



Long Term Pre-Election
Observation Report No. 3

From Party Primaries to the Ballot

*An Assessment of Candidate Nominations, Legal
Compliance, and Electoral Integrity in Zambia's
2026 General Elections*



OBSERVATION BRIEF
28 April - 25 May, 2026



GOOD
GOVERNANCE



STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



DEMOCRATIC
FUTURE

I. Introduction

The candidate nomination process marks a significant stage in the electoral process and the democratic participation of citizens, as guaranteed by the Constitution. The Constitution provides the legal foundation for democratic participation, specifically, Article 45 guarantees every citizen the right to participate in politics, while Articles 70 and 100 outline qualifications for candidates seeking election as Members of Parliament and President, respectively. These constitutional requirements are operationalised by the Electoral Process Act, which establishes the legal framework for candidate nominations. Specifically, Sections 28, 30, 31, 33, and 34 provide for the nomination of candidates for elective office, including the submission and scrutiny of nomination papers, payment of prescribed nomination fees, verification of candidate qualifications, objections to nominations, and the declaration of duly nominated candidates. Collectively, these constitutional and statutory provisions seek to guarantee transparency, fairness, inclusiveness, and equal opportunity in the electoral process.

Following the announcement of the candidate nomination timetable by the ECZ pursuant to Section 28 (1) (iii) of the Electoral Process Act, CCMG deployed 317 observers to 227 nomination centres to observe the presidential and parliamentary nomination processes. While nominations were largely conducted according to established procedures and in a calm manner, CCMG documented incidents and concerns in several districts regarding the conduct of political party primaries and candidate adoption processes, as well as incidents at nomination centres. For pre-nominations party adoptions, CCMG noted grievances relating to perceived lack of transparency, alleged imposition of candidates, inadequate consultation of party structures, and limited opportunities for aspiring candidates to challenge party adoption decisions through effective internal dispute resolution mechanisms. These concerns contributed to a notable increase in the number of candidates who opted to contest elections as independent candidates after failing to secure adoption by their respective political parties.

CCMG observed incidents in which some aspiring candidates who chose to contest as independent candidates were intimidated, harassed, and obstructed from filing their nominations contrary to Section 83 (2) of the Electoral Process Act by members and supporters of political parties they had previously been affiliated with. Such conduct undermines freedom of association, freedom of choice, and political participation as enshrined in the Constitution in Articles 21 and 45, respectively. Furthermore, CCMG observed arming of cadres, destruction of campaign materials, and use of public resources for political activities, which further point to structural challenges in ensuring a level playing field. The observations made during this reporting period

underscore the close relationship between internal party democracy, code of conduct enforcement and electoral integrity. While Zambia's constitutional and legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of elections, credible elections cannot be fully attained where political party primaries and adoption processes are perceived to be unfair, exclusionary, or lacking transparency, where the enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct is weak and where state resources are used for political activities.

The findings presented in this report are based on verified reports collected by CCMG's 330 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) across all constituencies, districts, and provinces. The report highlights emerging trends in the general political environment, including political parties' conduct, voter education, electoral administration, and compliance with the Electoral Code of Conduct, and assesses their implications for the credibility, inclusiveness, and peaceful conduct of the 2026 General Elections.

Key Areas of Focus During the Pre-Election Period

During this third reporting period, CCMG's Long-Term Observers continued to monitor the application of the legal and regulatory framework governing elections, with particular attention to how these provisions were being implemented as political activity intensified. This includes assessing the adequacy, consistency, and impartial enforcement of key laws such as the Constitution, the Electoral Process Act and Electoral Code of Conduct, the Public Order Act, the Cyber Security Act, and the Cyber Crimes Act, among others.

During this period, LTOs reported on key pre-election activities, including nominations and campaigns. CCMG's observers also reported on electoral administration and the Electoral Commission of Zambia's (ECZ) preparedness, including staff training carried out by the Commission, activities by the Zambia Police, and other stakeholders. Additional areas of focus included voter education/information and inclusion, the political environment, and the role of other security agencies. Observers also report on inducements and other forms of electoral malpractice that may compromise the fairness and credibility of the electoral process.

II. Key Highlights and Trends

Based on reports from CCMG's observers across all constituencies, districts, and provinces covering the period 27 April - 25 May 2026, and in comparison with findings from the two previous reporting periods (2 - 30 March, and 31 March - 28 April), CCMG observed the following key trends and developments (detailed below under III. Detailed Findings):

1. Electoral Code of Conduct Violations and Other Offences:

Compared to the previous reporting period, this reporting period recorded an increase in electoral tension, largely associated with the nomination processes held between 18 and 22 May.

While CCMG documented eight (8) critical incidents between 31 March and 28 April, primarily involving intra-party violence and the prohibited collection of personal details from voters, CCMG documented thirty-five (35) critical incidents during this reporting period, mostly linked directly to nominations, including one incident during presidential nominations, and twenty-six (26) incidents during parliamentary nominations. The concentration of incidents around nominations suggests that political competition has intensified as the electoral process has progressed from preparatory activities to candidate selection and formal contestation.

Presidential nominations were generally peaceful, with only one (1) reported incident involving the rejection of a presidential nomination, which resulted in a brief disturbance that was quickly contained by law enforcement. However, parliamentary nominations were characterized by a higher incidence of violence, intimidation, and disruption.

A notable pattern emerging from this reporting period is the prevalence of disputes linked to candidate adoption processes. Several incidents arose from multiple candidates possessing adoption certificates from the same party, disputes over political party endorsements, and dissatisfaction with candidate selection outcomes. Similar to the trend observed in the previous reporting period, where political tensions increasingly manifested through intra-party competition, CCMG's findings during this reporting period suggest that internal party disputes remain a significant driver of electoral tension and political violence, coupled with late-stage changes to the electoral process, which may have caused additional confusion.

