



Long Term Pre-Election
Observation Report No. 4



Contested Candidacies

*Constitutional Challenges and Electoral Integrity
Ahead of Zambia's 2026 General Elections*



OBSERVATION BRIEF

26 May - 08 June, 2026



GOOD
GOVERNANCE



STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



DEMOCRATIC
FUTURE

I. Introduction

As the campaign period came underway, CCMG continued its long-term election observation from 26 May through 8 June ahead of the 13 August general elections. During the reporting period, CCMG observed a primarily calm and peaceful electoral environment, with isolated incidents of violence, insulting or defamatory language, voter inducement, and other violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct. As a result of isolated incidents of violence, on 8 June, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), through a statement posted on Facebook, suspended campaigning in Mazabuka Central Constituency and condemned violence in Kabwe Central and Chawama Constituencies. The suspension was lifted, and campaigning resumed in Mazabuka Central on 14 June. The observations during the reporting period indicate that such incidents remain isolated compared to the reporting period 28 April to 25 May. Nonetheless, enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct remains infrequent, with few public announcements on investigations and punitive action by the ECZ and law enforcement agencies.

Two separate constitutional petitions raised significant pre-election legal questions under the Constitution of Zambia and the Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016 (EPA). The first case challenged the eligibility of more than 100 parliamentary candidates who filed nominations as independent candidates, arguing that these candidates remained members of political parties contrary to “Article 51(a)” of the Constitution, which requires that independent candidates must not belong to any political party at the time of nomination. The petition further raised unresolved interpretive issues around what constitutes “belonging to a political party,” including whether resignation must be formally accepted and what evidence is sufficient to prove party membership under the EPA and related nomination procedures. However, the Lusaka High Court dismissed the petition on procedural grounds under the High Court Election Petition Rules, without making any determination on the merits of the petition, meaning the Court did not interpret “Article 51(a)” or any relevant provisions of the Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016. As a result, the broader legal question on independent candidacies remains unresolved.

The second case concerned a petition against Dolika Banda, running mate to Socialist Party presidential candidate Dr. Fred M'membe, challenging her eligibility under “Article 100(1)(e)” and “Article 110(2)” of the Constitution, which require presidential and vice-presidential candidates to possess a Grade 12 certificate or its equivalent. Petitioners argued that Banda's 1978 Cambridge qualification did not meet this threshold, and that under “Article 52(6)”, the presidential ticket is joint, meaning any disqualification of a running mate would invalidate the entire ticket. The petition

also invoked “Article 266” on constitutional interpretation. The Constitutional Court dismissed the petition, holding that the applicants failed to discharge the burden of proof required under the Constitution and relevant provisions of the Electoral Process Act, finding the evidence insufficient to establish ineligibility.

CCMG notes that from an electoral governance perspective, the two cases are significant because they exposed legal uncertainty surrounding independent candidacies, party defections, nomination procedures, and internal party democracy, as well as uncertainty regarding the interpretation of the constitutional requirement for a “Grade 12 certificate or equivalent,” particularly in relation to foreign educational qualifications. This underscores the need for a clearer electoral legal and administrative framework.

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 fourth 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 the start of the campaign period. CCMG’s observers also reported on electoral administration and the ECZ’s preparedness, including staff training carried out by the Commission, activities by the Zambia Police, and other key 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 26 May - 8 June, 2026, and in comparison with findings from the three previous reporting periods covering the period 2 March - 25 May, 2026, CCMG observed the following key trends and developments (detailed below under *III. Detailed Findings*):

1. Electoral Code of Conduct Violations and Other Offences:

CCMG notes with concern the prevalence of Electoral Code of Conduct violations during the reporting period, specifically four (4) incidents of politically-motivated violence and four (4) incidents of threatening, abusive, or insulting language based on marginalized identities (including women, youth, persons with disabilities), tribe, or party affiliation. These include two (2) cases of violence against women in elections (VAWE) through physical and verbal abuse. Although the prevalence of politically-motivated violence and harassment, intimidation, or threats against voters, party supporters, or candidates has decreased since nominations closed, such incidents have persisted through the start of the campaign period. The character of such incidents has also changed, shifting from intra-party conflict before and during nominations to clashes between opposing party supporters or political opponents.

Incidents of voter inducement continued to rise, with 19% of observers reporting the distribution of money, foodstuffs, or other items compared to 16% in the previous reporting period. Such incidents occurred across the country and the political spectrum, primarily perpetrated by candidates for the National Assembly elections and Local Government elections. One observer in Western Province also reported that the Social Welfare Office distributed six (6) mobile phones to selected beneficiaries within the community who were also asked to support the ruling party. While incidents of handouts and voter inducements remain relatively low, it is concerning that such incidents are becoming more frequent, suggesting that incidents will continue to rise until election day. Additionally, six (6) observers reported incidents of buying or collecting of voters' cards or NRC details in Luapula, Muchinga, and Eastern provinces. CCMG urges the ECZ to strengthen enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct and quickly investigate all reported violations of the Code and apply sanctions consistently and impartially, or escalate matters to the appropriate authorities for action.

