

# Zimbabwe Election Support Network

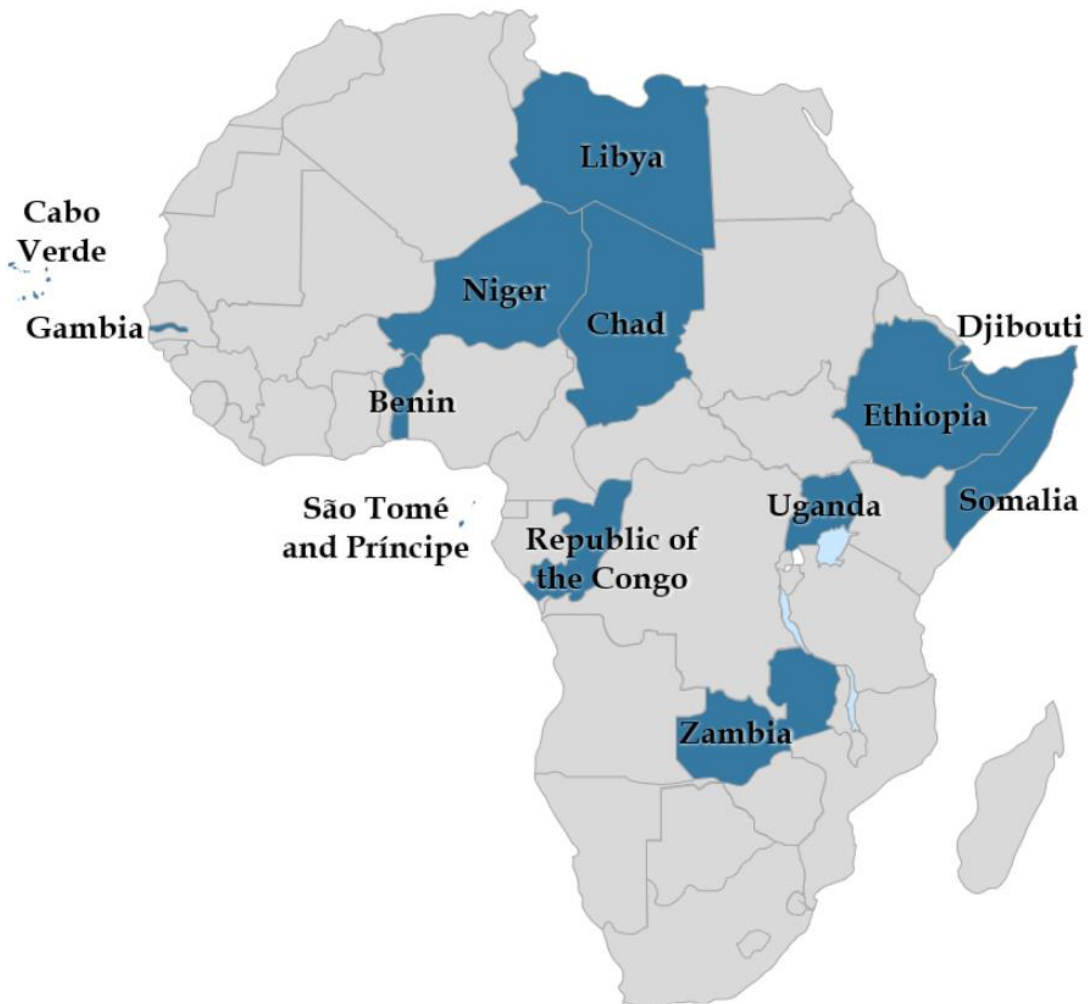


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*Monitoring Government Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic*

2021 Update # 10

## Elections in Africa in 2021



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers developments that occurred in the last two weeks of November and the first two weeks of December 2021, as reported by ZESN LTOs. ZESN hopes that the report will complement the information available for use in the development and reinforcement of strategies aimed at safeguarding the health of citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The period saw an increase in the number of people contracting the COVID-19 virus. For example, there were 40 new cases on 28/11/2021; 255 new cases on 29/11/2021; 399 new cases on 30/11/2021; 712 new cases on 01/12/2021; 1042 new cases on 02/12/2021; 1062 new cases on 03/12/2021; and 1082 new cases on 04/12/2021.<sup>1</sup>

On 30 November, President Mnangagwa addressed the nation on COVID-19 related developments. In the wake of the discovery of the Omicron variant in South Africa, a 14-day mandatory quarantine of all travellers entering the country, including

returning residents, was imposed. The President said that “all returning residents and visitors have to undergo PCR testing, and will be quarantined at own cost, for days recommended by WHO, even if they present negative PCR test results from elsewhere.”

Additional measures announced include: a revised curfew from 9 pm to 6 am, restriction of access to nightclubs and bars to vaccinated patrons, supervision of all COVID-19 related funerals by health ministry officials.

On 8 December, in Victoria Falls, President Mnangagwa said that the country had entered into the fourth wave of COVID-19.

### 1.1 MINISTRY OF HEALTH SUMMARY UPDATES

As of 21 December 2021, Zimbabwe had 197 768 confirmed cases, 144 747 recoveries and 4 819 deaths. To date, a total of 4 069 026 people have been vaccinated against COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

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<https://twitter.com/nickmangwana/status/1467325936232284164?s=20>

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[https://twitter.com/MoHCCZim/status/1473430645435162627?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwtgr%5Etweet](https://twitter.com/MoHCCZim/status/1473430645435162627?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwtgr%5Etweet)

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

During the period covered by the report, ZESN LTOs reported the following:

### 2.1 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE HEALTH SECTOR

Whereas local health facilities were reported to have continued offering services as before the COVID-19 era, reports of drug shortages were received from some constituencies such as Mt Darwin South, Muzarabani, Goromonzi North, Chimanimani West, Glen View North, Gutu South, Mutare North, Masvingo Urban, Mt Darwin West, Mazowe North, Masvingo West, and Magunje Constituencies.