CCMG further noted several incidents involving the obstruction of aspiring candidates from accessing nomination centres, harassment of independent candidates, destruction of nomination documents, and physical assaults on candidates and their supporters. In several instances, police intervention was required to restore order, with the police requiring reinforcement to contain escalating violence. CCMG also recorded two incidents of violence against women in elections (VAWE) and one incident of harassment of a candidate based on their disability status. Despite these incidents, the majority of constituencies were unaffected

by nomination-related incidents. Still, the increase in nomination-related violence and disruption represents a deterioration of the electoral and political environment compared to the previous reporting periods, and potentially serves as an early warning indicator as the country transitions to the official campaign period. Additionally, although these incidents were concentrated around nomination days and do not appear to reflect a broader pattern across the country, they nevertheless represent practices that undermine the principles of political inclusion, equal participation, and peaceful electoral competition.

Reports of other Electoral Code of Conduct violations remained relatively low. While 15% of CCMG's observers reported the distribution of money, foodstuffs, or other goods as inducements to support political parties or candidates, there were no significant increases in reports of hate speech, attacks on journalists, misuse of state resources, harassment of voter educators, or abuse directed at women, youth, or persons with disabilities.

2. Campaigning Outside of the Campaign Period and Other Practices to be Condemned:

Campaigning outside the official campaign period remained a notable feature of the electoral environment during this reporting period, with 15% of CCMG's observers reporting early campaigning by the United Party for National Development (UPND), compared to 6% for other political parties and candidates. As observed during the previous reporting periods, premature campaigning continued to occur despite existing legal and regulatory provisions, suggesting that early political mobilization has become an increasingly established feature of the pre-election environment.

This reporting period also highlights a growing convergence between premature campaigning activities and heightened political competition surrounding nominations. While the previous reporting period, in particular, was characterized largely by political mobilization and intra-party contestation, this reporting period demonstrates how these dynamics may have contributed to confrontations around access to electoral processes and candidate participation.

CCMG also continued to record reports of practices that CCMG has consistently reported as violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct or other legislation and which may contribute to electoral malpractice, namely the use of military-style attire, masked individuals participating in political activities, the use of vehicles without number plates, and allegations of supporters being ferried into constituencies. While these reports remain relatively limited, their continued occurrence suggests that previous concerns identified by CCMG have not been addressed.

While early indications, based on data from previous reporting periods, are that the political space generally remains open and that political actors enjoy broad freedom to organize and participate in electoral activities, CCMG documented two (2) instances of a political party

activity meeting in a public space being suspended or stopped. Overall, the findings suggest that while political participation is largely unrestricted, the nomination process revealed emerging tensions that require proactive intervention by electoral stakeholders to prevent further escalation during the campaign period.

3. Voter Education/Information:

Compared to the previous reporting period, CCMG documented a modest increase in voter education and information activities, although overall levels remain relatively low. In the last reporting period, CCMG recorded a sharp decline in voter education activities following the completion of the voter register inspection exercise, with voter education by ECZ declining from 47% to 8%, media from 25% to 1%, and targeted voter education activities for youth, women, and persons with disabilities declining substantially. This reporting period indicates some recovery, with 23% of observers reporting voter education activities conducted by ECZ officials or Voter Education Facilitators. Reports of voter education targeting women and youth increased to 11%, while voter education activities targeting persons with disabilities increased to 8%. Voter education efforts by civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and local media remained limited at less than 1% for civil society/faith-based organizations, and 9% for local media.

Voter education is vital because it provides citizens the knowledge and confidence required to take part effectively in election activities, particularly with the substantial changes to the electoral framework resulting from the Constitutional Reform in 2025 and the amendment of the Electoral Process Act. These findings indicate that while voter education efforts may be gradually increasing as the election approaches, these efforts remain insufficient relative to the growing intensity of political activity and complexity of the electoral environment. Further, CCMG notes the launch of the 2026 General Election Publicity and Voter Education Campaign by the ECZ on 1 June, and urges comprehensive and sustained civic and voter education in the lead up to the elections, including efforts specifically targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

4. Endorsements by Traditional or Religious Leaders and Government Employees:

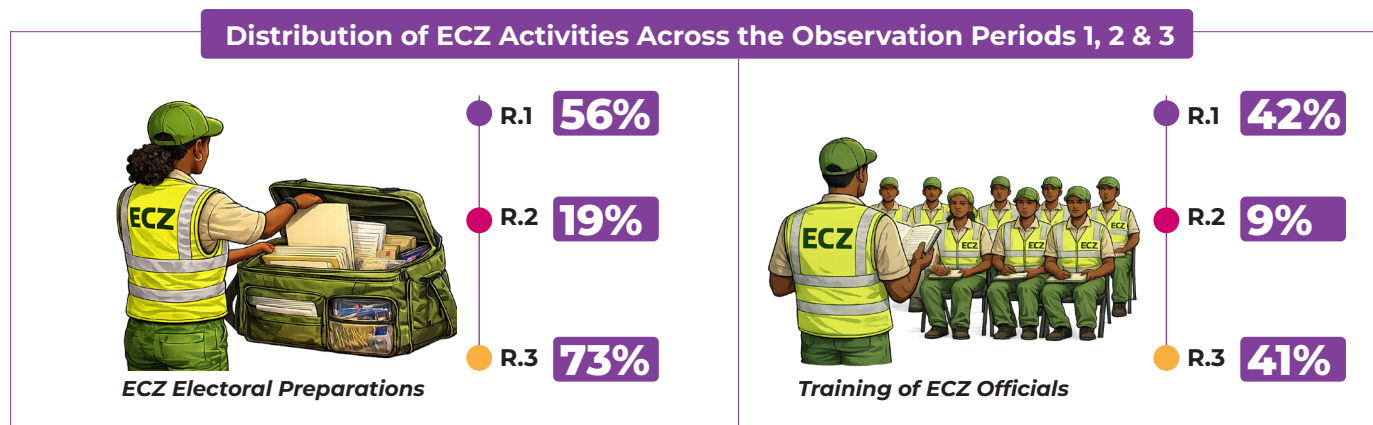
CCMG documented relatively low levels of endorsements of political parties and candidates by traditional leaders, religious leaders, and civil servants during this reporting period. Only three percent (3%) of CCMG's observers reported instances of traditional or religious leaders using their influence to support a political party or candidate. While this represents a slight increase compared to the previous reporting period, when only 1% of observers reported similar incidents, the overall prevalence remains low.