2. Voter Education/Information:

CCMG documented a significant increase in voter education and information activities conducted by the ECZ, rising from 23% during the last reporting period to 59% this reporting period. This increase in voter education and information activities corresponds with the start of the campaign period, just under three months from election day, and represents the highest frequency of such activities to date this electoral cycle. However, voter education efforts by civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and local media remain limited at 1% for civil society/faith-based organizations, and 15% for local media. Further, voter education and information activities targeting special interest groups rose for all groups this reporting period, from 11% to 24% for activities targeting youth, from 10% to 23% targeting women, and from 9% to 19% targeting persons with disabilities.

CCMG commends the ECZ's launch of the 2026 General Election Publicity and Voter Education Campaign on 1 June and the subsequent increase in recorded voter education and information activities documented during this period. Stakeholders should continue to prioritize and intensify voter education and information activities, especially those targeting women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Widespread voter education is essential in ensuring the electorate is well-prepared to participate in the voting process with trust and confidence. Voter education and information are of particular importance this electoral cycle, given recent changes to the electoral legal framework (Constitutional Amendment Act No. 13 of 2025 and the Electoral Process [Amendment] Act of 2026).

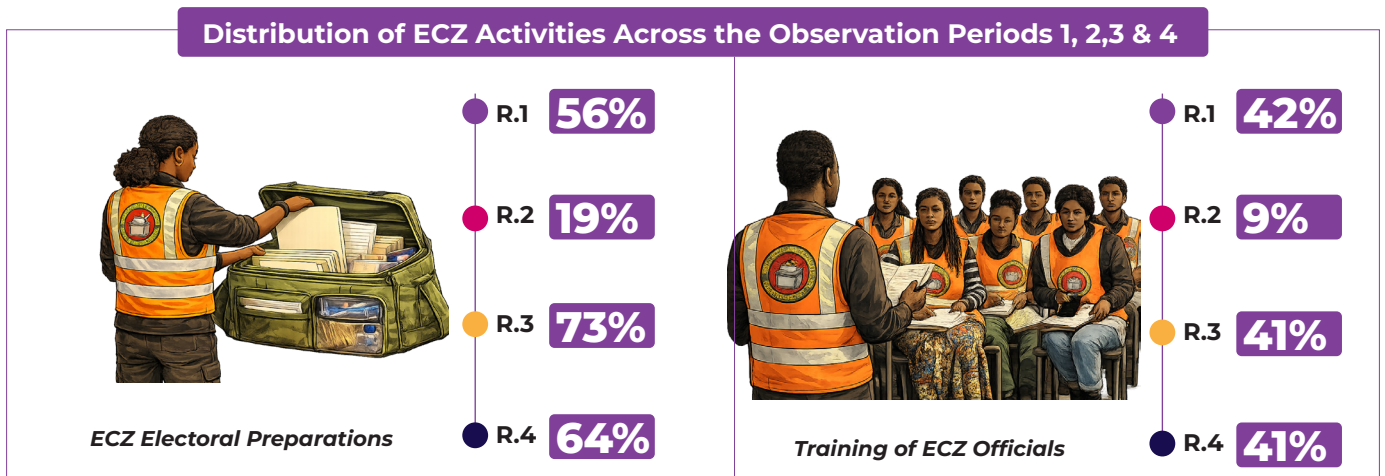
3. Endorsements by Traditional or Religious Leaders and Government Employees:

CCMG continued to document relatively low levels of endorsements of political parties and candidates by traditional and religious leaders during this reporting period. Only 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, representing a slight decrease compared to the previous reporting period (3%). These endorsements were observed in six (6) provinces with traditional leaders as the primary perpetrators. During this reporting period, there were no reports of civil servants attending political party events. However, one (1) CCMG observer reported an instance of civil servants using their influence to support the ruling party through social protection program resources.

