



CCMG Statement on Phase 1 and 2 of the 2025 Mobile Voter Registration Exercise

27 October 2025

Following the close of Phase 1 and 2 of the 2025 voter registration exercise, the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) is pleased to share its observation findings from the first two phases of mobile voter registration. CCMG assessed the voter registration process based on access to registration centres by accredited monitors/observers, opening of registration centres, setup, registration process and procedure, and closing processes. Furthermore, CCMG assessed the general political and electoral environment, focusing on voter education and publicity, as well as the participation and compliance of political parties and citizens with the Electoral Code of Conduct, and adherence to the voter registration regulations by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ).

CCMG has trained, accredited, and deployed 336 non-partisan voter registration observers to observe the six phases of the 2025 voter registration exercise. Of these, 319 CCMG observers are deployed to a statistically representative sample of 1,000 registration centres, with sampled centres located in every province, district, and constituency of Zambia, and the remainder of the observers are deployed to the district boma registration centres. For Phase 1, the sample included 169 registration centres, and 165 registration centres in Phase 2. As the ECZ failed to issue accreditation for CCMG's observers and other civil society observers in time for the start of voter registration (see below - Accreditation of Observers/Monitors), CCMG is unable to report observation data from Day 1 of Phase 1 of the mass voter registration exercise. ***This represents a step backwards in the transparency of Zambia's electoral processes, and as such, CCMG's monitoring data presented below includes representative data from the last day of the Phase 1 exercise and Phase 2 only.***

Accreditation of Observers/Monitors

On 11 October, the ECZ announced 12 October as the commencement date for accreditation of observers/monitors ahead of the mass voter registration exercise scheduled to begin on 13 October. However, by the evening of 12 October, CCMG had only managed to secure accreditation or some form of authorization for 104 out of its 336 observers. Despite the ECZ directive, 48 District Electoral Officers (DEOs) either did not open their offices or were unable to access accreditation kits, hindering timely processing. In some districts, temporary measures were taken; three (3) observers were issued handwritten notes authorizing their presence at registration centres, while eight (8) others had their CCMG introduction letters stamped and annotated to permit observation pending full accreditation.

On 13 October, the first day of the voter registration exercise, these logistical and administrative delays significantly affected CCMG's observation efforts. Thirty (30) observers were unable to deploy after spending much of the previous night at district offices attempting to finalize accreditation. An additional seventeen (17) were not permitted to observe due to the absence of official accreditation. By the end of Phase 2, 305 observers had received ECZ accreditation cards, while 28 observers had only received unofficial written authorization (notes, stamped application letters, and authorization letters from DEOs). Three (3) observers were simply provided verbal authorization and allowed to observe without an accreditation card or any form of written authorization.

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Registration Centre Opening

CCMG observers reported that an average of 11% of the centres remained closed and did not open in both phases (13% in Phase 1 and 11% in Phase 2). CCMG believes that this is primarily due to changes to deployment plans made at the district level, which did not reflect on the national-level deployment plan available to voters on the ECZ website. CCMG notes that divergence from the plan available to citizens causes confusion and may undermine eligible citizens' ability to locate an open registration centre in their area. In addition, CCMG observers reported that 5% of registration centres did not open on time (opened after 8:30 hours). A further 3% of centres opened and later closed due to a lack of backup power.

Materials and Equipment

CCMG observers reported that 99% of registration centres had all materials, including the BVR kit, laminates, and all appropriate application forms. In 50% of centres, there were no backup kits, while in 10% of centres, kits malfunctioned, resulting in suspension of voter registration.

Access to Information

In 11% of the registration centres, CCMG's observers were not provided with voter registration statistics at the close of the registration process. The purpose of collecting daily registration statistics is to understand the uptake of the exercise and to make recommendations, as well as develop initiatives aimed at enhancing the process. Much like releasing results at the polling station level on election day, providing registration figures to monitors/observers and party agents helps to build transparency and accountability in the process.

Presence of Stakeholders

CCMG observers reported the following were present at the centres: security personnel at 100%; political party agents for PF at 4%, UPND at 5%, and other party agents at 3%. Additionally, observers from CSOs and faith-based organizations were present at 10% of registration centres.

Adherence to Procedures

CCMG's observers reported that at 100% of registration centres, ECZ officials appeared to know how to operate the voter registration kit. CCMG's observers reported high levels of adherence to registration procedures: 100% reporting that applicants showed proof of eligibility, 100% reporting that successful applicants were given a voter's card with a photo, 100% reporting that registration materials were packed away safely at the end of the day, and 1% reporting registration centres closed before 17 hours.

Inclusion

Additionally, CCMG observers observed the adherence to the inclusion of special interest groups in the electoral processes. At 97% of registration centres, officials recorded the type of disability of registrants with disabilities. At 92% of registration centres, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and nursing mothers were allowed to go to the front of the queue. Additionally, at 64% of the registration centres, people were required to use stairs to access the registration desk.

Questionable Registrations

CCMG's observers reported on multiple types of potential questionable registration or disenfranchisement. CCMG's observers reported that these issues affected a small number of people per registration centre and a small number of registration centres: at 22% of registration centres, officials refused to register individuals who appeared to be eligible, though this affected an average of only one person per registration centre; at 2% of registration centres, there was registration of applicants who

appeared underage. CCMG's observers did not report any registration of applicants who appeared to be non-Zambians or incidents where those without National Registration Cards were permitted to register.

Voter Education

CCMG's observers reported that voter information and education activities were taking place, with 93% reporting activities by the ECZ/Voter Education Facilitators (VEFs), and 69% reporting on voter information/education by local media. Only 8% of CCMG's observers attended/heard of voter information and education activities conducted by civil society organizations (CSOs).

Conclusion

In conclusion, given the low turnout that characterised both Phase 1 and 2 of the mass voter registration exercise, CCMG calls on the ECZ to enhance its communication with the public on electoral process activities, and its planning and preparedness for key aspects of voter registration, including accreditation of monitors/observers, adequate deployment of kits, including backup kits, and staff, and to conduct better planning with district level structures to ensure that national deployment plans match district-level deployment plans so that voters know when centres in their area are operational. Further, CCMG urges the ECZ to release disaggregated registration numbers for every geographic area after the conclusion of each phase, and for daily registration statistics to be made available to all stakeholders.

CCMG commends ECZ registration officers for adherence to registration procedures and ensuring that all applicants were provided with a voter's card at the end of their registration. Lastly, CCMG calls on all eligible Zambians to visit the nearest voter registration centre and be registered.

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