As in the previous reporting period, none of CCMG's observers reported instances of civil servants using their influence to support a political party or candidate, nor were there any reports of civil servants attending political party events.

III. Detailed Findings

Preparations by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)

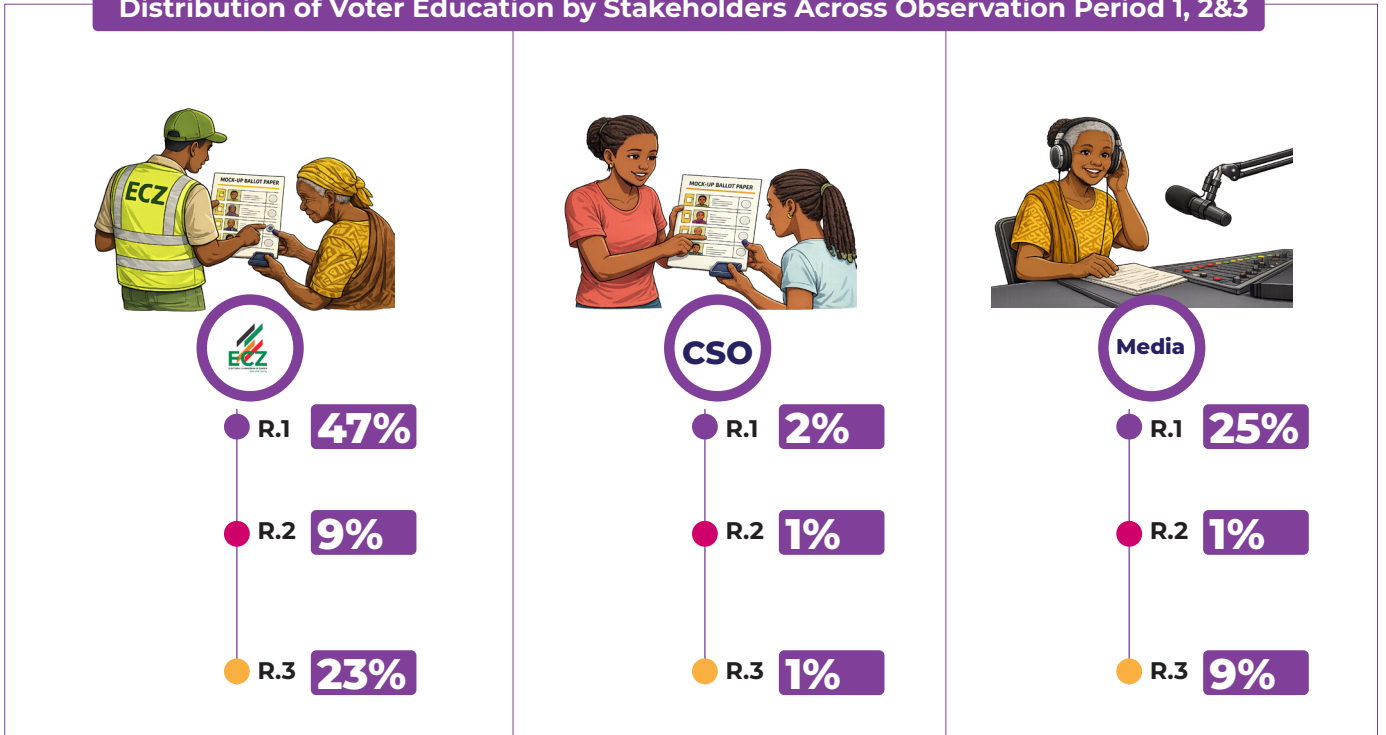
- During this reporting period, 73% of CCMG's observers reported that the ECZ was preparing for electoral activities, with party nominations as the key highlight. Additionally, 41% of CCMG's observers reported the training of District Electoral Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers (ROs).



Voter Education/Information

- Twenty-three percent (23%) of CCMG's observers reported voter education activities by ECZ officials or voter education facilitators (VEFs).
- One percent (1%) of CCMG's observers reported voter education activities conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs) or faith-based organisations (FBOs). For example, Advocacy for Good Governance in Nangoma Constituency (Central Province), Free Press Initiative in Ndola Central (Copperbelt Province), and the Bishops Council of Zambia in Kabwata Constituency (Lusaka Province).
- Nine percent (9%) of CCMG's observers reported voter education activities conducted by local media, including Ubuntu Integrity Media in Lusaka Province, Blue Sky FM in Central Province, Mufken TV and Radio Chimwemwe in Copperbelt Province, Radio Chikaya and Katete FM in Eastern Province, Lake Tanganyika Radio in North-Western Province, and Kariba FM in Southern Province

Distribution of Voter Education by Stakeholders Across Observation Period 1, 2&3



- Among those who reported the occurrence of voter education activities, 11% reported that the activities targeted youth, 10% targeted women, and 9% targeted persons with disabilities.

Political Parties, Traditional and Religious Leaders, and Civil Servants

- Fifteen percent (15%) of CCMG's observers reported campaigning outside the official campaign period by the United Party for National Development (UPND), and seven (7%) by another party/candidate (not UPND). These instances were reported in all provinces, while the nomination process and the commencement of the campaign period occasioned the increase in activity.
- Two percent (2%) of CCMG's observers reported instances in which traditional or religious leaders used their influence to support a particular party or candidate. These issues were prevalent in six (6) provinces and were mainly perpetrated by traditional leaders supporting candidates aspiring for member of parliament.