III. Detailed Findings

Preparations by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)

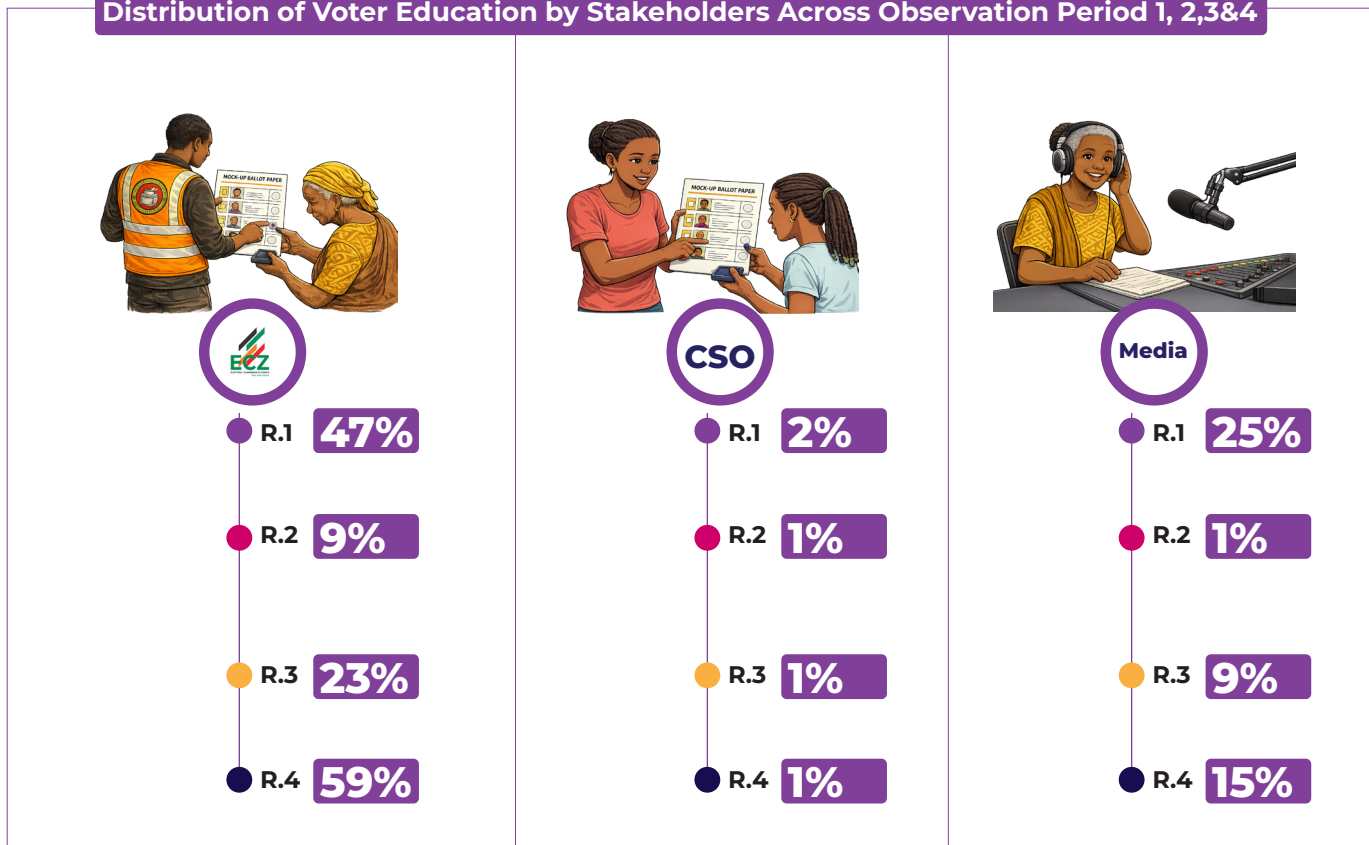
- During this reporting period, 64% of CCMG's observers reported that there were preparations for elections by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ). Additionally, 41% of the observers reported that there was training of ECZ officials in their constituencies for District Electoral Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers (ROs).



Voter Education/Information

- Fifty-nine percent (59%) of CCMG's observers reported voter education activities by ECZ officials or voter education facilitators (VEFs). Additionally, one percent (1%) of CCMG's observers reported voter education activities conducted by civil society organisations (CSOs) or faith-based organisations (FBOs). For example, FODEP in Chama North (Eastern Province), YWCA in Nakonde (Muchinga Province), AHO in Mazabuka Central (Southern Province), and ZNWL in Nakonde (Muchinga Province) and Lubasenshi (Northern Province).
- Fifteen percent (15%) of CCMG's observers reported voter education activities conducted by local media, including Sunny FM Radio in Kapiri Mposhi (Central Province), Serenje Radio in Muchinga Constituency (Central Province), Luanshya Radio in Luanshya Constituency (Copperbelt Province), Kanele Radio FM in Chasefu Constituency (Eastern Province), Lumezi FM in Lumezi Constituency (Eastern Province), Luapula Radio in Nchelenge (Luapula Province), Tuta Radio in Chipili (Luapula Province), Hot FM and Times of Zambia in Kabwata Constituency (Lusaka Province).

Distribution of Voter Education by Stakeholders Across Observation Period 1, 2,3&4



- Among those who reported the occurrence of voter education activities, 24% reported that the activities targeted youth, 23% targeted women, and 19% targeted persons with disabilities.

Political Parties, Traditional and Religious Leaders, and Civil Servants

- 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 to be members of parliament.

