens continued to walk long distances to go and vote, which can be a deterrent to voting and exercising the right to vote by the elderly and the disabled who might need assistance to access the voting centers.

Voters Roll

We noted incidences where some names of voters and candidates were missing from the voters roll. Officials had to improvise and add the missing names using pens whilst in some areas those missing from the voters roll were not allowed to vote. On 29 April at Ward 15 Mazowe West Constituency the election started late and some voters went back home before ballots came. Few people voted when the ballots eventually arrived and the election continued to the following day. This was also the case in Bindura North Ward 5, Bindura South Ward 6 and 13 and Bindura North Ward 19, Shamva North Ward 26. At some polls, ballots did not arrive and elections had to be postponed. Postponements were reported in Chipinge South Constituency, Rushinga Constituency, Mt Darwin East Constituency, Mazowe South Ward 8 and Uzumba Maramba Pfugwe (UMP) among others.

We also noted reports and allegations of using the voters' roll to rig the primary elections by some aspiring candidates and officials. In Chiredzi South aspiring Member of Parliament candidates and 7 Councilors including Darlington Chiwa and Norman Sharara and others pulled out of the election and petitioned the party President, ED Mnangagwa for a rerun of the election.

Ballot Papers

The observers noted that ballot papers arrived late in most areas resulting in the election starting late and in other centers continuing to the following day. Owing to late arrival some voters had to leave before casting their votes.

Names of some aspiring candidates were not on the papers and had to be added in some areas. On the 30th of April voters boycotted the election at Foothills Farm (Bindura North Constituency) after names of the candidates they wanted were missing on the ballot papers.

We noted in some areas ballots were depleted before closing of the ballot and whilst some eligible voters had not casted their ballots for example in Guruve North 14 cells failed to cast their vote as ballots were depleted.

Role of the Zimbabwe Republic Police

The role of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) during election time is to protect citizens and maintain law and order. We noted reports alleging the use of ZRP officials to campaign for certain candidates. ZRP officers were also used to as presiding officers in some constituencies whilst police vehicles were also seen carrying ballot papers to polling centers. The use and conduct of the ZRP is in contradiction of section 219 (2) of the constitution, which stipulates their role and professional duties to serve the people of Zimbabwe in a non-partisan manner.

Post Election Environment

We noted general calmness post the elections and we continue to monitor the environment pre, during and post elections. We also noted electoral disputes, complaints and conflicts reported to the police and others channeled to the party provincial offices and headquarters.

Recommendations

The ACBOs hold close the view that primary elections and other candidate selection processes within political parties strengthen intra-party democracy. We also contend that how political parties conduct themselves during this period are key indicators of the national election to be held this year. More importantly the primary elections give party members an opportunity to select a candidate of their choice. In general we submit that the ZANU PF primary elections were ill prepared, chaotic, violent and marred by logistical and management challenges. We therefore make the following recommendations to ZANU PF informed by what we observed in order to address the challenges identified:

1. We recommended that there is greater transparency, adequate provisions for logistics are availed in time to improve on the management of elections
2. Voters roll should be available to all stakeholders for verification and inspections in accordance to the ZANU PF constitution and electoral regulations
3. ZANU PF to improve on access to information by journalists, media and other stakeholders related to the election as it strengthens transparency and credibility of the process and outcome.
4. ZANU PF should take decisive and punitive measures against those that employ violence and intimidation against their opponents. We can ZANU PF to urge their supporters to participate peacefully and respect the rights of others in preparation of the General election.
5. The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) should be professional and conduct its duties in a non-partisan manner as espoused in the constitution specifically section 219 (2). Zimbabwe Republic Police should arrest perpetrators of violence without fear or favor.
6. ZANU PF should ensure equal participation and representation of women and marginalised groups by implementing the quota systems enshrined in their constitution and Zimbabwe's Constitution specifically Section 17 and S56 that stipulates gender balance, equality and non-discrimination of all.