Province	Constituency	Type of Leader	Party
Central	Katuba, Mumbwa, Mwembezhi	Traditional	UPND
Copperbelt	Lufwanyama	Traditional	UPND
Eastern	Chama North, Lundazi, Petauke	Traditional, Religious	UPND
Luapula	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lusaka	Kafue	Traditional	UPND
Muchinga	Nakonde, Mafinga	Traditional	Citizens First, UPND
North-Western	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northern	Chimbamilonga	Traditional	NRPUP
Southern	N/A	N/A	N/A
Western	N/A	N/A	N/A

- Thirty-nine (39%) of CCMG's observers reported activities conducted by UPND, and twenty-three (23%) reported activities conducted by another party (other than UPND) or an independent candidate. Of the observers who reported UPND party activities, only twenty-four (24%) reported that police provided security during the party activities/meetings/rallies. Of those observers who reported activities by other parties or independent candidates, only nineteen (19%) reported police providing security during the activities/meetings/rallies for other parties or independent candidates.
- During this reporting period, none of CCMG's observers reported instances of non-elected government officials (i.e., civil servants) and/or government employees using their influence to support a particular party or candidate.

The Distribution of Money, Foodstuffs, or Other Items/Goods as an Inducement to Support a Political Party or Candidate

The distribution of handouts as an inducement to support a party or candidate continued to rise, with sixteen percent (16%) of CCMG's observers reporting the distribution of money, foodstuffs, or other items/goods. This was an increase from twelve percent (12%) recorded in the second reporting period and eight percent (8%) in the first reporting period. These instances took place across the country, primarily perpetrated by candidates for the National Assembly elections.

Distribution of Handouts and Inducement Across Observation Periods 1, 2 & 3



Province	Constituencies	Goods	Parties Involved	Position
Central	Bwacha, Lufubu, Mumbwa, Shibuyuji	Branded apparel, cash, food items (rice, cooking oil)	UPND, Independent	MP
Copperbelt	Bwana Mkubwa, Chifubu, Kafulafuta, Mufulira, Ndola Central, Roan	Food items (snacks, drinks), cash, wheelchair	UPND, Independent	MP
Eastern	Chadiza, Chama North, Chasefu, Chipata Central, Kasenengwa, Luangeni, Lumezi, Lundazi, Malambo, Milanzi, Mkaika, Nyimba, Petauke, Kapoche	Branded apparel, cash, football jersey, food items (meat), chitenges	Economic Progress Party, NRPUP, UPND, Independent	MP
Luapula	Chifunabuli, Chipili, Mwansabombwe, Mwense, Nchelenge	Branded apparel (chitenges, caps), cash, foodstuffs (mealie meal)	National Reconciliation Party, UPND, Tonse Alliance	MP, Council
Lusaka	Chongwe, Kanyama, Mandevu	Branded apparel (t-shirts, chitenges), mattresses, football jerseys, foodstuff (mealie meal)	UPND, Independent	MP
Muchinga	Chinsali, Mafinga, Mpika	Cash, branded apparel (t-shirts, chitenges)	Citizens First, PF, UPND	MP

N o r t h - Western	Chavuma, Solwezi West, Zambezi East	Foodstuff (meat), cash	Independent, UPND	MP
Northern	Chimbamilonga, Senga Hill	Branded apparel (t-shirts, chitenges), cash, football jerseys	NRPUP, UPND	MP
Southern	Chirundu, Livingstone, Mbabala, Monze Central, Siavonga, Sinazongwe	Branded apparel (t-shirts, chitenges), cash, wheelchairs,	UPND	MP, Council
Western	Nalikwanda	Branded apparel (t-shirts, chitenges, caps)	UPND	Council

General Political and Campaign Environment

- Two (2) CCMG observers reported incidents in which a political party's or an independent candidate's activity/meeting in a public space was suspended or stopped. These incidents were reported in Munali Constituency (Lusaka Province), stopped by UPND cadres, and in Livingstone Constituency (Southern Province) which was stopped by school officials, as detailed in the critical incidents section below.
- One (1) CCMG observer reported an incident where members/supporters of the UPND used threatening, abusive, and insulting language against the National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP) candidate during nominations in Chama North Constituency (Eastern Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section below.
- One (1) CCMG observer reported an incident where a candidate used tribe, ethnicity, religion, social group, or gender to incite violence in Magoye Constituency (Southern Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section.
- Three (3) CCMG observers reported the use of language that was inflammatory, defamatory, or insulting, or which constituted incitement to public disorder, insurrection, hate, or violence. These incidents were reported in Mumbwa Constituency (Central Province), Mufumbwe Constituency (North-Western Province), and Magoye Constituency (Southern Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section below.
- Four (4) CCMG observers reported instances of intimidation or harassment against a candidate or his/her supporters. These incidents were mainly reported in the Southern Province during the nomination processes, as detailed in the critical incidents section.
- Two (2) CCMG observers reported incidents of the arming of supporters in Magoye Constituency and Moomba Constituency, both in Southern Province.

- Ten (20) CCMG observers reported incidents where youth were dressed in military (combat) attire or wore masks. These were reported in six (6) provinces as indicated below:
 - On 10 May, an observer in Senanga Constituency (Western Province) reported that UPND youth clad in military attire provided security during a party activity.
 - On 11-12 May, an observer in Kabwe Central Constituency (Central Province) reported that youth affiliated with political parties and independent candidates were clad in military attire including berets, ninja masks, and army boots during the preprocessing of presidential supporters. This was despite the heavy presence of the police.
 - On 20 May, UPND youth in Kafulafuta Constituency (Copperbelt Province) wore masks that concealed their faces during the filing of parliamentary nominations
 - On 20 May in Solwezi West Constituency (North-Western Province), UPND youth were clad in party regalia and face masks to conceal their faces during the filing of parliamentary nominations.
 - On 20 May in Mazabuka Central Constituency (Southern Province), UPND cadres clad in military combat and face masks attacked an independent candidate.
 - On 21 May in Nalikwanda Constituency (Western Province), UPND youth dressed in military combat accompanied an aspiring candidate to the nomination centre to file their nomination.
 - On 20-22 May in Chirundu Constituency (Southern Province), UPND youth were clad in military combat at the nomination centre.
 - On 22 May, UPND youth in Katuba Constituency (Central Province) were clad in military-like regalia, boots, and face covering masks during the nominations process.
 - On 22 May in Bahati Constituency (Luapula Province), youth supporters for an independent aspiring candidate for member of parliament wore military-like masks at the nominations centre.
 - On 22 May in Magoye Constituency (Southern Province), UPND youth were clad in face masks and combat attire during the parliamentary nominations.
- Eight (8) CCMG observers reported that youth were ferried from an area outside their constituency. These incidents were reported in six (6) constituencies as detailed below.
 - On 6 May, in Senanga Constituency (Western Province), UPND ferried supporters to Sioma Constituency during a meeting by the Head of State in the area.
 - On 8 May in Nalikwanda Constituency (Western Province), UPND ferried supporters to Mongu Town to welcome the Head of State, who had travelled to commission the HH Clinic in the town.

