



Statement on the Conduct of Voting, Counting, and Results Verification for the Chawama Parliamentary By-Election Held on 15 January 2026

19 January 2026

Following the declaration of a vacancy in the National Assembly, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) prescribed 15 January 2026 as the date on which to hold the parliamentary by-election pursuant to Article 57 of the Constitution. The Chawama parliamentary seat was declared vacant pursuant to Article 72(2) of the Constitution following the long absence of the incumbent member of parliament.

In keeping with its mandate to enhance electoral integrity in Zambia, CCMG undertook a non-partisan observation of the Chawama parliamentary by-election process. CCMG recruited, trained, and deployed seven (7) Long-Term Observers (LTOs)¹ to monitor and report on the pre-election environment, and one hundred and eleven (111) process and results verification for transparency (PRVT) Monitors² to all polling stations in the constituency to report on the opening, setup, voting, and counting processes on election day.

On election day, CCMG's monitors recorded ten (10) critical incidents involving harassment, violence, voter inducement, and campaigning at polling stations. Notwithstanding these incidents, CCMG finds that the Chawama by-election met national, regional, and international standards for a credible election. CCMG further commends the peaceful campaigns that characterised the pre-election period. Based on reports from 111 PRVT Monitors, CCMG confirms that the opening, setup, voting, counting, and results tabulation were conducted in accordance with the law and established procedures. CCMG therefore independently verifies the results of the Chawama parliamentary by-election, as announced by the ECZ, as a true reflection of the votes cast.

During the campaign period, CCMG documented eight (8) violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct, including acts of recording voter's card and NRC numbers by UPND supporters, contrary to Sections 81 and 83 of the Electoral Process Act. CCMG urges the ECZ to monitor and enforce compliance with the Electoral Code of Conduct as provided under Paragraph 3(2) of the Electoral Process Act.

“We urge the ECZ to attend political rallies and other political activities as a way to monitor compliance with the Electoral Code of Conduct as provided under Paragraph 3(2) Electoral Process Act. Further, the ECZ should strictly enforce the Electoral Code of Conduct by sanctioning political parties, candidates, and supporters who violate the Code irrespective of political affiliation.”

CCMG further notes, with concern, allegations by Mr. Miles Sampa on the establishment of illegal polling stations located at Mutason Shopping Centre along Lilayi Road. CCMG confirms that the said polling stations legally exist as per the 2025 Polling District Listing and that CCMG had monitors stationed at the two polling stations.

¹ Observer refers to Long-Term Observer (LTO)

² Monitor refers to PRVT Election Day Monitor

“We find the allegations made about illegal polling stations unacceptable. We urge political parties, candidates, their supporters, and indeed the public to access a copy of the 2025 Polling District Listing on the ECZ website, which contains a list of all 12,200 polling stations across the country, including their polling station codes. Such false allegations undermine public trust in the ECZ and the electoral process.”

CCMG commends all contesting candidates and their supporters for largely maintaining peace and adhering to the agreed electoral timetable. Both the pre-election period and election day in Chawama Constituency were generally peaceful. CCMG further commends the Electoral Commission of Zambia and polling officials for the orderly and professional conduct of voting, counting, and results management, all of which conformed to established legal and procedural requirements. Notwithstanding these positive aspects, CCMG remains deeply concerned about the persistent use of voter inducement and the recording of voter’s card and NRC numbers as a condition for receiving handouts, practices that undermine the credibility, secrecy, and integrity of the electoral process and require more decisive action by relevant authorities

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Detailed Assessment

I. Introduction

Article 57 of the Constitution provides for holding of a by-election to fill a vacancy in the office of Member of Parliament, Mayor, Council Chairperson, or Councillor. Following the declaration of the Chawama parliamentary seat vacant by the Speaker of the National Assembly pursuant to Article 72 (2) of the Constitution, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) prescribed 15 January 2026 as the date on which to hold the by-election pursuant to Article 57 of the Constitution. The seat was declared vacant following the long absence of the incumbent member of parliament from the National Assembly.

