

CHAIRPERSON'S BRIEF TO THE MEDIA AT A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2022 AT 1600HRS IN VICTORIA FALLS AT ELEPHANT HILLS HOTEL

Salutation

ZEC Commissioners

The Chief Elections Officer – Mr Utloile Silaigwana

Deputy Chief Elections Officer Knowledge Management and Communication (KMC) - Mrs Jane Pamhidzai Chigidji

Acting Deputy Chief Elections Officer- Operations Ms Mavis Mudiwakure.

ZEC Secretariat

The Media here present and those logged on our Facebook page

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me welcome you all to our first Press Conference in 2022

Ladies and gentlemen this media brief has been organized at the onset of the year so that the Commission can share more details on the major programs, the Commission is confronted with in this first quarter of the year

Ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware the Commission suspended the mobile Biometric Voter Registration exercise slated for the 6th of December in 2021 to allow prospective registrants to acquire national identity documents which are a requisite for the voter registration process.

The Commission could not also hold by-elections as guided by the Ministry of Health Statutory Instrument 225A of 2021 which provided that the environment was not conducive owing to the restrictive measures due to Covid 19 protocols

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to proceed to the details of the impending by-elections and voter registration mobile exercise

CONDUCT OF BY ELECTIONS

Following the Proclamation of 28 Constituency by elections by his Excellency the President of Zimbabwe on the 6th of January 2022, the Commission also issued out notices to fill 122 Local Authorities ward vacancies. In both instances the election road maps were harmonised with nomination courts sitting on 26 January 2022 while polling will take place on 26 March 2022 if it becomes necessary

Preparation for the sitting of Nomination Courts

The Proclamation of National Assembly vacancies fixed the respective Provincial Magistrates Courts as the nomination court venues while the Commission fixed the Nomination court venues for the ward vacancies at the respective Council Boardrooms. Aspiring candidates can now collect and lodge their nomination forms at the Commission offices in their Provinces and Districts. The nomination forms are also available on the Commission Website www.zec.org.zw Potential candidates are encouraged to pre lodge their nomination papers to decongest the nomination Courts. This can be done in the respective ZEC provinces and Districts.'

After sitting of nomination courts on 26 January 2022, the Commission will establish Multi-Party-Liaison Committees to resolve electoral disputes and publish the nomination court results in the Press.

Closure of Voters Roll

The Commission wishes to advise that the voters roll for the proclaimed National Assembly vacancies closed on the 8th of January 2022 (two days after Proclamation) while the voters' roll in respect of the ward elections closed when the vacancies occurred as indicated in published ZEC notices. This however does not mean that Voter Registration for the subsequent elections is closed./ Eligible persons can still be registered as voters as this is an ongoing activity but such persons will NOT be able to vote in the already Proclaimed elections

Roadmap

A comprehensive roadmap is already in place, and will be shared with stakeholders in due course, which provides a trajectory that the electoral processes will follow

MOBILE VOTER REGISTRATION KEY MILESTONES

The mobile voter registration exercise will be conducted in two phases:

First phase: 1-28 February 2022

Second phase: 11- 30 April 2022

The Public should note that deployments will be done per constituency with Voter Education preceding the program to encourage prospective registrants to participate. The public is encouraged to keep track of the Voter Registration itineraries to be advertised in the mainstream media as well as online. CSO's conducting Voter Education and political parties must encourage the public to visit the mobile registration centres nearer them as per advertised itineraries. The Commission will make sure that the information regarding the roll-out will be timeously churned to the public to avoid inconveniences.

As proclaimed, the by-elections will be punctuated by two major stages, which are the nomination process and the Polling process. Prospective candidates and the public are to contact ZEC offices for finer details regarding to these major stages.

Stakeholders are also encouraged to apply for observation of the above programmes (mobile voter registration and by-elections). A notice has already been published calling for applications as observers.

Voter Education

Both by-elections and mobile voter registration will be supported by intensive voter education as a way of preparing the electorate and ensure that they are able and willing to participate. ZEC will roll out the voter education programme in collaboration with stakeholders who have indicated their willingness to conduct voter education through applying to ZEC as provided for in Section 40C of the electoral act.

Covid-19 Preventive Measures

The pending electoral activities will be conducted in line with the ZEC Covid-19 Policy which encourages adherence to internationally agreed Covid 19 protocols. Among other steps, the Commission will ensure sanitisation, masking up, observing social distancing and ZEC will also administer temperature checks at entry points.

CONCLUSION

Allow me ladies and gentlemen to thank you for attending this Press Brief and it is my sincere hope that we will continue meeting regularly on similar forums as we share information on ZEC activities.

I would like to urge the media as a key stakeholder to disseminate accurate and balanced information to the citizens to make informed choices. Let's shun hate speech, malformation and falsehoods and uphold journalistic principles based on truth, honesty, accuracy balance and objectivity

Thank you