- On 18 May in Mkushi South Constituency (Central Province), UPND ferried youth from Mkushi North to Mkushi South for a party activity.
- On 19 May in Nangoma Constituency (Central Province), UPND cadres were ferried to Mumbwa Constituency to rally behind the UPND aspiring candidate for member of parliament
- On 20 May in Moomba Constituency (Southern Province), UPND ferried cadres from Monze Central Constituency during the nomination process.
- On 21 May in Mkushi North Constituency (Central Province), UPND ferried youth from various constituencies into Mkushi North during parliamentary nominations.
- On 21 May in Bwana Mkubwa Constituency (Copperbelt Province), UPND ferried youth from outside the constituency to support the party during the nominations at Mushili Skills Training Centre.
- On 23 May in Mkaika Constituency (Eastern Province), UPND ferried youth to Milanzi Constituency to provide support for the nominations process.
- Two (2) CCMG observers reported the use of state vehicles for political party/candidate campaigns. These incidents were reported in Munali Constituency (Lusaka Province) and Solwezi-West Constituency (North-Western Province) as detailed in the critical incidents section below.
- One (1) CCMG observer reported the use of the cash for work initiative as an inducement to support a political party or candidate, as detailed below:
 - On 29 April, an observer in Nangoma Constituency (Central Province) reported that a cash for work meeting was held by the Ward Development Committee (WDC). The meeting evolved into a political campaign meeting where the WDC chairperson declared his interest to contest in the upcoming elections, and solicited support.
- One (1) CCMG observer in Kabwata Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported an arrest on a cyber-related crime, as detailed in the critical incidents section below.

Candidate Nominations

a. Presidential Nominations

CCMG deployed three (3) observers to observe Presidential nominations in Lusaka, and all were permitted to observe. All observers reported that there was civic and voter education/information on the schedule and venue for nominations, that the nominations centre opened on time, and that people had to go up steps/stairs to access the nominations centre. All observers reported that the ECZ adhered to established procedures, and there were no reports of malpractice in attaining the required number of supporters. Further, Presidential nominations were conducted calmly and peacefully, with no incidents of violence in or around the nomination centre reported.

b. National Assembly Nominations

CCMG deployed 314 long-term observers to observe National Assembly nominations from 20 to 22 May. CCMG's observers reported on ECZ preparations, adherence to nomination procedures, and the general political environment during this period. All observers were permitted to observe the process. Eighty-one percent (81%) of observers reported that there was civic and voter education/information on the schedule and venue for nominations in their locations. Sixty percent (60%) of observers reported that people had to go up steps/stairs to access the venue. Political party representatives were present during the processes, with UPND representatives present at 49% of centres observed, and other parties and candidates represented at 48% of centres observed. Observers from other CSOs/FBOs were present at 16% of the centres observed, and security officers were present in all the centres observed.

National Assembly nominations were characterized by notable incidents of violence and disruption. CCMG observers reported that at 11% of centres observed, one or more candidates did not successfully file their nomination papers, and at 5% of centres observed, at least one candidate was prevented from filing for nomination. The issues with candidates not being able to file included multiple adoption certificates issued to candidates from the same party for the same seat, and the illegal blocking of mostly independent candidates from filing their papers. Additionally, at 4% of centres observed, there was disruption of the process and three percent (3%) of observers reported that candidates were harassed, intimidated or threatened, detailed below under Critical Incidents.

Critical Incidents:

In this reporting period, CCMG documented thirty-five (35) critical incidents, including sixteen (16) incidents of politically-motivated violence or attacks; six (6) incidents of harassment, intimidation or threats to party supporters or candidates; two (2) incidents of disruption of nomination processes; two (2) incidents of the use of inflammatory, defamatory, or insulting language or incitement to public disorder; one (1) incident of the use of threatening and abusive language; one (1) incident of a political activity or meeting stopped; two (2) incidents of the use of government resources in party activities; two (2) incidents of arming of supporters; two (2) incidents of destruction of campaign materials; and one (1) incident of an arrest on cyber-related crimes. These included 2 incidents of VAWE against women candidates/supporters and one incident of harassment based on a candidate's disability status.

Politically-Motivated Violence or Attack (16 incidents)

Central Province (1 incident)

- On 20 May, at the Mumbwa Civic Centre (Central Province), there was an incident of violence when two UPND aspirants both attempted to file nomination papers for the Mumbwa Central parliamentary seat using adoption certificates issued by UPND. Clashes between rival supporters resulted in injuries and damage to property, including one of the candidate's vehicles. The situation overwhelmed police officers, prompting reinforcement from the Zambian Army to secure the area. Following consultations involving the ECZ, UPND officials, security personnel, and both aspirants, the ECZ confirmed one candidate as the official nominee. Order was restored later in the evening, although isolated unrest reportedly persisted in nearby areas for several hours. No arrests were reported.

Lusaka Province (3 incidents)

- On 20 May, confusion arose during the nomination process at Chinkuli Secondary School in Chongwe Constituency (Lusaka Province) when two UPND aspiring candidates each presented valid adoption letters for the same constituency. Election officials temporarily halted the process while verifying how both candidates had been issued credentials for the same seat. CCMG's observer reported that tensions escalated among supporters, leading to a near-physical altercation that briefly disrupted proceedings. Police intervened promptly to de-escalate the situation and restore order. No injuries were reported, and the process was later resumed.
- On 20 May, CCMG's observer at Justine Kabwe nomination centre in Mandevu Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported that UPND cadres obstructed access for several candidates and their supporters attempting to enter the facility. One of the

affected individuals was an independent candidate who was assaulted along with his supporters, with phones and other personal belongings reportedly stolen. Their vehicle was also damaged during the incident. No police involvement was reported.

