



## **CCMG Statement on the Conduct of Voting and Counting for the Mfuwe Parliamentary By-Election Held on 7 August 2025**

*10 August 2025*

### **I. Introduction**

CCMG observed the pre-election period and election day for the Mfuwe Constituency by-election held on 7 August. For the pre-election period, CCMG recruited, trained, and deployed six (6) Long-Term Observers (LTOs) to observe and report on the pre-election environment including preparations by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), political party and candidate campaign activities, voter education/information activities conducted by various stakeholders, among other processes in the lead up to election day. For election day, CCMG recruited, trained, and deployed thirty-six (36) election day monitors to each of the 36 polling stations in Mfuwe Constituency. CCMG's LTOs also deployed as roving/mobile monitors on election day to support their assigned election day monitors and report any critical incidents witnessed or heard of. CCMG's monitors arrived at their assigned polling stations at 05:30 hours and remained there to observe the setup and opening, voting, counting, and the official announcement of results for the polling station.

The objective of CCMG's observation of the by-election was to **enhance transparency** by providing systematic, factual information on the electoral process; **improve accountability** by observing the polling procedures by the Electoral Commission of Zambia; and **promote inclusivity** by giving voters confidence to participate in the electoral process.

### **II. Pre-Election Assessment**

#### ***Voter Education***

There were significant efforts to inform and educate voters during the observation period, with all five wards reporting having witnessed or heard of voter education conducted by the ECZ or Voter Education Facilitators (VEFs), and/or by the District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) in one ward. Additionally, CCMG's LTOs reported having witnessed or heard of voter education information by Mpika Community Radio targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Lupembashi Ward. These messages encouraged voters to bring their National Registration Cards (NRCs) and voter cards to polling stations and warned them against surrendering these documents in exchange for handouts such as money or goods, which could disenfranchise them.

#### ***General Political Environment***

CCMG's LTOs reported having witnessed or heard of campaign activities by the United Party for National Development (UPND), Socialist Party (SP), and National Congress Party (NCP).

## **Electoral Code of Conduct Violations**

CCMG documented six (6) violations of the electoral code of conduct in the pre-election period, detailed below:

- **Collection of Voters' Card Details (information only not taking away the physical cards):**
  - On 15 July, CCMG's observer in Lupembashi Ward reported that unknown men were seen near Mwendachabe Polling Station paying community members ZMW 20 each for details from their NRCs and voters' cards. The men recorded the information and then returned the cards to the owners.
- **Food and Cash Handouts:**
  - On 26 July, CCMG's observer in Lupembashi Ward reported hearing that the UPND aspiring candidate and other party officials distributed money at Chifinshi Primary School. Community members were asked to form groups of ten, and each group received ZMW 200 and were encouraged to vote for the UPND candidate.
  - On 26 July, CCMG's observer heard of the Mafinga District Commissioner going door-to-door in Mwendachabe Village, distributing 25kg bags of mealie meal while campaigning for the UPND candidate.
  - On 28 July, CCMG's observer in Lupembashi Ward reported that the District Commissioner for Mafinga District distributed mealie-meal to community members, and cash to the congregants of Chifinshi Catholic Church in Mwendachabe Village. Congregants received ZMW 10 each and youth conveners received ZMW 100.
  - On 5 August, CCMG's observer in Chikanda Ward witnessed UPND officials distributing cash, with individuals with NRCs and voter's cards reportedly receiving ZMW 100 each, while those without cards received ZMW 20. In addition, the Minister of Youth and Sport was present at this campaign activity and was using a government vehicle, in contravention of the Electoral Code of Conduct.
  - On 6 August, CCMG's observer in Lupembashi Ward reported hearing of UPND cadres distributing food items including nshima and meat to the residents of Mwendachabe Village.

The acts are in contravention of paragraphs 3(1)(b), and 15 (h) and (k) of the Electoral Code of Conduct and Regulation 39 of the Electoral Process (Registration of Voters) Regulations, 2020.

## **III. Election Day Key Findings and Critical Incidents**

Based on reports from CCMG's 36 PRVT monitors and six (6) LTOs, CCMG finds that the Mfuwe Parliamentary by-election was conducted in compliance with national and regional standard procedures for the set-up, voting, and counting processes. However, CCMG documented one (1) critical incident on election day involving the disruption of proceedings at a polling station and violence, detailed below.