Chawama Constituency has four (4) wards with 93,124 registered voters, of whom 52% are female. The 2026 by-election was contested by nine (9) candidates, all male, of whom six (6) were party-affiliated, while three (3) contested as independent candidates. In contrast, in 2021, the seat was contested by four party-affiliated candidates, of whom one was female.



In keeping with its mandate to enhance electoral integrity in Zambia, CCMG undertook a non-partisan observation of the Chawama parliamentary by-election process. CCMG recruited, trained, and deployed seven (7) Long-Term Observers (LTOs) to monitor and report on the pre-election environment, which included preparations by the ECZ, political party and candidate campaign activities, and 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 one hundred and eleven (111) process and results verification for transparency election day monitors across all polling stations in Chawama Constituency. CCMG's LTOs also deployed as roving/mobile monitors on election day to support the stationary election day PRVT monitors and report on any critical incidents. 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.

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 the confidence to participate in the electoral process.

II. Pre-Election Assessment

Voter Education

CCMG findings show significant efforts to inform and educate voters during the observation period, with all four wards reporting instances of voter education conducted by the ECZ or Voter Education Facilitators (VEFs), and/or by the District Voter Education Committee (DVEC). Additionally, CCMG's LTOs reported voter education/information activities targeting women and youth in all four wards, and voter education/information activities targeting PWDs in three wards.

General Political Environment

During the campaign period, none of CCMG's observers reported any prevention of political party campaign activities. However, CCMG observers reported two instances of campaign activities taking place in a church building, which is a prohibited space for political campaigns. CCMG observers further noted that police officers provided security during party or candidate activities/meetings/rallies in Chawama and John Howard Wards only.

Electoral Code of Conduct Violations

CCMG documented eight (8) violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct in the pre-election period, detailed below:

- **Collection of Voters' Card Details (information only, not physical cards):**
 - On 24 and 30 December, CCMG observers in Nkoloma and Chawama Wards reported witnessing UPND supporters collecting NRC and voters' card numbers from members of the public. In exchange, individuals who provided their details were reportedly given party chitenges and materials.
- **Food and Cash Handouts:**
 - On 22 December, CCMG observers in Nkoloma and Chawama Wards reported that UPND supporters distributed 25kg bags of mealie-meal at Twatasha Primary School during a campaign rally.
 - On 31 December, CCMG observers reported that UPND members distributed K10 cash to youths in Chawama Ward near the Anglican area. The youths were further asked to register their details using their NRC and voter's card numbers to qualify to collect a chicken and a bag of mealie meal.
- **Ferrying of People**
 - On 29 December, CCMG observers reported that UPND ferried youths from 6 Miles, Matero, and town areas to attend a rally at the Worldwide Church in Nkoloma Ward.
- **Use of Insulting Language**
 - On 30 December, a CCMG observer in Chawama reported an incident where members of the UPND and the Tonse Alliance clashed while en route to their respective campaign destinations, and insulted each other. No physical violence nor police involvement were reported. The situation de-escalated after the parties proceeded to their separate campaign activities.
- **Use of Vehicles with No Number Plates**
 - On 23 and 29 December, CCMG's observer in Nkoloma Ward witnessed two vehicles with no number plates (*a Toyota Charcoal Grey Hilux and a white Toyota Vellfire*) being used by the UPND at the Worldwide Church and at Melele Community Centre.

These 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. Left unchecked, these violations undermine the credibility and integrity of the electoral process.

III. Election Day Key Findings and Critical Incidents

Based on reports from CCMG's 111 PRVT Monitors and 7 LTOs, CCMG finds that the Chawama Parliamentary by-election was conducted in compliance with national and regional standard procedures for the set-up, voting, and counting processes.

Opening and Set-Up of Polling Stations

Ninety-nine (99%) of the polling stations were open by 06:30. During the opening and setup of polling stations, agents representing UPND were present at 95% of polling stations, agents representing FDD were present at 91% of polling stations, and agents representing CF were present at 81% of polling stations. In all polling stations, a security officer was present during opening and setup, the ballot box was shown to be empty before being closed and sealed, and there was a voters' register, the correct ballot papers, the official stamp/mark, and permanent/indelible ink for marking voters' fingers.

