ZIMBABWE ELECTION SUPPORT NETWORK

BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION OBSERVATION REPORT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following is a comprehensive analysis and documentation of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network's (ZESN's) observation of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) process in Zimbabwe. It covers all the critical moments of the BVR process from its inauguration and inception in September 2017 to completion of the extended BVR Blitz exercise in February 2018. The processes covered in this report include the pre-BVR process (Polling Station Mapping Exercise, BVR Tender Processes, BVR Site Validation Tests) and the various stages of the BVR process. It covers the BVR Blitz in detail, starting with a contextual analysis of the use of Biometrics in electoral processes globally, especially in Africa, including motivations and reasons for the adoption of BVR.

The report also provides a contextual overview of the Zimbabwean political context within which the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) implemented the BVR process, including its historical antecedents and past challenges with the integrity and credibility of voter registration and resultant voters' rolls. It covers the legislative and institutional framework that catered for the BVR process. The heart of the report is the observation findings, which include various elements as observed above, zeroing-in on ZEC's preparedness, stakeholder involvement, the political climate, participation of marginalized groups, civic and voter education, the role of the media and registration data. It concludes with recommendations to various stakeholders including ZEC, Political parties and civil society.

The report commends ZEC for administering the BVR process in admirable fashion, under stringent conditions including limited time for full and proper training and acclimatization of its agents with this new voter registration system. ZESN found ZEC to be responsive, in the main, to emergent issues during the BVR process, including through constant ad hoc and programmed engagements with stakeholders. ZEC's successful implementation of the BVR process is perhaps best represented by the fact that by the end of the BVR Mop-Up exercise on the 10th of February, ZEC had registered approximately, 5,325,631 people. This figure, represented approximately 73, 5% of eligible voters, surpassing ZEC's target of 70%.
The successes notwithstanding, ZESN observed some challenges in the processes, regarding inclusivity, preparedness, fair distribution of registration centers and resources, and access to full analyzable information, amongst other elements. In light of its observations and in line with best practice in electoral processes, the ZESN makes several recommendations to ZEC, political parties, government and civil society at the end of the report. However below is a summary of recommendations to ZEC on future Voter registration and other electoral processes:

1. ZEC needs to institute proper voter and civic education ahead of critical electoral processes including but not limited to voter registration. Such voter and civic education must be extensive, inclusive, and comprehensive, which entails that ZEC:
    a. Coordinates with the Registrar General to facilitate the issuing of National Identification documents especially in farming areas where a lot of people were unable to register due to lack of IDs.

    b. Ensures that the voter processes and education information is also accessible to people with disabilities (PWDs) especially those with visual and hearing impairments.
    c. Intensifies targeted voter education and mobilisation efforts towards the youths and other segments of the population whose turnout statistics have traditionally been low.
2. ZEC must enhance the quality of training for its officers to ensure consistency in the application of laws and regulations regarding stakeholder participation, access to information, and polling, registration, as well as inspection centres.
3. ZEC must ensure adequate sharing of voter information, and comprehensively publicise any processes that include and or entail citizen participation. Such sharing of information must not just be general and placed in nationally distributed press outlets, but also, tailored to local interests and targets through locally available channels like community newspapers.
4. ZEC should ensure that voter registration; inspection and polling centres are easily accessible to all eligible citizens and ensure that special needs groups such as PWDs are not inconvenienced when they present themselves for the registration process.
5. ZEC must, in future, ensure that the updates it provides that include figures, like voter registration statistics, are in a format that is disaggregated by various filters such as province, constituencies, age and sex among others.
6. ZEC should facilitate the creation of standing multiparty liaison committees to discuss and stem issues related to political parties, actors and supporters' adherence to the stipulated code of conduct during the electoral processes.
7. ZEC must proactively address instances of deliberate misinformation by some political parties regarding electoral processes to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and minimise voter intimidation and misinformation that may result in apathy.
8. ZEC should publicise the simplified version of their procedures and regulations governing data transmission during all the critical electoral processes including registration, inspection of the voters roll, voting, and voting returns to increase stakeholders understanding of these critical processes.
    a. These procedures must be standardised and implemented uniformly to ensure consistency.
9. ZEC must consider limited financial disincentives for stakeholders to participate in electoral process like wavering of accreditation fees for observers and simplification of accreditation processes.
10. ZEC must consider recruiting election officials not just from government departments and the civil service but also the highly literate and readily mobilisable and trainable community of students in tertiary institutions.