- CCMG's Monitor at Kapilya School-01 Polling Station reported an incident of disruption and violence during the filling out of the results forms and copies. Supporters of the NCP and Socialist Party (SP) stormed the polling station after noises were heard outside the polling station. This action crowded the polling station, prompting the police to instruct everyone to leave the polling station. Once outside, NCP representatives alleged that UPND cadres vandalized a SP vehicle, breaking its windows. Two windows at the polling location were also reportedly damaged during the incident. Additional police officers arrived and dispersed the crowd. CCMG's Monitor and ECZ officials returned inside the polling station to complete the process of filling out the results forms, while all party agents did not return. CCMG's Monitor witnessed the announcement of results and signed the results form. No arrests were made, and no injuries were reported.

### ***Opening and Set-Up of Polling Stations***

- 100% of the polling stations observed were open by 06:30 am.
- At the polling stations observed, during the opening and setup of polling stations, agents representing UPND were present at 100% of polling stations, agents representing SP were present at 95% of polling stations, agents representing NCP were present at 97% of polling stations.
- In all polling stations observed, a security officer was present during opening and setup.
- At 100% of the polling stations observed, the ballot box was shown to be empty before being closed and sealed at the polling station; and had a voters' register, the correct ballot papers, the official stamp/mark, and permanent/indelible ink for marking voters' fingers.

### ***Voting Process***

In all (100%) of the polling stations observed, polling officials checked the fingers of voters for indelible ink before voting and marked the voters' fingers/thumbs with indelible ink before issuing them with the ballot papers; no one voted without the requisite documents such as NRC or voter ID, and no one who already had ink on their finger was allowed to vote. CCMG further notes that 19% of the polling stations observed did not have Braille Jackets for blind voters, while all other required materials were present before voting started.




### ***Counting Process***

In all polling stations observed, all voters who were in the queue by closing time, 18:00hrs, were allowed to vote. At the polling stations, UPND agents were present at 100% of polling stations for counting, and SP agents at 94%. Additionally, in 92% of polling stations, an agent representing the NCP was present for counting.

At all polling stations observed where an agent was representing a party candidate, all agents agreed with the results, signed the forms, and were given a copy of the results form. At all polling stations observed, ballot papers were shown to all party agents and monitors present so they could see how each ballot paper was marked, and ballot papers were sorted into individual piles by candidate before counting. At 100% of polling stations, official results were posted at the polling station for the public to see.

### ***CCMG Results Verification***

CCMG deployed thirty-six monitors to observe at all polling stations in the constituency. The table below shows the comparison between the ECZ official results and the CCMG results.

<b>Comparison of the ECZ Official Results with CCMG Estimates for Mfuwe Constituency</b>					
<b>Candidate Name</b>	<b>Political Party</b>	<b>ECZ Results</b>	<b>% ECZ Results</b>	<b>% CCMG Estimates</b>	<b>Match?</b>
<b>Mufunelo, Malama</b>	<b>UPND</b>	<b>5,684</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	
Kunda, Brian K	SP	1,665	18.8%	18.8%	
Mubaanga, Charles	NCP	1,665	17.0%	17.0%	

In addition, the ECZ total number of rejected ballots is **2.5%** while CCMG's is also **2.5%**. The turnout for the by-election for both ECZ official results and CCMG results is **43.5%**.

#### **IV. Recommendations and Conclusion**

CCMG makes the following recommendations,

##### ***Electoral Commission of Zambia***

- **Enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct:** CCMG notes with concern the weak enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct by the ECZ. ECZ has been reluctant to enforce the Code of Conduct in many by-elections, including the Mfuwe Parliamentary by-election, despite evidence and admission by the ECZ on vote buying and use of state resources. CCMG calls on the ECZ to enhance enforcement of the Code of Conduct and do so in a comprehensive manner without appearing to apply the law selectively. The Electoral Code of Conduct in Paragraph 3 (2) gives powers to the Commission to monitor compliance with the Code. We urge the ECZ to deploy its members to monitor compliance with the Code of Conduct and use its findings to swiftly and transparently investigate violations and enforce the Code of Conduct.

##### ***Political Parties***

- **Candidate Nomination and Participation of Women, Youth, and PWDs:** CCMG urges political parties to create more opportunities and incentives for youth, women, and PWDs to be adopted for elections.
- **Cease Politically Motivated Violence and other Code violations and Hold Perpetrators Accountable:** We urge political parties to conduct their campaigns peacefully and adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct, and to sanction their members found in violation of the Code. We further call on UPND and opposition political parties to desist from inciting violence during campaigns and voting as doing so undermines the credibility of the electoral processes.

