



 **ELECTION
RESOURCE
CENTRE**
Resourcing for Electoral Excellence

**Be an election
witness in your
community.
Report on the
political and
electoral
environment in
your community**

**CALL
08080219**
**AND SPEAK OUT TO MAKE OUR
ELECTIONS BETTER.**

 www.electionresourcecentre.org  Election Resource Centre  @ercafrica



**ELECTION
RESOURCE
CENTRE**

Resourcing for Electoral Excellence

**BY-ELECTIONS WATCH
6 CONSTITUENCIES TO LOOK OUT FOR**

KWEKWE CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY

KWEKWE CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY			
REASON FOR BY-ELECTION	Death of Masango Matambanadzo (NPF)		
LOCAL AUTHORITY VACANCIES	Ward 8	Ward 9	Ward 10

Polling Stations	Registered Voters	2018 Winning Party	2013 Winning Party	2008 Winning Party
37	24 434	NPF	ZANU-PF	MDC-T

Kwekwe Central comprises 8 wards in total, with ward 6 under ZANU PF control while the remaining 4 wards are controlled by MDC Alliance. There are 3 council vacancies following the deaths of MDC Alliance councillors representing ward 8 and 9 and the recall of Kwekwe Central Mayor, Angeline Kasipo representing ward 10.

Politically, former Member of Parliament and MDC Alliance losing candidate in 2018 Blessing Chebundo has since shifted political allegiances to ZANU PF, potentially impacting on the strength of the opposition vote. The death of incumbent MP Matambanadzo who represented the National Patriotic Front (NPF) and the crossing of former MDC Alliance candidate Blessing Chebundo presents a unique opportunity for both ruling and opposition parties to consolidate control. Yet it is still to be seen whether ZANU PF will reclaim its voters who had shifted political allegiances to Matambanadzo and the NPF following the dismissal of Matambanadzo from ZANU PF in March 2018, just before the 2018 Harmonised Election.

A focal point for the constituency is the gold mines and illegal gold panning which has grown to unprecedented levels in recent times and has resulted in high levels of violence including intra and inter-party violence in a bid for political and trade control within the region. Economic shifts and a mass migration of artisanal miners, the death of popular NPF Member of Parliament Matambanadzo Masango, the presence of the infamous “MaShurugwi” (violent Machete gangs in gold mining communities), as well as the presence of former Minister of State Security Owen Ncube within the constituency has changed the political complexion of the constituency, with the constituency viewed as a potential hotbed of politically motivated violence. The presence of “MaShurugwi” remains of concern as the groupings could be activated politically to assist the regime through violence and intimidation and could perpetuate conflict for purposes that conform with their specific political agendas.

MUTASA SOUTH CONSTITUENCY

MUTASA SOUTH CONSTITUENCY		
REASON FOR BY-ELECTION	Recall of Regai Tsunga (MDC Alliance)	
LOCAL AUTHORITY VACANCIES	N/A	

Polling Stations	Registered Voters	2018 Winning Party	2013 Winning Party	2008 Winning Party
26	33 746	MDC ALLIANCE	ZANU-PF	MDC-T

Mutasa South Constituency is a peri-urban constituency located in Manicaland province, covering Mutare Urban (Wards 11, 12 and 14), peri-urban and mining communities (Wards 21, 22 and 26), farming and plantation communities (Wards 18 and 23) and a rural community (Ward 25). The constituency has been a political battleground every election cycle in recent years, and the 2022 by-elections will be no exception.