According to the LTO reports, women were receiving antenatal and postnatal treatment at health facilities in their constituencies.

### 2.2 ACCESSIBILITY OF CLEAN WATER

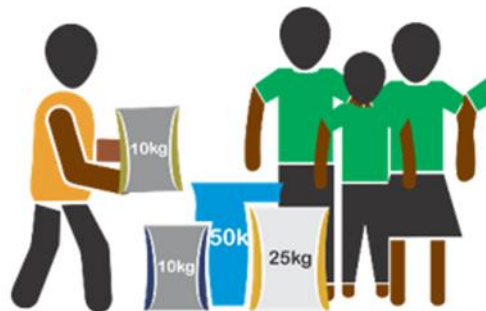
LTOs reported that there was a challenge of access to clean water in some constituencies such as Makokoba, Pumula, Makoni South, Chikomba West, Umguza, Chiredzi South, Epworth, and Gokwe Sesame constituencies. It is harder for citizens to maintain basic hygienic practices such as regular washing of hands wherever they encounter difficulties in accessing portable.

### 2.3 FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION

The government and some non-governmental actors were involved in food aid distribution interventions reported on by LTOs.

Food aid distribution by the Social Welfare Department was reported in Chiwundura, Gokwe Chireya, Chimanimani West, Zaka Central, Mwenezi East, Masvingo South, Chivi South, and Gwanda Central constituencies, among others. The

quantities ranged from 10 kgs to 50 kgs of maize, and millet in some cases.



In Mutare West, Action Aid, under the World Food Program, gave beneficiaries 50 kgs of maize, 5 litres of cooking oil, 3 kgs of beans for a family of five. Oxfam and Intwasa (Agritex branch) distributed sorghum, peas, cooking oil, among other things in Mangwe. In Mhondoro-Ngezi, Zimplats gave the elderly and those with disabilities 25 kgs of mealie meal and 2 kgs of beans.

In Kariba, World Vision gave beneficiaries grocery vouchers valued at USD 12 per beneficiary. The vouchers are redeemable at some supermarkets where beneficiaries should only buy food items such as mealie meal, cooking oil, sugar, flour, beans, and vegetables. The same was reported for Chipinge Central with Plan International implementing. Lean Season (a Non

Governmental Organisation also distributed food aid in Mwenezi West.

## 2.4 ELECTIONS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Unofficial pronouncements by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and Government officials indicated that the indefinite suspension of by-elections is likely to be lifted in March 2022.

During the reporting period, ZEC issued a press statement notifying stakeholders that the Commission's offices countrywide would be temporarily closed from 11 to 19 December 'as a measure to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus among internal and external stakeholders. Nevertheless before this announcement ZESN LTOs has reported the visible presence of ZEC officials in various constituencies who were either conducting stakeholder engagement meetings or pre-delimitation related fieldwork.

ZEC has also held radio programs on most community radio stations countrywide to raise awareness of pertinent electoral

activities that are either ongoing or will commence in the following year.

## 2.5 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES DURING LOCKDOWN

It was evident from the LTO reports that both ZANU-PF and MDC-Alliance held meetings in various parts of the country during the reporting period. However, several reports were received of disruptions of MDC-Alliance meetings. Such disruptions were reported in Lupane East, Bindura and most recently in Hatfield constituency where the party was hosting a charity event for the elderly.

ZANU-PF meetings were reported in Warren Park, Chimanimani West, Chikomba East, Harare East, Mutoko South, Mutare North, Masvingo Urban, Mberengwa East, and Kadoma constituencies. MDC Alliance meetings were reported in the Chimanimani West constituency.

In Chivi Central, ZANU-PF District Coordination Committee (DCC) elections were reportedly postponed on account of

intraparty violence. ZANU-PF held re-runs of district-level elections in some constituencies such as Zvimba West.

LTOs reported visible campaigns by incumbent MPs for Mutare West, Bikita South Constituency and by aspiring candidates for the Marondera East Constituency National Assembly seat.

## 3. HIGHLIGHTS OF ZESN ACTIVITIES

During the reporting period ZESN conducted several activities.

From 13-17 December, ZESN participated in the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Legislative Alignment workshop which identified sections of the Electoral Act which have not been aligned to the Constitution and developed proposals on how the different sections could be revised to make them align with the Constitution.

ZESN conducted four community radio programmes encouraging people to register as voters. One video skit<sup>3</sup> was

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<sup>3</sup> ZESN ne P.O BOX INOKUKURUDZIRAI KUNYORESA KUVHOTA <[https://youtu.be/L93B\\_XHERxU](https://youtu.be/L93B_XHERxU)>

produced on voter registration as well. To raise awareness of key electoral processes, ZESN also produced wall calendars and branded caps with important voter education messages. An animation video<sup>4</sup> on the voter registration process was also produced and disseminated on different social media platforms.

ZESN embarked on a social media campaign during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence<sup>5</sup>. Part of the campaign included the production and distribution of still images with messages against gender violence. In addition, ZESN participated in a classic 263 radio program that discussed the manifestations of gender-based violence in elections. To commemorate International Human Rights Day ZESN prepared and disseminated a statement on the same.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Political parties should retrain their supporters whenever political party activities are being held to eliminate intra-party violence.

- People should continue to adhere to COVID-19 prevention protocols, particularly during the festive season.
- Government should ensure the supply of adequate medication at health centres across the country.
- Local authorities and ZINWA should ensure the availability and accessibility of clean water to communities around the country.

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<https://twitter.com/i/status/1471056221658619909>

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<https://twitter.com/ZESN1/status/1469725598104834052/photo/1>