##### ***Zambia Police***

- **Provision of Security:** CCMG calls on the police to impartially protect citizens regardless of political party affiliation, to investigate and bring to book the perpetrators of violence.
- **Safety at Polling Stations:** Following an incident of violence reported by a CCMG monitor at Kapilya School-01 Polling Station, CCMG calls on the Zambia Police to investigate and, if warranted, take further action against the perpetrators. CCMG also calls on the Presiding Officer at the said polling station to file a complaint with the Police for disorderly conduct by the perpetrators which resulted in a disruption of the counting process.

##### ***Secretary to the Cabinet***

- **Civil Servants Involvement in Campaigns:** CCMG reiterates its call on the Secretary to the Cabinet to enforce provisions on the civil service to ensure that District Commissioners refrain from actively taking part in political party/candidate campaigns, as doing so amounts to violation of the Electoral Code of Conduct. CCMG notes the pronouncements by the Secretary to the Cabinet on this matter on 22 April at the first Senior Public Service Management Meeting in Lusaka, and urges action against District Commissioners and any civil servants involved in election campaigns.
- **Use of State Resources:** CCMG urges the Secretary to the Cabinet to take action, in line with the Electoral Process Act, against Ministers who use state resources (Government Vehicles) during campaigns. Further, CCMG calls on the Secretary to the Cabinet to provide proof of unpaid leave obtained by Ministers involved in election campaign activities.

#### **Conclusion**

While CCMG documented six (6) violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct in the pre-election period and one (1) incident of violence on election day, the overall political environment in Mfuwe Constituency remained largely calm and peaceful. CCMG commends the Electoral Commission of Zambia and polling officials for the generally smooth conduct of voting and counting, which adhered to established procedures. However, CCMG remains deeply concerned about the continued use of voter inducements, misuse of state resources, and incidents of politically motivated violence, which undermine the credibility of the electoral process. We reiterate our call for the ECZ to enforce the Electoral Code of Conduct impartially, transparently, and without delay, and for political parties to commit to peaceful, issue-based campaigns that respect democratic principles. CCMG further urges all stakeholders to ensure that electoral processes are inclusive and accessible, particularly for persons with disabilities, women, and youth. CCMG reaffirms its commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen confidence in Zambia's democratic processes. CCMG thanks all its Long-Term Observers, Election Day Monitors, Provincial Coordinators, and the Steering Committee for their work and dedication to promoting transparency and integrity in the electoral process.

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## **Detailed Findings Addendum**

### **A. Detailed Findings from Election Day**

#### *Setup and Opening of Polling Stations*

- All (100%) of the polling stations were open by 06:30.
- At 91% of the polling stations, an agent for the NCP Party was present during the opening and setup; at 89% of the polling stations, an agent for the SP Party was present during opening and setup; and at 100% of the polling stations, an agent for the UPND Party was present during opening and setup.
- At 100% of the polling stations, a security officer was present during opening and setup.
- At 100% of the polling stations, the ballot box was shown to be empty before being closed and sealed at the polling station; and had a voters' register, the correct ballot papers, the official stamp/mark, and permanent/indelible ink for marking voters' fingers.

#### *Voting Process*

- At 100% of the polling stations, election officials stamped ballot papers with the official mark/stamp and applied indelible ink to voters' fingers.
- At 100% of polling stations, no one was permitted to vote if they did not have their NRC and Voter's Card with them, if they already had indelible ink on their finger, or if they did not appear in the voters' register.
- At 100% of the polling stations, no voter was turned away and not permitted to vote even though they had their NRC and Voter's Card with them, did not have indelible ink on their finger, and their names were on the voters' register.
- At 40% of polling stations, a few men assisted able-bodied women (not physically disabled) to vote.
- At 100% of polling stations, no one (other than polling officials) assisted multiple people to vote.

#### *Counting Process*

- At 100% of polling stations, all party polling agents present were permitted to observe the counting of ballot papers.
- At 100% of polling stations, there was sufficient light during the counting of ballot papers.
- At 100% of polling stations, polling officials showed the ballot papers to all party representatives so that they could see how each was marked.

#### *Party Agents During the Counting Process*

- At 91% of polling stations, a representative for NCP was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form.
- At 97% of polling stations, a representative for SP was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form.
- At 100% of polling stations, a representative for UPND was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form.