Voting Process










In all polling stations, polling officials checked the fingers of voters for indelible ink and marked the voters' fingers/thumbs with indelible ink before issuing them with the ballot papers; no one voted without the requisite identification documents, both NRC or voter ID, and no one who already had ink on their finger was allowed to vote. CCMG further notes that 23% of the polling stations did not have Braille Jackets for blind voters, while all other required materials were present before voting started.

Counting Process

In all polling stations, all voters who were in the queue by closing time, 18:00, were allowed to vote. UPND agents were present at 99% of polling stations for counting, and FDD agents at 97%. Additionally, in 95% of polling stations, an agent representing the CF was present during the counting process. In all polling stations 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 100% of polling stations, ballot papers were shown to all party agents and Monitors present so that they could see how each ballot paper was marked, and ballot papers were sorted into individual piles by candidate before counting. At 96% of polling stations, official results were posted outside for the public to see (see below, Critical Incidents).

CCMG Results Verification

CCMG deployed 111 PRVT Monitors to observe at all polling stations in Chawama constituency. The table below compares the ECZ official results with the CCMG results.

Comparison of the ECZ Official Results with CCMG Estimates for Chawama Constituency					
Candidate Name	Political Party	ECZ Results	% ECZ Results	% CCMG Estimates	Match?
Nundwe Bright	FDD	8,085	45.4%	45.4%	
Muunda Morgan	UPND	6,542	36.7%	36.7%	
Mulenga Davison	CF	1,534	8.6%	8.6%	
Mwenya George	Independent	466	2.6%	2.6%	
Siatwaambo Elijah	Independent	428	2.4%	2.4%	
Mutete Mohammad	NCP	319	1.8%	1.8%	
Ndiweni Alfred	EPPP	239	1.3%	1.3%	
Musukuma Ntazana	LM	100	0.6%	0.6%	
Phiri James	NDC	93	0.5%	0.5%	

In addition, the ECZ total number of rejected ballots is **1.6%**, while CCMG's is also **1.6%**. The turnout for the by-election for both ECZ official results and CCMG results is **19.6%**.

Critical Incidents

CCMG documented ten (10) critical incidents on election day, detailed below:

- **Harassment, Intimidation, or Threats (2 Incidents)**
 - A CCMG Monitor at JICA Building-02 Polling Station reported an incident of harassment by the NCP candidate who entered the polling station to cast his vote and began taking photographs and recording videos inside the polling station. Polling officials advised him to stop, citing that this was not permitted within the polling station. Following this guidance, the NCP candidate, together with members of his entourage, began shouting at the polling officials. No physical confrontation was reported.
 - A CCMG Observer in Chawama Ward reported an incident of harassment at Twatasha Primary School Polling Station involving a UPND member who, while in the queue, asked people to vote for the UPND and flashed the party symbol. The UPND member was harassed by others in the queue before the police intervened and asked him to leave.
- **Violence (2 Incidents)**