Mutasa South Constituency, which had been represented by former headmaster and MDC Alliance candidate Regai Tsunga, is one of ZANU PF's top target seats in the March, 26 by-elections. Mutasa South is historically a swing constituency, with the seat switching between ZANU PF and MDC-T between 2005 and 2008. In 2013, ZANU PF (8,963 votes) subsequently won the constituency benefitting from intra-party fighting in the MDC-T who split the opposition vote between MDC-T candidate Mischek Kagurabadza (7,932 votes) and, then Independent Candidate Regai Tsunga (1,694 votes). In 2018, ZANU PF narrowly

lost the constituency by 2,047 votes owing to a strong showing by Mutare native and ZANU PF candidate Mischek Mugadza among the rural and peri-urban areas in the constituency, while the MDC Alliance candidate captured the urban vote and benefitted from the lack of an MDC-T candidate to split the opposition vote. With an increase in voter apathy amongst the urban youth following the 2018 Harmonised Elections, this could impact the strength of the urban vote.

Mutasa South has witnessed an influx of artisanal gold miners around the Penhalonga and Odzi areas which have become highly politicised and contested in a bid to control extraction and trade, with the threat of removal used for political leverage. The presence of the 3 Brigade Army Barracks within the constituency poses a potential threat, with concerns that the military could be used to interfere in the by-election and influence the result as the outcome is too close to call.

ST MARY'S CONSTITUENCY

ST MARY'S CONSTITUENCY		
REASON FOR BY-ELECTION	Recall of Unganai Tarusenga (MDC Alliance)	
LOCAL AUTHORITY VACANCIES	N/A	

Polling Stations	Registered Voters	2018 Winning Party	2013 Winning Party	2008 Winning Party
40	29 453	MDC ALLIANCE	MDC-T	MDC-T

St Mary's constituency comprises St Mary's and Chitungwiza. It is approximately 30 km south of Harare. The constituency is densely populated, a feature of high-density suburbs. The constituency has 6 wards which are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 with wards 2 and 3 controlled by ZANU PF following MDC Alliance's failure to field candidates in both wards during the 2018 Harmonised Election.

Historically, the MDC T won the constituency in 2008 with a margin of 45%. However, following the 2008 election, there has been a gradual decline in the margin of victory for the opposition, with the margin of victory declining in 2013 to 12% with a further reduction to 11% in the 2018 election. The MDC Alliance won the 2018 election by a margin of 2,781 votes with a voter turnout of approximately 85.5%. While, outside of the 2 main political parties, MDC Alliance and ZANU PF, political parties and independents hold a large stake within the constituency, holding a 22.4% and can be influential and determinant in the upcoming by-election.

Characteristically, in urban areas, opposition parties especially the MDC Alliance have experienced a turnout advantage. The gradual decline in the margin of victory and an increase in voter apathy particularly among the youth makes the constituency of particular interest for the 26 March by-elections. Voter apathy has been on the rise since the 2018 elections highlighted by the low voter turnout, approximately 28%, recorded in the 2019 by-election in Ward 24, Chitungwiza Municipality.

NKULUMANE CONSTITUENCY

NKULUMANE CONSTITUENCY		
REASON FOR BY-ELECTION	Recall of Kucaca Phulu (MDC Alliance)	
LOCAL AUTHORITY	N/A	

Polling Stations	Registered Voters	2018 Winning Party	2013 Winning Party	2008 Winning Party
36	21 896	MDC ALLIANCE	MDC-T	MDC-T

Since 2000 no other party has won the Nkulumane constituency in any election. But the MDC Alliance's dominance of the constituency has loosened, with MDC Alliance's support dropping from 62% in the 2013 elections to 45.3% in the 2018 harmonised election while ZANU PF support only increased by 1.44%, from 21.96% to 23.40% within the same period. The reduction in MDC Alliance's support within the constituency can be attributed to an increase in the support of other political formations and independents outside of ZANU PF and MDC Alliance, which stood at 28.9% of the total valid votes cast.

Voter turnout has been a key strategy for the opposition within the Bulawayo Province, however, the constituency and region has in recent years suffered from an increased electoral apathy with registration standing at approximately 60% of the potential registrants. Additionally, voter turnout has waned within Bulawayo in recent times which could potentially impact on the strength of the opposition vote. In the Bulawayo Municipality ward 28 by-election voter turnout stood at 18.89% with the MDC Alliance votes dropping from 8514 to 1499 between the 2018 harmonised election and the 2019 by-election, which resulted in ZANU PF capturing the council seat.