2. INTRODUCTION

On the 8th of September 2017, former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, ordered a new registration of voters in all wards and constituencies in the country. The order, made through Proclamation 6 of 2017, acting under section 36A(1) of the Electoral Act, designated the period between September 14, 2017, and January 15, 2018, as the period in which the new voter registration exercise would take place.[1] Following the proclamation, The ZEC complied with the order by starting a BVR process on 18 September 2017 in 63 district Centers[2] and later instituted a BVR Blitz which began on 10 October 2017 and stretched to 19 December 2017.[3] In January 2018, ZEC extended the BVR Blitz through a mop-up exercise from 10 January 2018 to 8 February 2018 on account of requests for an extension from ZESN and other organisations. This following a landmark high court ruling that allowed Zimbabweans of foreign descent, formally referred to as aliens to register as voters.[4] This new voter registration exercise is a precursor to 2018 harmonised elections.

In line with its mandate to promote democratic elections in Zimbabwe, ZESN observed the entire BVR process, ZESN deployed 2012 observers who were deployed as static and mobile observers from the onset of the BVR Blitz. This observation exercise followed ZESN's observation of other critical pre-BVR processes including the Polling station mapping exercise, BVR Site Validation Tests, BVR tender processes, and Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) tender processes.

The ZESN observation processes sought to measure the ZEC process' compliance with the Zimbabwean Constitution, Electoral Laws, regional and international standards as part of assessing the quality and legitimacy of the BVR process. In addition to the above, the observation process allowed ZESN to witness popular citizen participation and processes towards the exercise of the fundamental right to vote and used its observations to inform its advocacy interventions on electoral reforms. A free and fair election, where every person who is eligible to vote is registered, or is able to register without undue hardship to exercise this fundamental right entails that the system of voter registration be simple, accessible and inclusive. The voters' roll must be a true and fair reflection of the eligible voting population, without unnecessary exclusion of voters. It must be credible in order to facilitate a credible election.

2.1 Objectives and Methodology

Methodology

[1] https://www.newsday.co.zw/2017/09/president-orders-new-voter-registration/

[2] http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/voter-registration-begins/

[3] http://www.herald.co.zw/voter-registration-blitz-begins-on-tuesday/

[4] See https://www.herald.co.zw/zec-bvr-mop-up-exercise-begins/

As part of its efforts to promote democratic electoral processes in Zimbabwe, ZESN observed all the four phases of the BVR process in all ten provinces of Zimbabwe with at least 1 observer per ward. ZESN deployed more than 2 012 observers for the BVR blitz and 263 static observers for the mop up exercise. ZESN deployed static observers at district registration centres as well as at randomly selected centres across the country. In addition mobile observer teams were also deployed in all the 10 Provinces. The data transmission process was also observed.

2.2 Objectives of Observing the BVR Process

- To provide an oversight of electoral processes

2.3 Defining: Biometric Voter Registration

BVR technology uses physical features, which are unique to every individual for purposes of identification. These physical features include fingerprints, facial scans, voice recognition and other features, which are unique to each person. Since any two individuals do not identically share these features, the BVR system helps to create a more accurate system of identification and eliminates the problem of duplications, which has blighted previous voters' rolls and elections.

2.4 Distinguishing BVR and Biometric Voting

It is important to note that Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) is not the same as Biometric Voting (BV). BVR is only concerned with the registration of voters and compilation of the voters' roll. BV on the other hand is broader because it includes BVR and the actual process of voting where biometrics are also used. In Biometric Voting, the entire process, from registration to voting on polling day would be based on biometrics. This is not the case in Zimbabwe's forthcoming elections where BVR is only used in the voter registration exercise but not on actual polling day.

Below is a timeline of critical BVR processes observed by ZESN and covered in this report;