- A CCMG Observer in Nkoloma Ward reported an incident of violence at UCZ Church involving a party agent of the Leadership Movement who was beaten by voters for unknown reasons. Police intervened to stop the violence with no injuries or arrests reported.
- A CCMG Observer in Nkoloma Ward reported an altercation involving two Zambia Army soldiers and UPND cadres at Kuku Grounds. The incident occurred when the soldiers, travelling in a vehicle, attempted to pass through the area where UPND cadres were playing loud music and obstructing the road. The cadres reportedly attempted to forcibly place UPND campaign stickers on the soldiers' vehicle. When the soldiers objected, a confrontation ensued and escalated into a physical fight involving the two soldiers and more than ten UPND cadres. During the altercation, the soldiers used pepper spray on some cadres in an attempt to defend themselves. Community members intervened to protect the soldiers and de-escalate the situation. Police officers later arrived at the scene and assisted in restoring order. No injuries or arrests were reported.
- ***Voting Temporarily Suspended (1 Incident)***
 - A CCMG Monitor at JICA Building-02 Polling Station reported that voting was temporarily suspended for approximately 15 minutes following the arrival of the ECZ Chairperson at the polling station. During this period, the Chairperson was observed engaging in discussions with polling officials inside the polling station. At the time of the suspension, there were three (3) voters waiting in the queue. Voting resumed after the Chairperson concluded her interaction with polling officials.
- ***Results Not Posted at Polling Station (1 Incident)***
 - A CCMG Monitor at Chimwemwe Primary School-01 Polling Station reported that the polling station results were not posted outside for the public to see.
- ***Eligible Voters Not Permitted to Vote (1 Incident)***
 - A CCMG Monitor at Twatasha Primary School-02 Polling Station reported an incident of an eligible voter being turned away and not allowed to vote. The voter presented herself at the polling station with all the required voting documents. However, the polling assistant was initially unable to locate her name in the voter's register, and as a result, the voter was turned away and not permitted to cast her vote. The observer later reported that, while voting was ongoing, the polling officer subsequently located the voter's name in the same voter's register. However, by that time, the voter had already left the polling station and was not recalled to cast her vote. No further action was reported.
- ***Disagreement Over Results (1 Incident)***
 - A CCMG Monitor at UCZ Church-01 Polling Station reported an incident involving a discrepancy in the ballot count at the polling station. During the count, officials identified that the total number of ballots exceeded the expected figure by one. Further examination established that one ballot lacked a serial number, although it bore an official ECZ stamp applied by a polling assistant. ECZ officials did not explain the irregularity. This particular ballot was set aside, and counting proceeded.
- ***Voter Inducement (1 Incident)***
 - A CCMG Observer in Nkoloma Ward reported an incident where the UPND Chairlady allegedly posed as an ECZ usher while escorting voters to their polling stations and distributed K50 to voters. The observer further reported that, at the same location near Kuku Grounds, a UPND vehicle was seen distributing food, including pies and drinks, to individuals as they exited the polling station.
- ***Illegal Campaigning (1 Incident)***

- A CCMG Observer in John Howard Ward reported instances of political party campaigns by the UPND and PF at Crawford Nursery & Primary School Polling Station and Cheshire Homes Polling Station, respectively. This is a violation of Section 28 (3) of the Electoral Process Act.

IV. Recommendations and Conclusion

Following CCMG's observation of the pre-election period and election day for the Chawama parliamentary by-election, CCMG makes the following recommendations to stakeholders:

Electoral Commission of Zambia

- **Enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct:** Paragraph 3 (2) of the Electoral Process Act provides for members of the Commission to attend campaign rallies to monitor compliance with the Electoral Code of Conduct in view of enforcing the code. CCMG calls on ECZ to effectively monitor compliance with the Code of Conduct and ensure strict enforcement. Specifically, ECZ should collaborate with the Anti-Corruption Commission in enforcing Sections 81 and 83 of the Electoral Process Act and Section 35 of the Anti-Corruption Act.
- **Restriction on Number of Monitors:** CCMG noted during accreditation that ECZ restricted the number of monitors/observers to accredit to five per polling district. As CCMG has recommended before, the ECZ should extensively consult local observer groups and other key stakeholders before introducing restrictions of this nature. Further, the ECZ should facilitate citizen observation as a confidence-building measure rather than constraining it.
- **Disruptions to Voting:** Establish clear protocols to minimise disruptions to voting, including visits by senior officials during polling hours.
- **Adherence to Procedures:** The Commission should investigate the instance of the stamped ballot paper without a serial number that was discovered at UCZ Church-01 Polling Station and publicize the findings of this investigation including any action taken. This will enhance transparency and accountability as we head to the 13 August 2026 general elections.

Political Parties

- **Candidate Nomination and Participation of Women, Youth, and PWDs:** CCMG noted that out of 9 candidates, no woman was contesting, unlike in 2021, when there was one woman. CCMG urges political parties to create more opportunities and incentives for youth, women, and PWDs to be nominated for elections and participate as candidates.
- **Politically Motivated Violence:** Political parties and candidates' supporters should conduct their campaigns in a non-violent manner to protect the integrity of elections. CCMG calls on all political parties and their supporters to adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct and ensure a peaceful environment for both candidates and voters.
- **Illegal Campaigns:** Political parties should desist from conducting active campaigns at polling stations outside the official campaign period, as was observed during this by-election. This is in contravention of Section 28 (3) of the Electoral Process Act, which prohibits campaigning at stations.

