



Zambia Elections Information Centre

ZEIC

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ZEIC WEEKLY REPORT

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Report by
Zambia Elections Information Centre

INTRODUCTION

Zambia will hold tripartite elections in less than 14 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 REFERENDUM ON THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Media Institute Southern Africa (MISA) held a discussion on the Referendum on the Bill of Rights on 27th July, 2016 in efforts to further inform the public on the document. This talk was held at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre and broadcast live on 5FM 89.9 MHz.

The coming Referendum is still a hot topic on and around the platform. Evident from the Whatsapp group Citizen Engage where topics like violence have seen a slight decline in recurrence in the conversation cycle (see table), the Referendum on Bill of Rights has not shown any signs letting up. Reports from the 2323 SMS Short code that citizens use to ask questions, send alerts and information to the Centre during this period had **1, 828 impressions of the word 'Referendum' and 709 for 'Bill of Rights'**.

- ❖ The audience consisted mainly of students from different schools of the University of Zambia as well as a few members of the general public.

- ❖ The panel of discussants were Ms. Sara Longwe NGOCC who was for the Bill of Rights. Their organization which champions women and girls rights would like to see the bill pass as it improves the lives of these groups.
- ❖ Mr. Chipenzi an elections expert who is against the Referendum on basis of timing as well as process.
- ❖ Mr. Ntewewe Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) representative also for the YES vote described the bill as progressive and saw no reason why the people want to throw away their power by voting NO.
- ❖ Mr. Mwitwa of Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) maintained the position that the association has and has expressed at discussions like the #ZeicLazForum.
- ❖ LAZ are pro YES vote as they feel although the bill is not what was hoped for it has more positive than negatives to it.
- ❖ The voices remain unchanged in views from the various talks held on and around the Referendum on the Bill of Rights with those for against it.
- ❖ The audience interactions were mainly that of disappointment with organizations who say that the Referendum should be voted YES as they seemed to be forcing the yes vote on the people as opposed to educating them on the entire bill and letting them decide on their own terms.
- ❖ One audience member said he was personally disappointed in the way organizations like LAZ were misleading the people onto voting yes on a document that is according to him, flawed.

- ❖ A lot of feedback and confusion around the bill is on the fact that if voted YES the Bill goes to Parliament where they have the final say, this was brought up by an audience member who said ideally the YES vote should be final.
- ❖ The spill over conversation around the debate on our ICT platforms were not different from the weeks prior, complaints of timing and content of the Referendum are still a contentious issue for the majority of the people.
- ❖ However, a Twitter poll that asked if people felt more knowledgeable on the Referendum on Bill of Rights in light of the several open forums it held around it, the final result was 53% YES and 47% NO.

ECZ ARRIVAL OF BALLOT PAPERS FROM DUBAI U.A.E

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) is still not popular with majority of the people with whom the ZEIC platform engages with as well as with a few organization whose events we have attended.

The ECZ shares a statement giving the expected date and time of arrival for the ballot papers. We were at the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, Lusaka when the first consignment of ballot papers arrived on 28th July, 2016 14: 15 hours and the second at 18:25 hours.

- ❖ Ballot papers were successfully received at the airport by ECZ Commissioner Justice Esau Chulu in view of various stakeholders like media houses as well as political party representatives.
- ❖ Rainbow Party as well as United Party for National Development (UPND) representatives Patrick Phiri and Joseph Lungu, whom we spoke to respectively, both felt the receiving of the ballot papers was successful.
- ❖ The Twitter hashtag #BallotPapersArrive was used to help users follow activity at the airport.

- ❖ The engagement that followed this saw some platform users commend the ECZ on the transparency of the printing as well as the arrival of the ballot papers.
- ❖ The ECZ had during the printing process shared statements and videos with the public on each major stage of the process.
- ❖ The itinerary of the arrival of the cargo plane with ballot papers was made public by the ECZ, this further saw some praise of their openness in the whole process.
- ❖ The engagements on the opposite end were those that still criticize the ECZ for printing the ballot papers in Dubai and not using Government Printers as would have been expected.

PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE AND LUSAKA MAYORAL DEBATE

There have been calls for debates for presidential candidates and other aspirants of political office in the upcoming election in efforts to allow the public to be better informed on what each of the parties bring. This week saw a Presidential Running mate and a Lusaka Mayoral Debate happen.

- ❖ The platform had asked its users what they would like to see as an ideal election, amongst responses were need for issue based campaigns as well as debates.
- ❖ Prior to any such debate occurring views expressed by the ZEIC platform users had some people voice out how bigger political parties often shun public debate appearances.
- ❖ This behavior of absenteeism was described as disrespectful by another user, as to how some political parties felt it a waste of time to talk on issues as opposed to going out to campaign.

- ❖ These remarks were highlighted when the Presidential Running mate on 27th July, 2016 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre on saw only six of the nine political parties participate.
- ❖ Parties present were FDD, UNIP, Greens, UPP,PAC and Rainbow Party. Notably absent were the PF, UPND and DA parties.
- ❖ The Lusaka Mayoral Debate at Mulungushi International Conference Centre was organized by Chevening Alumni Association of Zambia on 28th July, 2016.
- ❖ Present were all but one of nine candidates who are hoping to become mayor.
- ❖ Candidates present were Dr. Maureen Mwanawasa UPND, Mrs. Muntanga FDD, Rev Banda UNIP, Wilson Kalumba PF, Mr.Maiseke, Mr.Fisho Mwale and Mr. Elias Mpondela all Independent candidates.
- ❖ The debate did see issue based discussions take place, questions on housing, water sanitation, council fees and tax were discussed, and bringing depth to the campaigning season as hoped for by some of our platform users.
- ❖ However, the pattern for debates has been that of small to medium sized audience in attendance and also, some of these debates are not aired on national television or radio potentially narrowing their reach.

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 an attempt be made to get the 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. Also to help give confidence to the electorate that there will be peace during the election as well as when election results are announced.

WEB AND SMS PLATFORMS USAGE

There have been a cumulative xxx SMS reports, xxx web reports to ZEIC platforms as of 29/07/2016

NO.	PLATFORM	SMS REPORT	WEB REPORTS
1.	Citizens		
2.	Media		
3.	Observer		
4.	TIZ		

Twitter

NO.	TOPIC	DETAILS	STATISTICS
1.	Tweet impressions (number of times users saw the Tweet on Twitter)	169, 600	21, 800 impressions per day
2.	Engagement rate (clicks, retweets, replies, follows and likes divided by total impressions)	2.0%	0.7 % More engagement compared to prior week

NO.	TOPIC	DETAILS	STATISTICS
3.	Link clicks	86	Average 11 link clicks per day
4.	Retweets (sharing of a post by other users)	827	Average 103 Retweets per day
5.	Likes (affirmation/bookmark of content)	816	Average 102 Likes per day
6.	Replies (responses to posts)	526	Average 66 replies per day

Facebook

NO.	TOPIC	DETAILS	STATISTICS (Last 30 days)
1.	Page Likes	16,000	720 new likes within this week 1,074 page views
2.	Posts	403	206 likes on posts this week 43 comments 9 shares 155, 124 people reached
3.	Page impressions	155, 124 people reached	Audience age range between 25-34 Audience mostly use mobile devices
4.	Videos	5 video views	78 % decrease in views possibly due to fact that most of our Facebook video content is old

Instagram

NO.	Item	Details	STATISTICS
1.	Followers	257	Avg of 5 new followers per week
2.	Posts for the week	13	Avg 2 Post a day
3.	Likes per week	76	Avg of 5 likes per post

WhatsApp

NO.	TOPIC	PERIOD REPORT	OF	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		1-2 violence cases reported on a weekly basis around Zambia. There has been a significant drop in violence reports after campaign were reopened after the ten day suspension period.
2.	Media reporting and press freedom	Fourth week of July 2016		Discussed at least once
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.	Item	Details	STATISTICS
1.	Subscribers	4	33 % growth in subscribers over period
2.	Videos	4	96 Total views