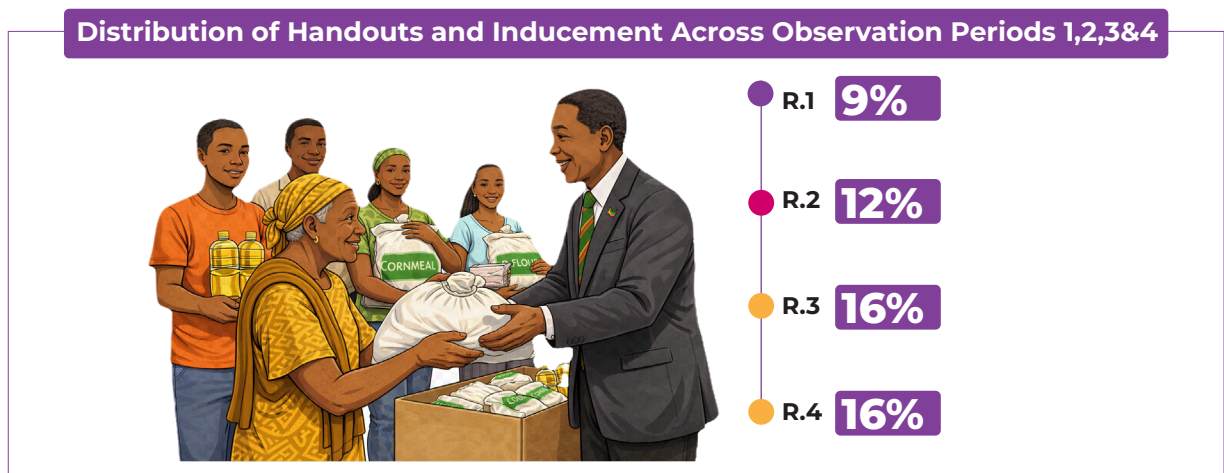
Province	Constituency	Type of Leader	Party
Central	Mumbwa, Mwembezhi	Traditional	UPND
Copperbelt	Lufwanyama	Traditional	UPND
Eastern	Chama South, Lundazi, Petauke, Milanzi	Traditional	NRPUP, UPND
Luapula	N/A	N/A	N/A

Lusaka	N/A	N/A	N/A
Muchinga	Mafinga, Nakonde	Religious, Traditional	Citizens First, UPND
North-Western	Chavuma	Traditional	UPND, Independent
Northern	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southern	N/A	N/A	N/A
Western	Nalikwanda	Traditional	UPND

- Fifty-six (56%) of CCMG’s observers reported activities conducted by UPND, and fifty-three (53%) reported activities conducted by another party (other than UPND) or an independent candidate. Of the observers who reported UPND party activities, only nine (9%) reported that police provided security during the party activities/meetings/rallies. Of those observers who reported activities by other parties (not UPND) or independent candidates, only ten percent (10%) reported police providing security during the activities/meetings/rallies for other parties or independent candidates.
- One (1) CCMG observer reported an instance of non-elected government officials (i.e., civil servants) 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 on an upward trend, with nineteen percent (19%) of CCMG’s observers reporting the distribution of money, foodstuffs, or other items/goods. This was an increase from sixteen percent (16%) in the third reporting period, twelve percent (12%) recorded in the second reporting period, and eight percent (8%) in the first reporting period. These instances occurred across the country and were primarily perpetrated by candidates for the National Assembly and Local Government elections.



Province	Constituencies	Goods	Parties Involved	Position
Central	Kapiri Mposhi, Katuba, Mkushi South, Muchinga, Mumbwa, Mwembeshi, Nangoma	Cash, foodstuff (meat), party-branded apparel (t-shirts, caps)	UPND	MP, Councillor
Copperbelt	Bwana Mkubwa, Chimwemwe, Kamfinsa, Lufwanyama, Roan	Cash, party-branded apparel (chitenges), food items (mealie meal)	Citizens First, NRPUP, UPND	MP, Councillor
Eastern	Chadiza, Chama North, Chama South, Chipata Central, Kasenengwa, Luangeni, Lundazi, Mkaika, Milanzi, Msanzala	Branded apparel (t-shirts, caps), food items (salt, meat)	NRPUP, Zambia Must Prosper Party, Independent	MP, Councillor
Luapula	Cheinge, Kawambwa, Mansa Central, Mwansabombwe, Nchelenge	Cash, food items (meat, salt, cooking oil, rice)	UPND	MP
Lusaka	Kabwata, Kanyama	Branded party apparel (t-shirts), cash, food stuff (mealie meal)	UPND	MP, Councillor
Muchinga	Chinsali, Isoka, Kanchibiya, Mafinga, Mfuwe, Nakonde, Shiwan'gandu	Branded party apparel (t-shirts, chitenges), cash	Citizens First, NRPUP, UPND	MP, Councillor
North - Western	Chavuma, Solwezi Central	Branded party apparel (t-shirts), cash, food items	UPND, Independent	Councillor
Northern	Chimbamilonga	Food items (mealie meal, sugar, cooking oil)	Socialist Party	Supporters
Southern	Gwembe, Livingstone, Monze Central, Siavonga	Branded party apparel (t-shirts), cash, food items (drinks, cooking oil, biscuits), fuel	UPND, Independent	MP, Supporters
Western	Nalikwanda, Nkeyema	Branded party apparel (t-shirts, chitenges), bicycles	UPND	MP, Councillor