Zambia Police

- **Provision of Security:** CCMG commends the Zambia Police for providing security during the campaign period and on election day. This contributed to a peaceful electoral process. CCMG calls on the police to work with ECZ in enforcing the Electoral Code of Conduct in line with their duties as provided in Paragraph 6 of the Electoral Code of Conduct.

Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), ECZ, and Disabilities Organisations

- **Improve Accessibility:** CCMG calls on ZAPD to work with the ECZ in conducting an accessibility audit of all polling stations before the 2026 general elections to ensure

reasonable accommodation for PWDs in line with the legal provisions, and for the ECZ to meaningfully engage representatives of the disability community to ensure their needs are met.

Anti-Corruption Commission

- **Electoral Corruption:** Prioritise investigation and prosecution of election-related corruption, particularly voter inducement to serve as a deterrent to would-be offenders and thereby contribute to strengthening electoral integrity.
- **Enhance Visibility:** Increase visibility during by-elections and other electoral processes through public messaging and coordinated operations with the ECZ and the Zambia Police Service.

Conclusion

CCMG commends all contesting candidates and their supporters for largely maintaining peace and adhering to the agreed electoral timetable. Both the pre-election period and election day in Chawama Constituency were generally peaceful; however, CCMG documented eight (8) violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct during the pre-election period and ten (10) critical incidents on election day. CCMG further commends the Electoral Commission of Zambia and polling officials for the orderly and professional conduct of voting, counting, and results management, all of which conformed to established legal and procedural requirements. Notwithstanding these positive aspects, CCMG remains deeply concerned about the persistent use of voter inducement and the recording of voter card and NRC numbers as a condition for receiving handouts, practices that undermine the credibility, secrecy, and integrity of the electoral process and require more decisive action by relevant authorities.

CCMG further reiterates its call for the ECZ to enhance monitors/observers and party agents' access to polling stations without imposing restrictions on the number of monitors/observers and party agents for a polling district. Enforcement of the electoral legal framework remains very weak, therefore, CCMG calls on the ECZ, Anti-Corruption Commission, Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Zambia Police to strictly enforce electoral laws. 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.

Detailed Findings Addendum

A. Detailed Findings from Election Day

Set up and Opening of Polling Stations

- 99% of the polling stations were open by 06:30. One polling station opened after 06:30 but was open by 07:00.
- CCMG monitors reported that agents for political parties were present at polling stations as follows: UPND party agents at 95%, FDD agents at 91%, CF agents at 81%, LM agents at 31%, NCP agents at 54%, and NDC agents at 22%. Additionally, agents representing independent candidates were present at 83% of the polling stations.
- 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

- In all, 100%, polling stations, election officials stamped ballot papers with the official mark/stamp and applied indelible ink to voters' fingers, 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 99% 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 one polling station, one (1) eligible voter was mistakenly turned away and not allowed to vote because officials did not initially find their details in the register (see *Election Day Key Findings and Critical Incidents* section)
- At 6% of polling stations, a few men assisted able-bodied women (not physically disabled) to vote. However, in one polling station, Nyerere Community Centre (Nkoloma Ward), many men assisted women without disabilities to vote.
- At 1% of polling stations, no one (other than polling officials) assisted multiple people to vote. At one station, one individual assisted four (4) family members to vote.

Counting Process

- At 100% of polling stations, all party polling agents present were permitted to observe the counting of ballot papers.
- At 98% 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 Present During the Counting Process

- At 99% of polling stations, a representative for UPND 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 FDD was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form.
- At 95% of polling stations, a representative for CF was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form.
- At 57% of polling stations, a representative for LM was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form
- At 77% 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 52% of polling stations, a representative for NDC was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form
- At 95% of polling stations, a representative for an independent party was present during counting, agreed with the results, and was given a copy of the results form

Accessibility of Voting for Persons with Disabilities

- Only 77% of the polling stations had Braille jackets for blind voters.
- At 52% 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 98% of polling stations, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and nursing mothers were allowed to go to the front of the queue.

