



Pre-Election Observation Statement for 12 July 2024 Ward Councilors By-Elections

Report for the Period 11 – 23 June 2024

*For Immediate Release
28 June 2024*

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) is, in Article 57 (1) of the Constitution of Zambia, mandated to hold elections to fill any vacancy occurring in the office of a Member of Parliament, Mayor, Council Chairperson, and Councilor within 90 days from the date of occurrence. In line with this, the ECZ set 12 July 2024 as the date for the ward by-elections in Mubula Ward (Choma District) and Njame Ward (Chirundu District) of Southern Province, Mulalo and Luchinde Wards (Nakonde District) and Chinama Ward (Kanchibiya District) of Muchinga Province, Lushiba Ward (Kawambwa District) of Luapula Province, Kaminzekenzeke Ward (Mufumbwe District) North-Western Province and Mwenyi and Liumena Wards (Sikongo District) in Western Province.

In contributing to enhanced transparency and accountability of the electoral process in Zambia, the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) recruited, trained, and deployed nine (9) Long-Term Observers (LTOs) to observe the nomination of candidates in their respective wards and pre-election environment including the campaigns. The LTOs observe political activities such as voter education and information, political campaign activities, potential election-related violence, and election-day preparations. CCMG's observers reported on the use of hate speech or any language inciting violence, any instances of intimidation, harassment, or violence during the pre-election period, including any cases of violence against women, and any violations of the electoral code of conduct.

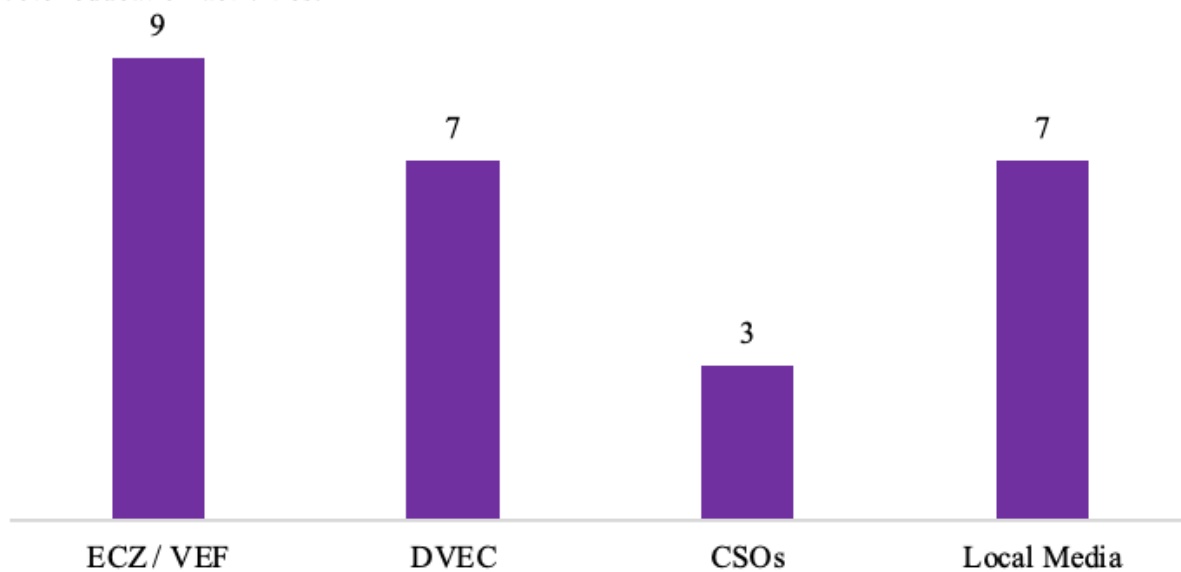
Key Findings

Based on the reports of the nine (9) LTOs in all nine wards covering the period 11 to 23 June, CCMG found the following:

Voter Information/Education: There were significant efforts to inform and educate voters during the observation period, with all nine wards reporting having witnessed or heard of voter education efforts by the ECZ or voter education facilitators, in 7 wards by District Voter Education Committee (DVEC), 7 by local media and 3 wards by civil society and faith-based organizations (CSO/FBOs).