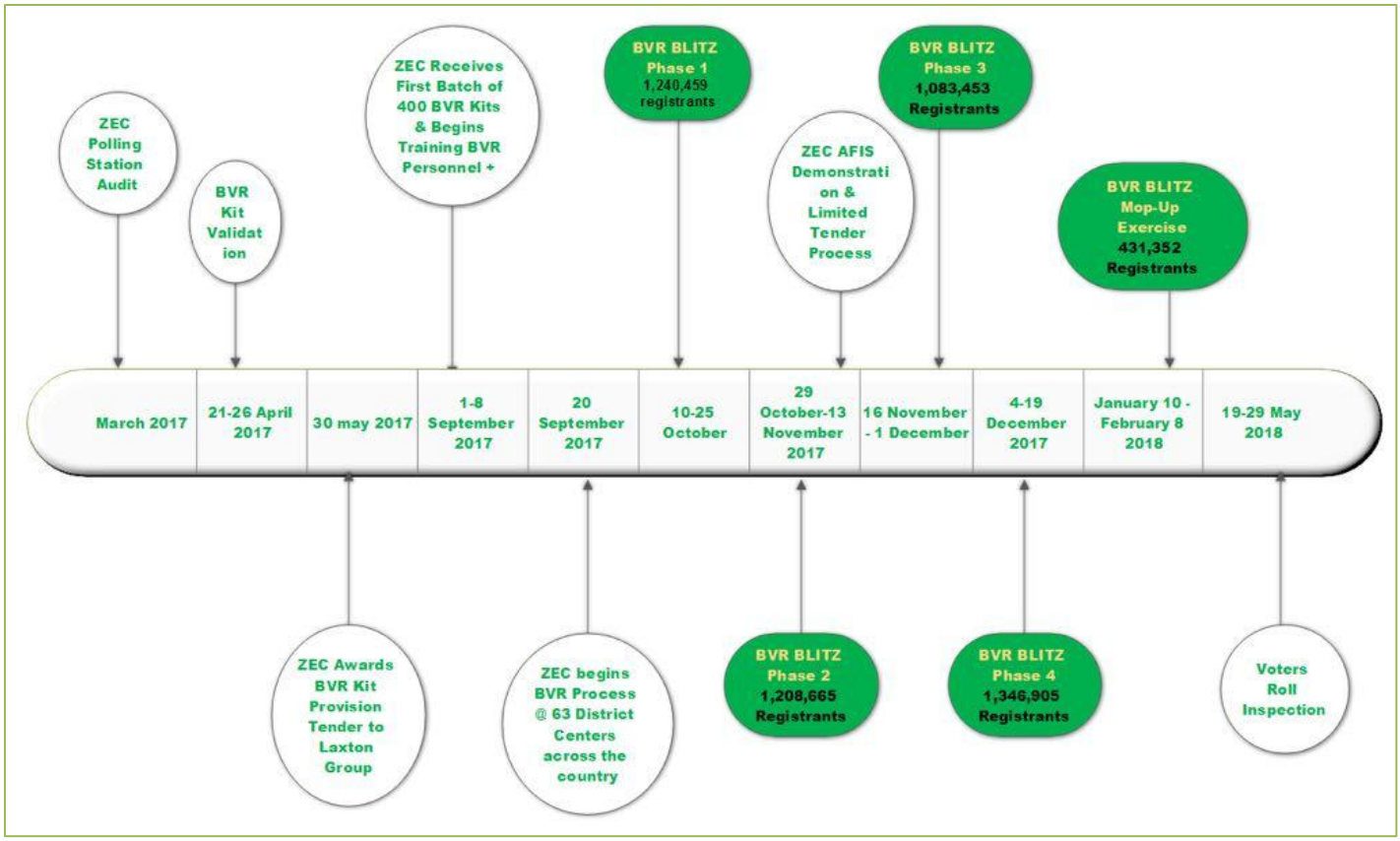

Figure 1: Critical stages of Zimbabwe's BVR Implementation Process Monitored by ZESN

3. BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION'S GROWTH AND APPLICATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN AFRICA

While the use of Biometric identification and verification systems has been around for years in the criminal justice, immigration, and civil registry systems, the application of BVR to elections is recent, gaining traction at the turn of the century. The application of biometrics to electoral processes has increased post the new millennium, and unlike other trends in technological developments and adaptation, where the West tends to lead the rest, it is the South that has taken a lead in the adoption of biometrics in elections. This is evidenced by the fact that the bulk of countries using biometrics in elections are in Africa and Latin America. According to the International IDEA ICTs for Elections database, over 46% of countries in Africa use biometric identification and or verification processes in their electoral processes especially registration, while virtually none in Europe use this application, restricting biometrics, in the main, to civic registry process.[5] Most western countries already have well-developed citizen registry capacities and had the ability to capture huge amounts of demographic, political, and economic aspects of their polities. These states that have functioned as "Registering Organizations"[6] have developed trusted systems that negate the need to switch to biometrics in electoral processes, as the existing citizen registries are solid.

Given the above, the introduction of Biometrics, especially Biometric Voter Registration affords an opportunity for using states to 'leapfrog' and secure citizen identification. The challenge is that Biometrics are being introduced in situations where reliable records were 'previously' absent.[7] In this regard, African states introduced Biometrics in elections to "fix" challenges around defective vital statistics and reliable data collection[8], more so duplication of voters' rolls, and accusations of electoral fraud on balloting days as a result of voters' roll deficiencies. These challenges routinely affect the integrity and credibility of electoral processes in Africa (See table 1 for an outline of reasons for BVR uptake).