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 Mazabuka Central and Siavonga, both in Southern Province, as detailed in the critical incidents section below.
- One (1) CCMG observer reported an incident where a political party/independent candidate was denied permission or had their permission revoked by police for an activity/meeting in Mazabuka Central (Southern Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section.
 - Two (2) CCMG observers reported campaign activities being conducted in a prohibited place. These incidents were reported in:
 - Livingstone (Southern Province), where the UPND conducted campaign meetings at Namatama Secondary School and St. Raphael's School during normal school hours.
 - Shangombo (Western Province), where several political parties, including ZMP and UPND, were reported to be holding party activities on school grounds during class time.
- Two (2) CCMG observers reported incidents of the use of threatening, abusive, or insulting language against women as voters or party supporters. Both incidents were reported in Shangombo (Southern Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section. Such incidents constitute VAWE cases.
- Two (2) CCMG observers reported incidents of the use of threatening, abusive, or insulting language against youth as voters or party supporters. These were reported in Chama North (Eastern Province) and Chawama (Lusaka Province), resulting in violence, as detailed in the critical incidents section.
- Two (2) CCMG observers reported use of threatening, abusive, or insulting language against women candidates in their areas in Malambo Constituency (Eastern Province) and Shangombo (Western Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section below. Such incidents constitute VAWE cases.
- Three (3) CCMG observers reported intimidation or harassment against a candidate or his supporters. Similarly, there were two (2) reported incidents of physical assault during political party activities or events in Kabwe Central Constituency (Central Province) and in Chawama Constituency (Lusaka Province), as detailed in the critical incidents section below.

- One (1) CCMG observer in Chawama Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported a case of arming of supporters where UPND cadres attacked Tonse Alliance supporters and threw stones at them, as detailed in the critical incidents section below.
- Six (6) CCMG observers reported incidents of the collection/buying of voters' cards or NRC details (not taking away the physical cards), as detailed in the critical incidents section.
- Eight (8) CCMG observers reported instances where youth were clad in military-like (combat) attire or wore masks to cover their faces. These incidents were reported in seven (7) provinces.

Province	Constituency	Dress Type	Party Affiliation	Activity
Central	Kabwe Central	Cargo pants, barrets, boots, ninja masks	NRPUP	Meeting
Copperbelt	Kwacha	Ninja masks	NRPUP	Campaign
Copperbelt	Bwana Mkubwa	Ninja masks	UPND	Campaign
Lusaka	Kabwata	Ninja Masks	UPND	Door-to-door activity
North-Western	Kasempa	Military-like gloves and boots, barrets	UPND	Church service
Northern	Chimbamilonga	Military-like boots, masks	UPND	Meeting
Southern	Mazabuka Central	Ninja masks	UPND	Campaign activity
Western	Nalikwanda	Military combat	UPND	Campaign activity

- One (1) CCMG observer in Mkushi North Constituency (Central Province) reported an incident where the NRPUP ferried youth from Mkushi South to Mkushi North for a campaign meeting on 27 May.
- One (1) CCMG observer in Chimbamilonga Constituency (Northern Province) reported that a government vehicle belonging to the District Commissioner was used by the UPND supporters to transport foodstuffs to their "command centre" in Kampinda Ward.

- Two (2) CCMG observers reported destruction of campaign materials as indicated in the table below:

Province	Constituency	Perpetrator	Victim	Material Destroyed
Copperbelt	Mufulira	Unknown	Independent	Defaced campaign posters
Eastern	Chama North	NRPUP	UPND	Defaced campaign posters

- One (1) CCMG observer reported that the distribution of social protection program resources was used as an inducement to support a political party or candidate. This was reported in Nkeyema Constituency (Western Province) at the Social Welfare Office, where six (6) mobile phones were distributed to selected beneficiaries within the community who were also asked to support the ruling party.

Critical Incidents:

In this reporting period, CCMG documented seventeen (17) critical incidents, including four (4) incidents of politically-motivated violence or attacks; two (2) incidents of shutdown of political party events; eight (8) incidents of buying/collecting voters' card or NRC numbers; one (1) incident of harassment/intimidation/threats to party supporters; and two (2) incidents of a party member using offensive/vulgar/insulting language. These included 2 incidents of VAWE against women candidates.