Participation of Women

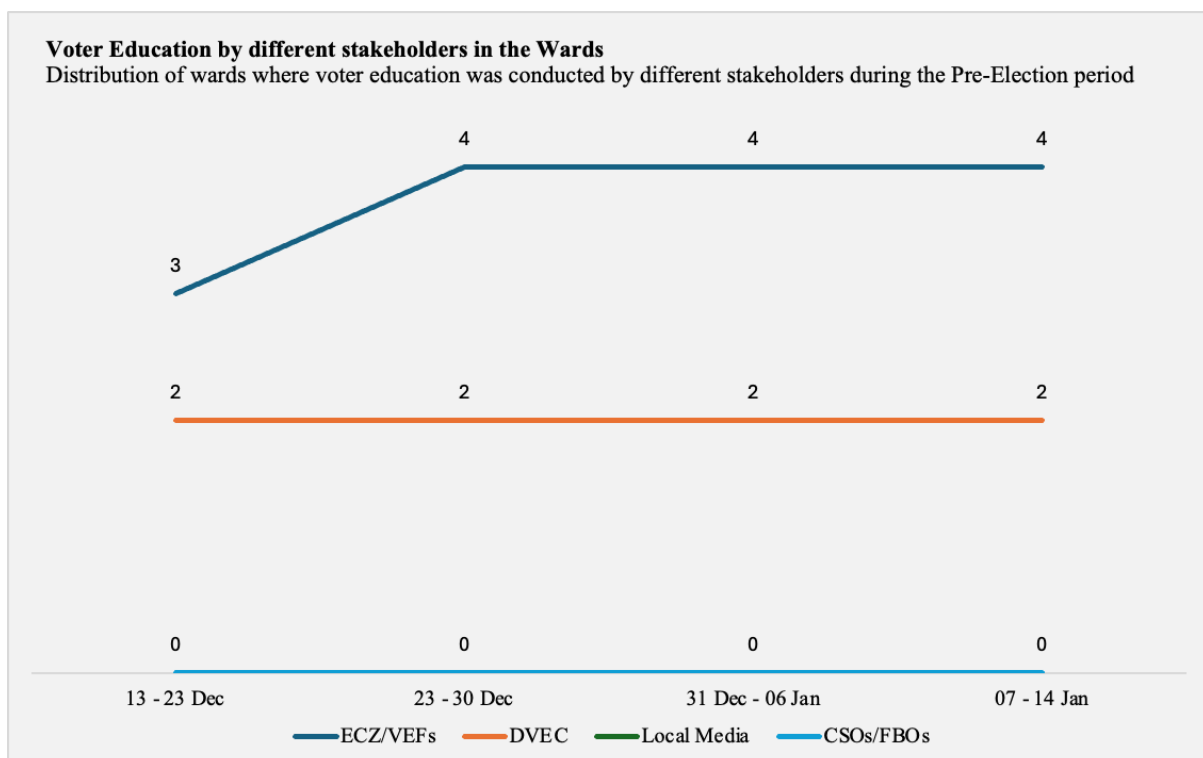
- An average of 6 ECZ officials were in the polling stations, with 6 of the presiding officers being females. Additionally, 54% of the polling stations had a female presiding officer
- 71% of the polling stations had at least one female security officer.
- 64% of party representatives for UPND were women, 50% of party representatives for FDD were women, 67% of party representatives for CF, 29% of party representatives for LM, 43% of party representatives for NCP, 21% of party representatives for NDC, while 70% of representatives representing independent candidates 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 in all wards in Chawama by different stakeholders, as follows: voter education conducted by ECZ through the voter education facilitators in all (4) wards, and voter education conducted by DVEC in two (2) wards. However, there were no reports of voter education being conducted by the local media and civil society organisations, or faith-based organisations.

The figure below shows the distribution of voter education by different stakeholders in the wards over the reporting periods.



CCMG monitors reported having attended or heard of voter education activities targeting youth and women in all (4) wards and targeting persons with disabilities in three 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.