



Zambia Elections Information Centre

ZEIC

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ZEIC WEEKLY REPORT

16th July to 21st July 2016



Report by
Zambia Elections Information Centre

INTRODUCTION

Zambia will hold tripartite elections in less than 30 days and all eyes are on the Electoral Commission of Zambia as people assess how prepared the country really is to hold a successful, free and fair election.

Elections being a process that has key components such as, campaign period, Election Day, ballot counting, announcement of results, declaring of the winners, and in some instances presentation of complaints regarding the election outcome, Zambia comes under the spotlight especially that it is administratively divided into ten provinces and has 107 district councils into which fall the 156 constituencies that are the units of political representation in the national assembly.

With this backdrop, the task that the Electoral Commission of Zambia has, is a mammoth one and as the Zambia Elections Information Centre, we're in existence to ensure that certain basic minimums that can be implemented to ensure that the election process is as conducive and ideal as possible, are highlighted through our ICT-based information platforms to allow citizens to actively engage on the electoral process.

Our aim is to improve the quality of elections through sharing inform with the aim of addressing shortfalls so that a more informed and participatory citizenry is mobilized. We also aim to engage with key stakeholders in efforts to resolve the challenges that may arise as the process unfolds in real time or near real time. Our key areas of focus as ZEIC on monitoring the following components of the election cycle are;

- 1. Media Monitoring**
- 2. Campaign Financing**
- 3. Citizen's views**
- 4. Election observation**

The past weeks, ZEIC in recognizing that one of its roles is to compliment the work of the Electoral Mother body and not sabotage it, gathered key concerns from the general public regarding the electoral process as well as areas that might be of interest to them.

- ❖ Timing and Content of the Referendum on Bill of Rights
- ❖ Election Campaign Violence
- ❖ The Role of Public Media as per the electoral code of conduct
- ❖ Quality of ECZ voter education facilitators
- ❖ Corruption
- ❖ Police Action as per ECZ campaign ban
- ❖ Independence and transparency of the ECZ
- ❖ Voters register

STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE TO ELECTION VIOLENCE

- ❖ Reports from the 2323 SMS Short code that citizens use to send alerts and information to the Centre during this period had 1, 292 impressions of the word 'violence' and 589 for 'peace'.
- ❖ The violence that has rocked the elections period, the peak being 8th July, 2016 were a United Party for National Development (UPND) supporter identified as Mapenzi was allegedly shot by the police has driven various stakeholders take initiative to act.
- ❖ The Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) on 19th July, 2016 organized a march for peace in Lusaka, supported by Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and Non-Governmental Organizations Coordinating Council (NGOCC).
- ❖ The theme of the march was "Peace and Unity in Diversity".
- ❖ The LAZ march was well attended and had a notable turn out of women who made up a good number of the people in the crowd.
- ❖ The crowds was diverse in terms of ages, race, religious affiliations as well as gender.
- ❖ It was noted that the political leaders of opposition party UPND party president Hakainde Hichilema and Guy Scott were amongst the marchers.

- ❖ Users of the platform who interacted with a picture shared were happy to see political leaders take part in such causes, however it was noted that it seemed leaders, especially of bigger parties often turn up their noses on events that are not considered “big” gatherings.
- ❖ The speeches given within the cathedral where the marchers gathered after their walk spoke against violence.
- ❖ Mrs. Mwangala Zaloumis called for the church to do more than pray but be brutally honest with political leaders around election violence.
- ❖ The Twitter hash tag #LAZPeaceWalk allowed users of the platform to follow the proceedings online.
- ❖ The general view from the ICT platforms was that of appreciating the initiatives such as peace walks more action needed to be taken to hold accountable the Zambia Police as well as the political leaders.
- ❖ It was announced that an investigation was being opened to look into the death of Mapenzi who was allegedly shot by police earlier in July.
- ❖ This announcement was met by claps in cheers from the attendees of the peace march.
- ❖ On the 18th July, 2016 Kitwe town saw Young Women in Action with National Democratic Institute (NDI), Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), YWA hold a Solidarity March with youth of different political parties.
- ❖ This solidarity march had youth of the two biggest opposing parties, PF and UPND marching together peacefully dressed in their individual party regalia.

ECZ UPDATE ON PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS IN DUBAI

With less than 25 days to go before elections, the general feeling towards the Electoral Commission of Zambia as of last week was one of mistrust and disappointment with some of the findings in the report from the audit of the Voter's Register causing concerned citizens to question the system of registration.

This week, on the 20th of July, 2016 the ECZ released a video briefing on their Facebook page informing the nation on the successful printing of the ballot papers

in Dubai as well as letting it be known that they were now finalizing the freight arrangements for the ballot papers.

Highlights of this announcement were as follows:

- ❖ Ballot papers were successfully printed and packed
- ❖ However, the National Assembly as well as Local Government ballot papers were yet to be packed
- ❖ This information was shared on the ZEIC Twitter and Facebook page but did not generate any debate with regard to why the papers were not all completed at the same time.

The history of the ballot papers being printed in United Arab Emirates, Dubai and not South Africa as in previous elections, caused some controversy earlier in the first half of the year when it was announced that the contract to print ballot papers was with Al Ghurair in Dubai, despite it being at a higher cost than the previous printers.

END OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN SUSPENSION PERIOD

The ECZ on 9th July, 2016 imposed a 10 days suspension period on election campaigns that ended on the 18th of July, 2016. The campaigns were suspended in Namwala and Lusaka districts which are known for escalating violence during such periods of time.

The ban was lifted in a Press Release from ECZ who further stated there was need for the political parties to be peaceful during the remainder of the campaign period.

We engaged with the users of our ICT platforms on what they were hoping to see now that the ban was lifted and also after a week that saw peace walks done in the name of peace and unity.

- ❖ Of the Twitter users who responded to us, some said there was indeed much louder activity in Lusaka city with more cars carrying campaigners in cars seen moving about the roads with political party anthems coming out of the speakers.

- ❖ There were opinions that ECZ failed to implement the ban as some platform users had in the days of the ban alerted ZEIC of having allegedly seen political party campaign vehicles moving through the city of Lusaka.

Other opinions that the platform received said that it was too early to tell if the ban had indeed made the perpetrators of violence remorseful or if the messages of peace spread in the walks carried out had indeed sank in the hearts of the people.

WHAT ZEIC HAS DONE IN SUMMARY

In the build up to poll day, we have endeavored to provide platforms not only for citizens to voice out on issues they are passionate about, but also package this information for the attention of the various institutions tasked to ensure that the election process is administered accordingly. A key milestone this week has been intensifying and validating a working relationship with more of our partners by coordinating better with them and ensuring that our team is sent out to cover events and activities that they have around the elections.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Zambia Elections Information Centre has established itself as an impartial source of information on elections in Zambia where public discourse has been enhanced and a more politically involved and active citizenry is being shaped ahead of elections. Our aim is to ensure that citizens, organizations, management bodies, observers and monitors all understand their role in the election process so as to create a more accessible and conducive political environment.

The key areas of consideration for us going forward are to:

- ❖ Address the ways which anti violence movements can be seen as more all-inclusive by reaching grass root level in areas where these acts of violence actually happen.
- ❖ To engage Church Mother bodies so that they educate the public on what their role is in elections and inspire confidence as most of our interactive followers have indicated losing confidence in churches and church leaders because they appear compromised and infiltrated by political agendas

- ❖ Continue to stimulate public debate on key issues around the election process in Zambia by directly engaging ordinary Zambian citizens and connecting them directly to government, management bodies and Civil Society organizations through ICT based platforms, Social Media, Radio and TV.
- ❖ To organize a presidential debate that will allow the citizens to hear for themselves what their leaders are offering. Also, a possible better alternative to campaigns as they have been marred with violence that has been escalating.

TOPIC IDEA FOR CONSIDERATION

ZEIC can attempt to engage the leadership of the two political parties that are seemingly at the centre of the brewing violence and escalating tensions in the countries, the PF and the UPND.

This would inspire more public debate and engagement on what people wish to see in the election process directly with the people involved and give immediate feedback since the shows are live on radio and TV. It may also help various stakeholders in the election process bridge the gaps that citizens are concerned about.

PANELISTS IDEA FOR CONSIDERATION

We would suggest that a former ECZ Commissioner & former Police Commissioner feature in the event that the current serving individuals are unavailable along with a citizen and a representative from ZEIC to discuss issues that are escalating tensions on the ground and how best to diffuse them.

WEB AND SMS PLATFORMS USAGE

There have been a cumulative xxx SMS reports, xxx web reports to ZEIC platforms as of 21/07/2016

No.	Platform	SMS Report	Web Report
1.	Citizens		
2.	Media		
3.	Observer		
4.	TIZ		

Twitter

No.	Platform	Details	Statistics
1	Tweet impressions (number of times users saw the Tweet on Twitter)	45,200	7,000 impressions per day
2	Engagement rate(clicks, retweets, replies, follows and likes divided by total impressions)	1.3%	More engagement of 0.8% less compared to prior week
3	Link clicks	27	Average 5 link clicks per day
4	Retweets (sharing of a post by other users)	201	Average 34 Retweets per day
5	Likes (affirmation/bookmark of content)	107	Average 33 Likes per day
6	Replies (responses to posts)	112	Average 19 replies per day

Facebook

No.	Platform	Details	Statistics
1	Page Likes	15,607	1,607 new likes within this week 1,150 page views
2	Posts	394	257 likes on posts this week 19 comments 59 shares 96,274 people reached
3	Page impressions	20,860 people reached	Audience age range between 25-34 Audience mostly use mobile devices
4	Videos	44 video views	83% decrease in views possibly due to fact that not that much our Facebook video content is old

Instagram

No.	Platform	Details	Statistics
1	Followers	254	Avg of 5 new followers per week
2	Posts for the week	9	Avg 1 Post a day
3	Likes per week	28	Avg of 3 likes per post

WhatsApp

No.	Platform	Details	Statistics
1	Violence cases: it has been noted that during the run up to the elections a number of reports on violence have been recorded.	Fourth week of July 2016	5-6 violence cases reported on a weekly basis around Zambia.
2	Media reporting and press freedom	Fourth week of July 2016	Discussed at least 2 times
3	Bill of Rights and Referendum: Citizens of Zambia share concerns on the lack of knowledge and clarity on the BOF and Referendum.	Fourth week of July 2016	Discussed on platform at least 6-7 times

YouTube

No.	Platform	Details	Statistics
1	Subscribers	3	0% growth in subscribers over period
2	Videos	4	Total views 51