Politically-Motivated Violence or Attack (4 incidents)

- On 5 June, CCMG's observer in Chawama Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported clashes in the John Howard area following an alleged attack by suspected UPND cadres on members of the Tonse Alliance. The observer reported that the Tonse Alliance group was returning from a memorial service for the late former President Edgar Lungu held at St. Regina Parish, which was attended by the Tonse Alliance presidential candidate and his running mate. During the confrontation, Tonse Alliance supporters reportedly retaliated to defend themselves. Zambia Police officers later intervened and restored order at the scene. One member of the UPND was injured during the incident and was subsequently taken to a hospital to receive treatment.
- On 5 June, CCMG's observer in Chama North Constituency (Eastern Province) reported an incident of assault at Chief Chibale's Palace following a memorial ceremony held in honour of the late Chief Chibale. The observer reported that an ensuing confrontation escalated into violence when supporters of NRPUP began playing campaign songs associated with the Tonse Alliance presidential candidate after the memorial service, prompting the chief's retainer to intervene and instruct the group to stop, stating that the palace and memorial event were not appropriate venues for

political campaigning. The chief's retainer was assaulted before the group fled the scene. On 6 June, the police visited the palace to investigate the incident, with no arrests reported.

- On 6 June, CCMG's observer in Shangombo Constituency (Western Province) reported an incident in Shika Village of Keyana Ward where a female independent aspiring candidate for member of parliament was confronted by a group of individuals of unknown political affiliation (although some of the individuals involved wore UPND-branded t-shirts) during her campaign activities. This group of individuals verbally abused her, using derogatory and insulting language. When members of the candidate's campaign team intervened, there was a physical altercation resulting in injury to some of the campaign team members. Additional individuals from the community reportedly joined the confrontation, further escalating the violence. CCMG's observer reported that the candidate was warned not to return to Shika Village or other parts of Keyana Ward and was threatened with death should she continue campaigning in the area. There was no report of police involvement, although the matter was later reported to the Natukoma Police Post for follow-up action. This constitutes an incident of VAWE.
- On 7 June, CCMG's observer in Kabwe Central Constituency (Central Province) reported an incident in Katondo Ward where a political rally held by the NRPUP aspiring candidate for member of parliament was attacked by a group of known UPND cadres who damaged chairs, a public address system, and campaign materials. Several individuals sustained injuries during the attack, while others got away unharmed. Some of the vehicles parked at the venue also had their windows damaged. Police officers intervened to restore order, with no arrests reported. During the same incident, youths were clad in military-style combat attire, including jungle boots and ninja masks.

Shutdown of a Political Party Event (2 incidents)

- On 30 May, CCMG's observer in Siavonga Constituency (Southern Province) reported that an independent aspiring candidate for member of parliament, aligned to the Tonse Alliance, was stopped by the Zambia Police from holding a campaign event at ZESCO grounds. Police officers indicated that the venue was government property and therefore not authorized for the conduct of rallies or campaign activities.
- On 7 June, CCMG's observer in Mazabuka Central Constituency (Southern Province) reported that the campaign launch of an independent aspiring member of parliament was cancelled by the Zambia Police despite the candidate presenting a valid police permit for use of the designated venue. The observer reported that, according to the ECZ campaign timetable, the independent candidate was scheduled to campaign in

Nega Nega. However, the candidate had reportedly entered into a written agreement with another independent candidate to exchange campaign dates and venues, an arrangement that was reportedly witnessed by both police officers and officials from the District Electoral Office. Despite the documentation presented, police officers stopped the event from proceeding and dispersed the supporters using tear gas. The police stated that the action was taken on the grounds that the event was likely to cause a breach of the peace in the area.

Buying/Collecting of Voters' Card or NRC Numbers (Not Taking Cards) (8 incidents)

- On 2 June, CCMG's observer in Pambashe Constituency (Luapula Province) reported that members of the NRPUP collected NRC details from constituents in exchange for money.
- On 2 June, CCMG's observer in Mweru Constituency (Luapula Province) reported an incident where NRPUP members collected NRC details from people in Lupili area of Mwatishi Ward in exchange for K20 cash and unbranded chitenge materials, while conducting door-to-door campaigns.
- On 6 June, CCMG's observer in Chama Central Constituency (Eastern Province) reported that an individual affiliated with the UPND collected voters' cards and NRC numbers from residents of Ngoli Village of Bazimu Ward, and promised chitenge materials and money in exchange for the information.
- On 6 June, CCMG's observer in Chipili Constituency (Luapula Province) reported that UPND members, gathered at a known UPND member's residence in Kapapula Village for a meeting, collected voters' cards and NRC details from attendees, and promised money in exchange for their votes.
- On 6 June, CCMG's observer in Chipili Constituency (Luapula Province) reported that PF-aligned individuals moved around the constituency collecting voters' cards and NRC numbers from constituents, reportedly for the creation of party branches, and promised monetary rewards once this process was completed.
- On 7 June, CCMG's observer in Nchelenge Constituency (Luapula Province) reported that the NRPUP aspiring candidate for Chimpili Ward Councillor collected voters' cards and NRC numbers from constituents, including her supporters.
- On 8 June, CCMG's observer in Chadiza Constituency (Eastern Province) reported that two UPND members, including the UPND Youth Chairperson, conducted door-to-door visits in Chadiza West Ward, where the two individuals collected NRC numbers and voters' card numbers from households within the area.