#### *Accessibility of Voting for People with Disabilities*

- Only 80% of the polling stations had Braille jackets for blind voters.
- At 89% of polling stations, voters had to go up the stairs to reach the polling station, rendering it inaccessible for people with mobility-related disabilities.
- At 100% of polling stations, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and nursing mothers were allowed to go to the front of the queue.

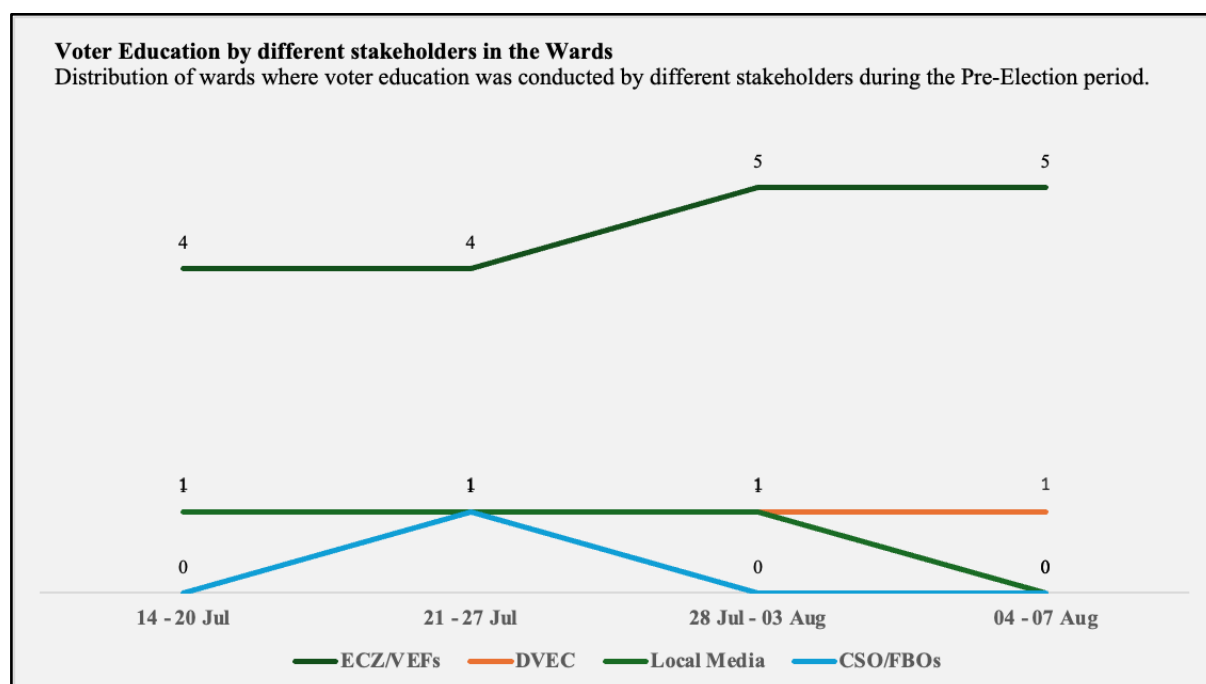
#### *Participation of Women*

- An average of 6 ECZ officials were in the polling stations, with 3 of the presiding officers being females.
- 51% of the polling stations had a female security officer.
- 35% of party representatives for SP were women, 29% of party representatives for UPND were women, while 38% of party representatives for NCP, party representatives were women.

## B. Detailed Key Findings from the Pre-Election Period

### *Voter Education/Information*

CCMG observers reported having attended or heard of voter education being conducted at least once in the wards. Observers reported having attended or heard of voter education conducted by ECZ through the voter education facilitators in five (5) wards, voter education conducted by DVEC in one (1) ward, and CSOs/FBOs in one (1) ward. The figure below shows the distribution of voter education by different stakeholders in the wards over the reporting periods.



Voter education, particularly targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities, was relatively low. CCMG monitors reported having attended or heard of voter education activities targeting youth in five wards, targeting women in five wards. There was no voter education targeting persons with disabilities reported in any of the six wards.

CCMG calls on the ECZ, the District Voter Education Committees (DVEC), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and the media to enhance coverage in the by-election areas in future elections to provide accessible information to all voters, with a particular focus on marginalised groups.

### ***Election Preparations***

All CCMG's Long-Term Observers reported having witnessed or heard of election preparations by the ECZ, including training of ECZ officials.