- On 25 May, CCMG's observer in Munali Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported an incident of violence involving supporters of the UPND and an independent parliamentary aspirant. The incident occurred at a public ground in Kalikiliki Ward, where the aspiring candidate and members of his campaign team were attacked by UPND supporters who threw stones at them, resulting in injuries to three (3) individuals and damage to a campaign vehicle. No police involvement or arrests were reported.

Muchinga Province (1 incident)

- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Mafinga Constituency (Muchinga Province) reported an incident of violence at Muyombe Day Secondary School, where UPND supporters wearing face masks, and while using an unregistered Toyota Hilux, attacked and assaulted a Citizens First (CF) candidate and his supporters with machetes. No arrests were reported.

North-Western Province (4 incidents)

- On 19 May, CCMG's observer in Mufumbwe Constituency (North-Western Province) reported an incident of intra-party violence involving members of the UPND. The incident occurred during the accreditation process at Mufumbwe Civic Centre, where disagreements arose between rival UPND factions following the adoption of a candidate for the parliamentary seat. Supporters of one faction protested the party's decision to adopt a candidate from the opposing faction, escalating tensions into violence. Police officers intervened to restore order and subsequently apprehended two suspects in connection with the incident.
- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Chavuma Constituency (North-Western Province) reported a violent confrontation between two UPND aspiring candidates. The dispute arose after one candidate was denied endorsement as the party's candidate in favour of the other, with both candidates presenting adoption certificates. The ECZ accepted one candidate's nomination on the basis that it carried the required party authorisations. This decision angered rival supporters, resulting in a physical altercation and widespread disorder at the nomination centre. Police intervened and deployed tear gas to disperse the rival groups and restore order, with no arrests reported.
- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Solwezi West Constituency (North-Western Province) reported a violent disruption at the entrance to the nomination centre involving suspected UPND cadres and an independent aspirant. The independent aspirant and his supporters were reportedly blocked from entering the facility by cadres who

stated that independent candidates would not be permitted to file nominations. The situation escalated into violence, during which the independent aspirant and members of his group were assaulted. Police intervened, escorting the independent aspirant to a secure location and closing the gate to prevent further confrontation. Consequently, the independent aspirant was initially unable to file his nomination papers on the scheduled date.

- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Zambezi East Constituency (North-Western Province) reported that suspected UPND cadres harassed the Socialist Party (SP) candidate before he could file his nomination papers. The cadres reportedly tore up his nomination documents and prevented him from accessing the nomination centre. The SP candidate later obtained a police report, replaced his documents, and was subsequently allowed to file his nomination papers by the ECZ. There were no reports of police involvement.

Southern Province (6 incidents)

- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Mazabuka Central Constituency (Southern Province) reported that an independent aspiring MP candidate, accompanied by his wife and supporters, was attacked and blocked from entering the nomination centre by suspected UPND cadres, including two masked individuals. Police officers present attempted to de-escalate the situation but were initially overpowered as the cadres blocked access to the facility. The candidate and his wife were eventually able to get into the Town Clerk's office, where one cadre followed them and continued to harass the candidate in the presence of police officers. The police later intervened and removed the individual from the office. The candidate subsequently filed his nomination successfully, and later proceeded to a police station to lodge an official report of assault. Twenty (20) arrests were reported, with the police indicating that investigations into the incident continued.
- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Chirundu Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident involving an independent aspirant who initially arrived at the nomination centre at 11:00 hours, ahead of his scheduled time, and was instructed to return at 12:45 hours. The aspiring candidate later returned at approximately 13:00 hours, accompanied by supporters and forced his way into the centre, during which he verbally confronted police officers attempting to restore order. Although order was temporarily restored and the aspiring candidate was initially allowed to proceed with the nomination process, the situation escalated when police officers from Lusaka arrived and informed local officials that the aspiring candidate was required to answer to charges/allegations in a separate case in Lusaka, for which he had failed to appear at 09:00 hours. The officers attempted to effect an arrest, which the candidate resisted while allegedly insulting police personnel. The candidate was subsequently arrested and transported

to Lusaka, and his nomination process was not completed. Following the disruption, the Returning Officer declared the nomination centre closed for the day.

- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Choma Central Constituency (Southern Province) reported that an independent aspiring MP candidate was harassed and intimidated by suspected UPND cadres who attempted to block him from accessing the nomination centre and filing his nomination papers. Police intervened to restore order, after which the aspiring candidate was able to proceed and successfully file his nomination papers.
- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Moomba Constituency (Southern Province) reported that during the nomination process at Kaumba Secondary School, tensions escalated into violence involving suspected UPND cadres. After the UPND aspirant successfully filed his nomination, his supporters reportedly gathered outside the nomination centre, celebrating and playing loud music. When an independent candidate arrived to file his nomination, cadres allegedly blocked his entry, forcibly opened his vehicle, and assaulted him and his team, forcing them to leave the area. The situation worsened as supporters allegedly blocked roads leading to the nomination centre to prevent the independent candidate from returning to file his nomination. As a result, the candidate was only able to file his nomination the following day. No police involvement was reported.
- On 21 May, CCMG's observer in Monze Central Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident of violence involving supporters of the UPND and an independent candidate. The incident occurred shortly after the independent candidate left the nomination centre, when he was attacked by UPND supporters armed with knives and pangas. Police officers deployed teargas to disperse the crowd.
- On 22 May, CCMG's observer in Magoye Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident where UPND cadres harassed and attacked an independent aspiring candidate for member of parliament during nominations. The cadres were armed with machetes and sticks. No injuries or arrests were reported.

Western Province (1 incident)

- On 21 May, CCMG's observer in Luampa East Constituency (Western Province) reported an incident of violence at the nomination centre involving an independent candidate and his supporters who clashed with rival supporters. The incident occurred shortly after the independent candidate successfully filed his nomination papers, when a confrontation between the candidate's supporters and opposing supporters escalated into a physical altercation. The police dispersed the crowd and restored order. No injuries or arrests were reported.