- On 8 June, CCMG's observer in Chinsali Constituency (Muchinga Province) reported that an aspiring UPND councillor for Chinsali Ward, together with his supporters, collected voters' card details from marketeers at Chinsali Market. The observer reported that marketeers who provided their voters' card details were offered K200.

Harassment, Intimidation, Threats to Party Supporters or Candidates (1 incident)

- On 8 June, CCMG's observer in Chama North Constituency (Eastern Province) reported an incident of intimidation involving supporters of NRPUP and UPND in Malama Village of Nkhankha Ward. The observer reported that the NRPUP chairperson for the Chibale area confronted a group of UPND youths who were placing campaign posters on shops and other locations near his shop, and chased, insulted, and threatened the youths while carrying an axe.

Party Member or Supporter Using Inflammatory/Defamatory/Vulgar/Offensive/Insulting Language (2 incidents)

- On 1 June, CCMG's observer in Malambo Constituency (Eastern Province) reported that a female independent aspiring candidate for member of parliament lodged a complaint with the Conflict Management Committee alleging that the UPND parliamentary candidate had subjected her to harassment, defamatory remarks, insulting language, and gender-stereotypical comments during his campaign activities in Msoro. The observer reported that during a hearing before the Conflict Management Committee, the UPND candidate acknowledged making some of the statements and engaging in the conduct cited in the complaint. The UPND candidate reportedly stated in his defense that his actions were in response to defamatory remarks that the female candidate had allegedly made against him during her campaign activities. Following deliberations, the Conflict Management Committee advised both parties to apologize to each other and to conduct their campaigns in a free, fair, and respectful manner. This constitutes an incident of VAWE.
- On 5 June, CCMG's observer in Chawama Constituency (Lusaka Province) reported that youths were verbally abused and insulted by UPND members when UPND and Tonse Alliance members clashed.

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 and Public Accountability:** CCMG notes that while incidents of politically motivated violence declined compared to the nomination period, violations of the Electoral Code of Conduct continue to occur, including politically motivated violence, voter inducement, collection of voters' card and NRC details, use of offensive language, and campaign activities in prohibited places. CCMG urges the ECZ to promptly investigate all reported violations and apply sanctions consistently, transparently, and impartially. The Commission should regularly provide public updates on complaints received, investigations undertaken, and actions taken to strengthen public confidence in the electoral process.
- **Enhance Monitoring of Emerging Electoral Malpractices:** CCMG is particularly concerned by the increasing reports of voter inducement and the collection of voters' card and NRC details by political actors. The ECZ should intensify public awareness campaigns on prohibited electoral practices and work closely with law enforcement agencies to investigate and address these incidents before they become more widespread.
- **Sustain and Expand Voter Education Efforts:** CCMG commends the ECZ for the significant increase in voter education and information activities following the launch of the 2026 General Election Publicity and Voter Education Campaign. The Commission should sustain this momentum and further expand outreach efforts, particularly in rural and underserved communities, with targeted programming for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Special emphasis should be placed on explaining recent legal reforms, voting procedures, and voter rights and responsibilities.
- **Promote Consistent Stakeholder Engagement:** CCMG encourages the ECZ to continue engaging political parties, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, media institutions, and security agencies to address emerging electoral challenges and strengthen confidence in the electoral process.

Political Parties

- **Promote Peaceful and Issue-Based Campaigning:** CCMG urges all political parties and candidates to ensure that campaigns are conducted peacefully and in accordance with the Electoral Code of Conduct. Party leaders should actively discourage violence, intimidation, harassment, and the use of inflammatory or insulting language against

political opponents, supporters, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups.

- **Respect Political Rights and Freedoms:** CCMG calls on all political parties and candidates to respect the right of all political actors to campaign freely and participate in the electoral process without interference, intimidation, or obstruction. Political parties and candidates should remind their supporters that political competition must take place within the confines of the law and democratic norms.
- **End Voter Inducement and Collection of Voter Information:** CCMG calls on political parties and candidates to immediately cease the distribution of money, foodstuffs, and other material inducements intended to influence voters. Parties should also refrain from collecting voters' card or NRC details, a practice that may undermine public confidence in the secrecy and integrity of the vote.
- **Discourage Intimidating Conduct:** Political parties should prohibit the use of military-style attire, face masks, and other forms of intimidating regalia during campaign activities, and ensure that members and supporters who engage in misconduct are held accountable.

