



CCMG NOTES RISING POLITICAL MOBILISATION, ELECTORAL CODE VIOLATIONS, AND DECLINING VOTER EDUCATION AHEAD OF THE 2026 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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For Immediate Release

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) has continued implementing its long-term election observation project ahead of the 13 August 2026 General Elections. This second observation period, covering 31 March to 27 April 2026, reflects an increasingly active political environment as the country moves closer to nominations and the official campaign period.

The findings are based on verified reports collected by CCMG's 330 Long-Term Observers deployed across all constituencies, districts, and provinces. During this period, CCMG observed heightened political mobilisation, intensified intra-party competition, continued stakeholder engagement on electoral reforms, and preparations by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), including training of District Electoral Officers and Returning Officers.

While the overall electoral environment remains generally calm, CCMG notes emerging trends that require urgent attention from all stakeholders. Reports of politically motivated violence remain relatively low, with less than one percent of observers reporting such incidents. However, unlike the previous reporting period where tensions largely involved clashes between supporters of different political parties, the current period was characterised mainly by intra-party disputes, particularly during internal adoption and leadership processes.

CCMG also recorded incidents involving attacks on journalists and disruptions of media programming linked to intra-party disagreements. Such actions undermine media freedom and violate democratic principles protected under Article 20 of the Constitution of Zambia, which guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Further, acts of violence, intimidation, and harassment are contrary to the Electoral Code of Conduct provided for under the Electoral Process Act, which prohibit political parties, candidates, and supporters from engaging in violence, intimidation, hate speech, or conduct likely to incite public disorder.

We are further concerned by the increase in reports of inducements to voters. Twelve percent (12 %) of CCMG's observers reported the distribution of money, foodstuffs, and other goods such as cement, solar panels, sanitary kits, iron sheets, and computers as part of political mobilisation activities. These practices may constitute voter bribery and inducement prohibited under the Electoral Process Act, which outlaws the giving of money, gifts, or other incentives intended to influence voters or secure political support.

CCMG also documented continued incidents involving the collection of NRC and voter's card details, in some cases linked to promises of access to empowerment programmes or political structures. CCMG notes that such practices raise serious concerns regarding coercion, misuse of

personal information, and abuse of public resources and violates Regulation 39 of the Electoral Process (Registration of Voters) Regulations.

Additionally, CCMG observed continued campaigning outside the official campaign period, with 10% of observers reporting early campaigning by the UPND and approximately 5% reporting similar activities by other political parties and candidates. Premature campaigning is prohibited under the Electoral Process Act, which provides that campaigns shall only be conducted within the officially prescribed campaign period announced by the Electoral Commission of Zambia.

We further noted incidents involving youths dressed in military-style attire, wearing ski masks, and armed with tasers during political activities. The wearing of military or security regalia by unauthorised persons is contrary to Section 6 of the State Security Act, which prohibits the unlawful use or possession of military uniforms and attire in a manner likely to mislead or intimidate members of the public.

CCMG notes with concern the sharp decline in voter education activities during the reporting period. Reports of voter education conducted by the ECZ dropped significantly from 47% in the previous reporting period to 8% in this reporting period, while media and civil society-led voter education also declined considerably. This reduction comes at a critical time when Zambia is undergoing significant constitutional and electoral reforms that require sustained public awareness and civic education.

Considering these developments, CCMG calls on the Electoral Commission of Zambia to strengthen proactive enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct before the commencement of the official campaign period and to intensify civic and voter education activities nationwide. Political parties are urged to promote peaceful and democratic internal processes, hold members accountable for violence and intimidation, and refrain from practices that undermine electoral integrity. CCMG further calls on the Zambia Police to provide equitable security to all political actors and investigate all reported incidents of political violence and intimidation without fear or favour.

As Zambia moves closer to the 2026 General Elections, CCMG notes that experiences from previous electoral cycles demonstrate that tensions and violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct often increase during the campaign period. Early intervention, consistent enforcement of electoral laws, and sustained stakeholder engagement will therefore be essential to preserving peace, protecting political rights, and ensuring credible, inclusive, and transparent elections.

CCMG remains committed to providing independent, evidence-based election observation throughout the electoral cycle in support of peaceful and credible elections in Zambia.

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