Harassment, Intimidation, Threats to Party Supporters or Candidates (6 incidents)

- On 28 April, CCMG's observer in Siavonga Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident in Kanyebele Compound involving online intimidation of an aspiring candidate based on his disability. UPND supporters circulated a false death notice of the candidate online, apparently intended to discourage his participation in the elections. The candidate was also subjected to insults, including vulgar language and derogatory tribal remarks.
- On 19 May, CCMG's observer in Kapiri Mposhi District (Central Province) reported an incident involving a female aspiring candidate for Kapiri Mposhi Council Chairperson whose adoption papers were stolen by members of her political party a day before she was scheduled to file her nomination papers. Consequently, the aspiring candidate was unable to file her nomination and subsequently opted not to contest in the upcoming elections. There was no report of police involvement. This constitutes an incident of VAWE.
- On 21 May, CCMG's observer in Lusaka Central Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported an incident involving competing claims to the mayoral adoption certificate by two UPND candidates. The two individuals held adoption certificates for the same position, with one candidate subjected to intimidation and threats of violence by UPND cadres. Although the candidate was initially unable to file his nomination papers on the scheduled date, he successfully filed his nomination with police escort the following day.
- On 21 May, CCMG's observer in Monze Central Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident in which UPND cadres stormed the nominations venue, damaged a door, and blocked a Socialist Party aspiring candidate for Council Chairperson from accessing the venue. Consequently, the candidate was unable to file his nomination at the scheduled time until the ECZ intervened and facilitated the SP candidate's nomination.
- On 22 May, CCMG's observer in Bweengwa Constituency (Southern Province) reported that UPND cadres harassed an independent aspiring candidate for Member of Parliament during nominations. The candidate was chased away and prevented from filing his nomination papers at the initial attempt. Police officers later intervened and dispersed the cadres, allowing the candidate to complete the nomination process.
- On 22 May, CCMG's observer in Mazabuka Central Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident in Nakambala Township where a woman, who was mistakenly assumed to be filing nomination papers, was attacked by individuals of unknown political affiliation on the basis that she was a prospective candidate as she was wearing a red cap and was carrying a brown envelope. The woman was assaulted and stripped in the process. There was no report of police involvement.

Disruption of Nomination Processes (2 incidents)

- On May 19, CCMG's observers reported that the ECZ rejected the presidential nomination of United Progressive People of Zambia (UPPZ) presidential candidate on two grounds: that he was considered an undischarged bankrupt due to a prior court matter, and that his party's adoption certificate did not meet legal requirements as it lacked the Secretary General's name and signature. Following the announcement, the UPPZ presidential candidate publicly disputed the decision, rejecting the bankruptcy finding and alleging political motivation. His remarks triggered dissatisfaction among some supporters, leading to verbal exchanges and a brief commotion at the nomination centre. Police intervened to restore order, and the situation was contained without further escalation.
- On 20 May, a CCMG observer at Chinkuli Nomination Centre reported an incident of disruption at the nomination venue when two candidates presented what were believed to be valid adoption certificates for the same position. The situation led to tensions between supporters of the two candidates, resulting in clashes and a temporary suspension of nominations. Police intervened to restore order and calm the situation. No arrests were reported.

Use of Inflammatory, Defamatory, or Insulting Language or Incitement to Public Disorder (2 incidents)

- On 19 May, an observer in Mufumbwe Constituency (North Western Province) reported an incident of the use of insulting and defamatory language during a violent clash at the Mufumbwe Civic Centre during the accreditation process.
- On 22 May, an observer in Magoye Constituency (Southern Province) reported the use of inflammatory and derogatory language by alleged UPND cadres against an independent candidate during the nomination process.

Use of Threatening and Abusive Language (1 incident)

- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Chama North Constituency (Eastern Province) reported an incident in which the UPND candidate for member of parliament and his supporters used insulting and vulgar language against the National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP) candidate as the NRPUP candidate left the nomination centre after successfully filing his nomination papers for member of parliament.

Political Activity or Meeting Stopped (2 incidents)

- On 17 May, CCMG's observer in Livingstone Constituency (Southern Province) reported an incident in which school officials at Linda Secondary School stopped a UPND rally at the school grounds. Campaign meetings within the premises of educational institutions

during class hours are prohibited.

- On 24 May, a CCMG observer in Munalu Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported an incident where an independent candidate, who defected from the UPND party, was stopped from conducting a campaign meeting by suspected UPND cadres.

Use of Government Resources in Party Activities (2 incidents)

- On 17 May, CCMG's observer in Munalu Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported that the UPND candidate for Member of Parliament held a rally at Mahatma Gandhi School, where government vehicles, including Zambia Police vehicles, were used to ferry supporters.
- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Solwezi West Constituency (North-Western Province) reported that the UPND used government vehicles to ferry supporters to the nominations centre.

Arming of Supporters (2 incidents)

- On 20 May, CCMG's observer in Moomba Constituency (Southern Province) reported that UPND cadres armed with crude weapons and stones blocked an independent candidate from accessing the nomination centre.
- On 22 May, CCMG's observer in Magoye Constituency (Southern Province) reported the presence of UPND cadres armed with machetes and sticks at the nomination centre during National Assembly nominations.

Destruction of Campaign Materials (2 incidents)

- On 10 May, CCMG's observer in Kabwata Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported an altercation between UPND and PF supporters that led to the destruction of PF t-shirts.
- On 22 May, CCMG's observer in Magoye Constituency (Southern Province) reported that UPND cadres destroyed chitenge materials belonging to an independent candidate for Member of Parliament.

Arrests on Cyber-Related Crimes (1 incident)

- On 5 May, CCMG's observer in Kabwata Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported that police in Lusaka arrested the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party president and charged him with one count of transmitting unsolicited deceptive electronic communications under Section 19 of the Cyber Crimes Act of 2025. Authorities arrested the opposition leader following his circulation of a Facebook video in which the EFF leader alleged that the presidential motorcade had gotten lost in Chinsali District.