Zambia Police Service

- **Provide Equal and Impartial Security:** CCMG urges the Zambia Police Service to provide professional, impartial, and adequate security to all political parties, candidates, and citizens participating in campaign activities. Security responses should be guided by the principles of neutrality, legality, necessity, and proportionality.
- **Investigate and Prosecute Electoral Offences:** The Police should thoroughly investigate all reported incidents of political violence, voter intimidation, destruction of campaign materials, voter inducement, and other electoral offences. Individuals responsible for electoral misconduct should be held accountable regardless of political affiliation.
- **Safeguard Freedom of Assembly and Political Participation:** CCMG encourages the Police to ensure that decisions relating to campaign meetings and public gatherings are applied consistently and fairly. Restrictions on campaign activities should be based on clear legal grounds and communicated transparently to all stakeholders

Anti-Corruption Commission

- **Investigate Electoral Corruption and Vote Buying:** CCMG urges the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to swiftly investigate electoral corruption, including incidents of vote buying. In particular, the ACC should investigate the reported distribution of mobile phones under a social protection program at the Social Welfare Office in Nkeyema Constituency, where beneficiaries were allegedly encouraged to support the ruling party for receiving mobile phones. The ACC should probe the criteria used to select

beneficiaries and the officials involved in the distribution, and take appropriate action where evidence of wrongdoing is established.

Civil Society Organisations

- **Complement Voter Education and Information Efforts:** CCMG encourages civil society organisations and faith-based organisations to intensify voter education activities, particularly in communities where outreach remains limited. Such efforts should focus on electoral rights, peaceful participation, the secrecy of the vote, and the dangers of electoral malpractice.
- **Promote Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention:** Civil society organisations should strengthen community dialogue initiatives, peace messaging, and early warning mechanisms, particularly in areas experiencing heightened political competition and electoral tensions.
- **Monitor and Raise Awareness on Electoral Malpractice:** CSOs should enhance efforts to document and raise public awareness about voter inducement, the collection of voters' information, violence against women in elections, and other practices that undermine electoral integrity.

Traditional and Religious Leaders

- **Maintain Political Neutrality and Promote Peaceful Participation:** CCMG urges traditional and religious leaders to continue exercising restraint and refrain from using their positions of influence to support political parties or candidates. Their role should be to foster peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and respect for democratic processes. Traditional and religious leaders should use their influence to encourage non-violence, civic responsibility, and mutual respect among political actors and community members throughout the campaign period.

Conclusion

The findings from this reporting period indicate that the electoral environment remained largely calm and peaceful as the official campaign period commenced. Compared to the nomination period, CCMG observed a reduction in incidents of politically-motivated violence and electoral tensions. Nevertheless, isolated incidents of violence, intimidation, offensive language, and disruptions to campaign activities continue to pose risks to peaceful electoral competition. Of particular concern is the continued increase in voter inducement and the emergence of multiple reports involving the collection of voters' cards and NRC details by political actors. These practices have

the potential to undermine voter confidence and weaken the integrity of the electoral process if left unaddressed. CCMG is also concerned by incidents of violence against women in elections and the persistence of intimidating conduct, including the use of military-style attire and masked individuals during political activities.

At the same time, CCMG notes the significant increase in voter education and information activities undertaken by the ECZ following the launch of its nationwide voter education campaign. Continued efforts by the ECZ, civil society organisations, the media, and other stakeholders will be essential to ensure that all eligible voters are adequately informed ahead of election day.

From an electoral governance perspective, CCMG further notes that the two constitutional cases examined in this reporting period are significant as they exposed persistent legal uncertainty surrounding independent candidacies, party defections, nomination procedures, and internal party democracy. The cases also highlight ambiguity in the interpretation of the constitutional requirement for a "Grade 12 certificate or equivalent," particularly in relation to foreign and legacy educational qualifications. This underscores the need for clearer legal and administrative standards to guide the assessment of academic equivalency in electoral nominations and to strengthen consistency, predictability, and confidence in the nomination process.

As the campaign period advances, CCMG calls on all electoral stakeholders to uphold the rule of law, respect political rights and freedoms, and demonstrate a firm commitment to peaceful, inclusive, and issue-based campaigning. Sustained enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct, coupled with proactive conflict prevention and voter education efforts, will be critical in safeguarding the credibility and integrity of Zambia's 2026 General Elections.

For more information on the work of CCMG and related reports and statements, please visit the CCMG website at CCMG Zambia. To contact the CCMG secretariat, please send an email to info@ccmgzambia.org.





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