Voter Education Agent

The distribution on the number of wards that the following agents conducted their voter education activities.

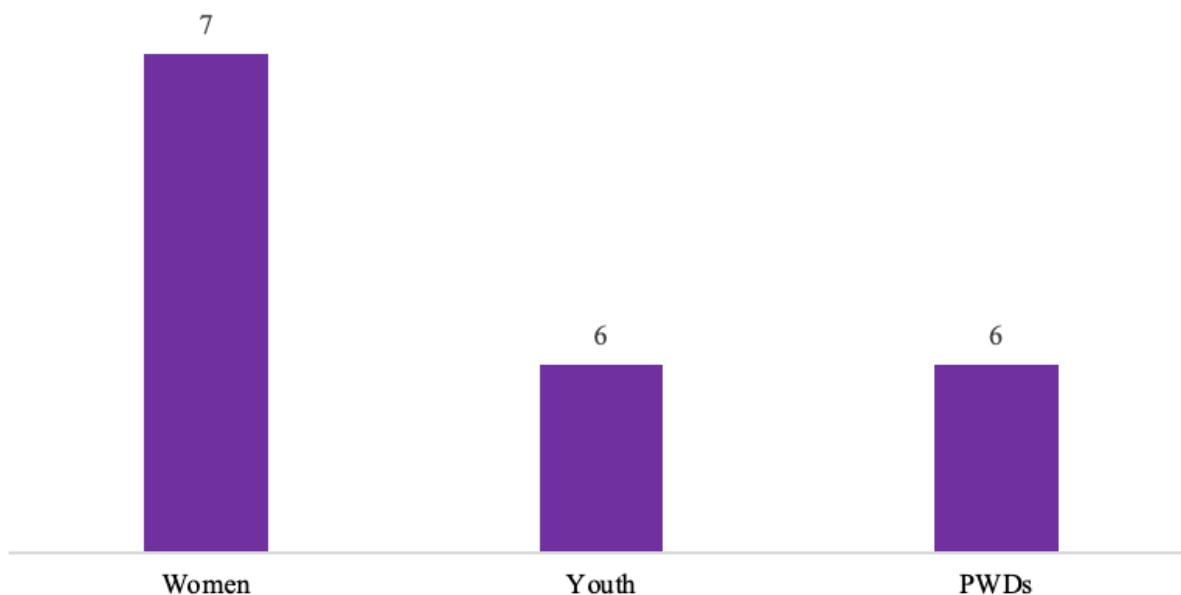


Source: CCMG LTO Data

Additionally, CCMG's LTOs reported having witnessed or heard of voter education information targeting women in seven wards, youth in six wards and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in six wards.

Target of the Voter Education

Distribution of the wards on the target of the voter education to special interest groups.



Source: CCMG LTO Data

Political Party Campaign Activities: CCMG LTOs reported witnessing or hearing of campaign activities by the Citizens First, Patriotic Front (PF), the United Party for National Development (UPND), Socialist Party (SP), Leadership Movement (LM), United National Independence Party (UNIP) and United Prosperous and Peaceful Zambia (UPPZ) including independent candidates. CCMG's LTOs reported incidents of voter inducement by PF and UPND, as detailed in the critical incident section below.

Police Conduct: CCMG's LTOs only reported police providing security to PF, UPND and other parties during campaign activities in Mulalo Ward (Nakonde District, Muchinga Province).

Political Violence/Electoral Code of Conduct Violations: CCMG observers did not witness or hear of any use of hate speech or incitement to violence, violent physical attacks during campaign events, buying of voter's cards, or arming of supporters during this observation period. However, CCMG's LTO reported having heard of UPND cadres dressed in military-like attire at Kaminzekenzeke Market in Kaminzekenzeke Ward (Mufumbwe District, North-Western Province) on 20 June. On 22 June CCMG's LTO witnessed use of a state vehicle and use of a vehicle without number plates for campaign activities by the Western Province Minister in Liumena Ward (Sikongo District, Western Province) in support of UPND activities. The incidents are detailed in the critical incidents section below.

Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are incidents that are serious in nature and which are reported immediately by CCMG observers and on which there is follow-up and verification of all available details. In this reporting period, CCMG received a total of seven (7) critical incident reports, as follows:

Distribution of money, foodstuffs, or other items/goods as an inducement to support (2 incidents)

- On June 12, the LTO in Kaminzekenzeke ward (Mufumbwe District, North-Western Province) reported that PF supporters distributed money to supporters and people in the surrounding areas of the Kanyanta Grounds during a party activity.
- On June 20, the LTO in Liumena Ward (Sikongo District, Western Province) reported that meat distributed from the UPND camp to supporters as an incentive to vote.

Prevention for a party to conduct a campaign activity in a public space by the police (1 incident)

- On June 12, the LTO in Kaminzekenzeke Ward (Mufumbwe District, North-Western Province) reported that the Zambian Police prevented the Socialist Party from conducting their planned campaign activity near the Kaminzekenzeke Polling Station. The party had intended to celebrate their successful nomination on June 11, but the police denied them the permission, claiming it was unnecessary.

Vehicles with no plates (1 incident)

- On June 22, the LTO in Liumena Ward (Sikongo District, Western Province) heard of the use of a vehicle without number plates during a UPND rally held at Liumena Grounds.

Use of state vehicles for campaigns (1 incident)

- On June 22, the LTO in Liumena Ward (Sikongo District, of Western Province) reported sighting a government-plated vehicle with government plates being used by the Western Provincial Minister during a UPND campaign rally at Liumena Grounds.

Collection of NRC details (1 incident)

- On June 17, the LTO in Kaminzekenzeke Ward (Mufumbwe District, North-Western Province) reported that supporters of the PF party collected details of NRC cards in exchange for money.

Overall Assessment and Conclusion

CCMG commends political parties and candidates for their peaceful conduct thus and urges all candidates and their supporters to remain peaceful and adhere to the established campaign schedules. CCMG further urges the Zambia Police to provide security for campaign rallies for all candidates and further calls on the Police to investigate any violations of the electoral code of

conduct. CCMG calls on the Secretary to Treasury to ensure that state vehicles are not used for campaign activities as provided for by law.

Recommendations

Based on its findings from its observation of the pre-election period in the by-elections, CCMG makes the following key recommendations to stakeholders:

Electoral Commission of Zambia

- ECZ should swiftly and transparently investigate all allegations of electoral malpractice in violation of the Electoral Code of Conduct, including those reported in this statement, and determine how to prevent repeated violations in these by-elections and future elections. Acting on this recommendation is within the ECZ's mandate and builds greater accountability in elections.
- ECZ should continue providing voter education and information ahead of the by-elections
- ECZ should, in line with Paragraph 3 (2) of the Electoral Code of Conduct deploy monitors to monitor compliance with the code to enhance enforcement

Zambia Police

- CCMG urges the Zambia Police to provide security to all candidates during their scheduled campaign activities throughout the campaign period. CCMG further calls on the Police to work with the ECZ in enforcing the Electoral Code of Conduct and ensure that violations reported in this report are investigated and perpetrators are sanctioned according to the law.

Political Parties

- CCMG encourages political parties to continue adhering to each ward's campaign schedules as published by the ECZ to maintain a peaceful pre-election period.
- As CCMG's LTOs reported use of a state vehicle and a vehicle without a number plate, CCMG calls on the UPND to desist from using state vehicles as this is a direct violation of Paragraph 3 (1) (b) of the Electoral Code of Conduct
- CCMG commends all candidates and their supporters for their peaceful conduct, and particularly for the issue-based campaigns thus far.

Civil Society Organizations and Faith Based Organisations

- As observers documented a relatively small amount of voter information/education during this observation period by CSOs and FBOs, CSOs should increase efforts in this regard and specifically increase their voter education and information campaigns targeted to the needs of women, youth, and persons with disabilities to enhance their participation in the electoral process.

Media

- As local media made a commendable effort to inform voters during this observation period, CCMG urges public and private media to continue to conduct voter education and information programs aimed at informing citizens of their rights and civic duty to participate in political and electoral processes and to provide information about upcoming elections.

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