IV. Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on CCMG's findings from the observation of the general political and electoral environment in all constituencies, districts, and provinces in this reporting period, CCMG makes the following key recommendations to stakeholders:

Electoral Commission of Zambia

- **Strengthen Enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct:** CCMG notes the increase in politically-motivated violence, intimidation, harassment, and the disruption of nomination processes during this reporting period. CCMG calls on the ECZ to promptly investigate all reported breaches of the Electoral Code of Conduct and apply sanctions consistently and impartially, or escalate matters to the appropriate authorities for action. In addition, the ECZ should provide public updates on reports received, actions taken and associated outcomes to foster greater transparency, accountability and citizen awareness.
- **Improve Public Access to Electoral Information and Updates:** CCMG encourages the ECZ to enhance transparency by proactively publishing and regularly updating key electoral information, including nomination schedules, venues, procedural guidelines, and any changes affecting the electoral timelines or procedures. Such information should be disseminated through accessible national and local communication channels to ensure consistency between information shared with stakeholders at district level and information available to the wider public. Timely and transparent communication of electoral decisions and procedures is essential for promoting certainty, equal participation, and public confidence in the electoral process.
- **Expand Civic and Voter Education Efforts:** While voter education activities increased compared to the previous reporting period, overall levels remain insufficient given the commencement of the campaign period and the recent changes to the electoral legal framework. CCMG urges the ECZ to scale up voter education efforts nationwide, particularly targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- **Continue Stakeholder Engagement and Information Sharing:** CCMG encourages the ECZ to maintain regular engagement with political parties, civil society organizations, media institutions, and citizens to improve understanding of electoral activities and procedures, and to strengthen confidence in the electoral process.

Political Parties

- **Promote Peaceful Campaigning and Internal Party Discipline:** CCMG notes that many of the incidents documented during nominations arose from disputes related to candidate adoption and internal party competition. Political parties should strengthen their internal party democracy, including their candidate selection processes, to

reduce tensions and ensure that candidates are selected through democratic means. This also includes ensuring the women, youth and people with disabilities are afforded fair and equitable opportunities to stand for elective office. Political parties should also strengthen internal dispute resolution mechanisms and ensure that grievances are addressed peacefully and through established procedures.

- **Respect the Rights of All Candidates:** Political parties should take deliberate steps to ensure that their members and supporters respect the rights of rival candidates, including independent candidates, to participate freely in the electoral process without intimidation, obstruction, or violence. Members and supporters found to have violated internal party rules and the Electoral Code of Conduct should be sanctioned.
- **Uphold the Electoral Code of Conduct:** CCMG calls on all political parties and candidates to refrain from committing acts of political violence, hate speech, voter inducement, and any conduct that undermines peaceful electoral competition. Further, political parties should discourage members and supporters from wearing military-style attire, face masks, or other intimidating regalia during political activities as these practices contribute to tension and public insecurity.

Zambia Police Service

- **Ensure Equal and Impartial Provision of Security:** CCMG calls on the ECZ to provide adequate and impartial security to all political parties and candidates particularly during campaign activities, without fear or favour. Further, given the nomination-related incidents, the Police should strengthen preventative security measures and early warning responses in areas identified as potential hotspots.
- **Investigate Electoral Violence and Intimidation:** CCMG urges the Police to thoroughly investigate all reported incidents of violence, harassment, intimidation, obstruction of candidates, and destruction of property documented during this reporting period including during nominations, and hold perpetrators accountable.
- **De-Escalation Training and Elections Operating Procedures:** CCMG urges the Police to ensure that its officers deployed for elections-related duties are thoroughly trained in electoral processes, candidates and supporters' rights, the role of the police, and de-escalation tactics to better ensure a peaceful environment for the electoral process.

Civil Society Organisations

- **Scale Up Civic and Voter Education and Promote Peacebuilding:** CSOs should complement ECZ efforts by increasing voter education initiatives, particularly on peaceful participation, electoral rights and responsibilities, and recent changes to electoral legislation. Further, CCMG urges CSOs to intensify community-based peace

messaging, dialogue initiatives, and conflict prevention efforts in targeted areas, and particularly those experiencing heightened political tensions.

Traditional and Religious Leaders

- **Maintain Political Neutrality:** CCMG urges traditional and religious leaders to refrain from using their influence to support political parties or candidates, and to uphold the neutrality expected under the Electoral Code of Conduct. Traditional and religious leaders should use their influence to encourage tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and respect democratic processes throughout the campaign period.



Conclusion

The reporting period reveals a troubling pattern of electoral conflict and violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct across several provinces, especially during the nomination period. CCMG documented 35 critical incidents including politically motivated violence, intimidation, intra-party disputes, and procedural disruptions, all of which undermine equal participation of candidates and voters, safety and security. Of great concern was the violence and harassment linked to candidate adoption disputes and obstruction of independent candidates, which often escalated into physical confrontations, disruptions to nominations, and in some cases, injuries, property damage, and the blocking of candidates from filing nominations. These incidents reflect weaknesses in internal party dispute resolution and insufficient safeguards at nomination centres and accountability mechanisms for breaches of the Electoral Code of Conduct.

The recurrence of intimidation, arming of cadres, destruction of campaign materials, and use of public resources for political activities further points to structural challenges in ensuring a level playing field. While law enforcement and electoral officials were able to intervene and restore order in several instances, there were notable cases where police presence was overwhelmed, delayed, or absent, allowing disorder to escalate. The use of government resources for partisan activities also undermines fairness in the electoral process and raises concerns about the independence of key institutions.

CCMG reiterates its call for all political actors to adhere strictly to the Electoral Code of Conduct. There is an urgent need for strengthened enforcement mechanisms, improved coordination among electoral stakeholders, and proactive prevention of violence at all stages of the electoral cycle. CCMG remains committed to impartial observation, systematic documentation, and the promotion of a transparent, accountable, and credible electoral process. CCMG further urges political parties, Zambia Police and the ECZ to take decisive and transparent corrective action to prevent recurrence of such incidents and to safeguard peaceful democratic participation before, during and after the 13 August polls.

For more information on the work of CCMG and related reports and statements, please visit the CCMG website at [CCMG Zambia](http://www.ccmgzambia.org). To contact the CCMG secretariat, please send an email to info@ccmgzambia.org.



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