The presence of former War-Veteran leader and firebrand ZANU PF Provincial Chairperson Jabulani Sibanda who is a resident in Nkulumane could galvanise ZANU PF's mobilization efforts within the constituency. Jabulani Sibanda was instrumental in

mobilizing support for ZANU PF under the “*Million-Man Mugabe Marches*”. Voter mobilization efforts are effective at increasing turnout. Additionally, the presence of Jabulani Sibanda increases the chances of politically motivated violence, with Sibanda accused of allegedly spearheading political violence on various occasions.

GOKWE CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY

GOKWE CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY		
REASON FOR BY-ELECTION	Appointment of Victor Matemadanda as Ambassador	
LOCAL AUTHORITY	N/A	

Polling Stations	Registered Voters	2018 Winning Party	2013 Winning Party	2008 Winning Party
46	29 597	ZANU PF	ZANU PF	ZANU PF

Gokwe comprises Njelele, Gokwe and Gwavava. The constituency was pruned in the 2008 delimitation and a number of new constituencies have grown out of it. Gokwe is a dry region and cotton remains the main crop area. The constituency had 22,669 registered voters in 2005 whilst in 2008, the constituency had 24,172 registered voters. In 2018, the number of registered voters increased to 29,597. In the last elections, the opposition tried to win over Gokwe Central constituents to its cause. But despite getting closer in 2018 with ZANU PF winning by a margin of 1,790 votes, the mood like the majority of rural constituencies remains a stronghold for the ruling party. However, with the opposition parties seeking to extend their political influence to rural constituencies, Gokwe Central could be seen as a constituency to kickstart the opposition's rural growth and break ZANU PF's stranglehold within rural constituencies.

EPWORTH

EPWORTH CONSTITUENCY		
REASON FOR BY-ELECTION	Recall of Earthrage Kureva (MDC Alliance)	
LOCAL AUTHORITY VACANCIES	Ward 4	Ward 6

Polling Stations	Registered Voters	2018	2013	2008

		Winning Party	Winning Party	Winning Party
85	72 286	MDC ALLIANCE	ZANU PF	MDC-T

Epworth, is largely an informal settlement 12 kilometres east of Harare, is arguably Zimbabwe's biggest slum settlement and a conduit into Harare for rural to urban migrants. It is a high-density dormitory town administered by the Epworth Local Board. Epworth constituency is constituted by 7 wards, wards 1, 3, 5, under the MDC Alliance control while wards 2 and 7 are controlled by ZANU PF. There are two council vacancies in wards 4 and 6 following recalls of two MDC Alliance councillors on 24 November 2020.

This constituency has challenges which vary from infrastructural bottlenecks and a lack of service delivery. The majority of the people get by as street vendors and informal manufacturers. The constituency electoral history has been marred by electoral violence. The demography of the constituency makes it susceptible to manipulation and abuse by candidates especially of the youthful unemployed citizens. The constituency has been a swing constituency won by MDC-T in 2008, ZANU PF in 2013 and MDC Alliance in 2018. With an aim to retain the Epworth Parliamentary seat, the MDC Alliance (now Citizens Coalition for Change) has re-nominated Earthrage Kureva. But determined to wrestle this seat back following their victory in 2013, the ruling ZANU PF will leverage on recent socio-economic developments including a 2020 drive to facilitate the availing of drivers licenses to Epworth youths to regain the seat.

Despite the marked decrease in the levels of violence witnessed in 2008, the potential for political violence within the constituency remains pervasive. The constituency's potential for violence remains of concern, with the constituency historically a hotspot for inter and intra party political violence. The threat of violence could shape civilian attitudes towards the by-elections.

Released by ERC on 23/01/2022

