



CSOs CALL FOR ACCREDITATION OF CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (CRV) MONITORS

PRESS RELEASE

1 July 2022

(For Immediate Release)

We the undersigned CSOs are saddened by the Electoral Commission of Zambia's (ECZ) position to not accredit citizen monitors to monitor the continuous registration of voters since the commencement of the exercise on 1 June, 2022.

The ECZ informed stakeholders that the commission will not allow monitors access to registration centers to monitor the ongoing registration of voters stating that the exercise is being implemented in an office environment which space may not be adequate to accommodate monitors. However, following concerns raised by stakeholders about this pronouncement, the Chief Electoral Officer assured CSOs during a ECZ stakeholders' briefing held in Lusaka on 31 May 2022 that the commission would be open and available to engage stakeholders on working out modalities for facilitating citizen monitoring of the ongoing registration of voters. To this effect, we the undersigned CSOs sought a meeting with the ECZ and on 14 June 2022, we submitted to the ECZ a proposal of modalities on monitoring registration of voters that would not cause overcrowding of registration offices or indeed interference with the process. CCMG's observers who were initially allowed to observe the voter registration process on Friday, June 3 and later asked to leave by the ECZ officials confirmed that the issue was not that there was little space in the registration centres/offices or that they were a disturbance but simply that they had not received ECZ accreditation.

“What is important is for ECZ to acknowledge the principle of electoral process monitoring and provide a guiding framework on how stakeholders can effectively monitor registration of voters and not to deny accreditation on the basis of operating space”



We are of the view that the current position maintained by the ECZ erodes the transparency, accountability, and credibility of the CRV process and is inconsistent with the *Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation in the SADC Region* which provides that critical electoral processes such as voter registration should promote broad participation and should not inhibit the participation of all stakeholders. We continue to make a clarion call to the ECZ to codify the rights of accredited monitors and observers in the legal framework for elections to guarantee the ability of citizen monitors to observe critical electoral processes such as the continuous registration of voters exercise for transparency and accountability.

In conclusion, the commission should note that nonpartisan citizen monitoring of electoral processes including voter registration (both continuous and mobile) helps to ensure electoral integrity, strengthens citizen participation, and promotes evidence-based advocacy and therefore, it is imperative that the commission accredits, without limitations, interested and qualified monitors as this will help build public confidence in the process. We strongly call on the ECZ to immediately facilitate accreditation of monitors to be allowed access to registration centres to monitor the registration of voters for the reasons outlined herein.

Fr. Emmanuel Chikoya

CCMG-Steering Committee Chairperson

Signed for and on behalf of the following CSOs:

Operation Young Vote

GEARS Initiative Zambia

Zambia National Women's Lobby

Centre for Young Leaders in Africa-Zambia

Zambia Federation of Disabilities Organisation