Table 1. Reasons for Biometric Voter Registration Uptake by User Countries

[5] See ICTs In Elections Database at https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/icts-elections

[6] Diamant, N. J., 2001. Making Love 'Legible' in China: Politics and Society during the Enforcement of Civil Marriage Registration, 1950-66. Politics & Society 29 (3): 447-480.

[7] Gelb, A., Clark, J., 2013. Identification for Development: The Biometrics Revolution. Working Paper 315, Center for Global Development, New York.

[8] Setel, P. W., Macfarlane, S.B., Szreter, S., Mikkelsen, L., Jha, P., Stout, S., Abou Zahr, C., 2007. A scandal of invisibility: making everyone count by counting everyone. The Lancet 370 (9598): 1569- 1577.

General Intentions behind BVR introduction in African Electoral Systems	
Cleaning voters' roll (De-duplication, dead voters) **Efficiency** **Improving the quality and integrity voters' roll**	**Enfranchising eligible voters** **Enhancing trust and credibility of the process**

The need to deal with voters roll integrity challenges, which affected the credibility of electoral processes resulting in disputed electoral outcomes has driven the growth Africa's uptake of Biometrics in electoral processes. For instance, the need to ensure the credibility of the voter list as a critical factor in the legitimacy of the 2017 Presidential election motivated Somaliland's 2016 BVR process. Although hailed as a success, the 2016 process followed failed BVR attempts in 2008-2010 after data acquisition and cleaning processes had undermined the resultant roll.[9] In Ghana and the Ivory Coast, controversial multi-party elections using voters' rolls of questionable integrity led to the introduction of BVR by Ivory Coast in 2010 and Ghana in 2012, this to improve identification and voter registration, ease political tensions, and electoral disputes. While these objectives were relatively achieved in Ghana's 2012 Presidential election, the Ivorian Presidential election of 2010 retained some of the old allegations around the voters' roll more so the disenfranchising people which contributed to the conflict that ensued after incumbent Laurent Gabgo refused to accept defeat.[10] The Gambia also registered a false start with BVR in 2011, eventually dealing with some of the challenges around manipulation of the voters' roll in the 2016 Election that led to the defeat of the incumbent President Yahyah Jammeh.[11]

While the majority of African countries that use Biometrics in Voter Registration outsource the provision of BVR kits and associated technologies, Nigeria has achieved a highly credible voters' roll, which using homegrown compilation hardware and software. Nigeria's Independent National Election Commission (INEC), which, like Uganda, was an early pioneer on using BVR as early as 2002, was able , to use open-source voter registration software and biometric imaging software developed by Nigeria's National Institute of Standards and Technology between 2010 and 2011. The result was a credible voters' roll that has been used successfully in two General elections.[12]

Electoral experiments with BVR in Africa have yielded mixed results with some good examples showing that biometrics can indeed lead to an accurate voter registry that is 'foolproof '. In other cases it has been shown that despite the best of intentions, accuracy in Voter Registry continues to be an ideal

[9] Schuller, M & Walls, M (2017). Report by International Observers on the 2016 Voter Registration Process in Somaliland. Progressio & UCL Development Planning Unit, London

[10] Piccolino, G. (2016). Infrastructural state capacity for democratisation? Voter registration and identification in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana compared. *Democratization*, *23*(3), 498-519.

[11] https://findbiometrics.com/gambia-electoral-commission-reports-on-biometric-registration-work-301266/

[12] IDEA (2017). Nigeria Case study in Introducing Biometrics in Elections. Stockholm

owing to many other factors. Some factors include the need to continually update the voters roll as , the voting population is not static, and people migrate in and out of areas, die, new ones qualify as voters making the task of an "accurate" Voters' register at best a challenging prospect. On the other hand and perhaps more fundamentally, Biometric Voter Registration, if well implemented by an untrusted Electoral Management Body, may still fail to increase confidence in the resultant roll, although such a register may otherwise have integrity.

It is for these reasons that ZESN consistently insisted on the need for a transparent BVR process in Zimbabwe, accompanied by other appropriate electoral reforms to achieve BVR potential in transforming the electoral system in Zimbabwe given its significant protection against double registrations and inaccuracies.[13]

[13] ZESN (2017). Enhancing understanding of BVR in Zimbabwe & ZESN Position on BVR. 2 April 2017. Harare

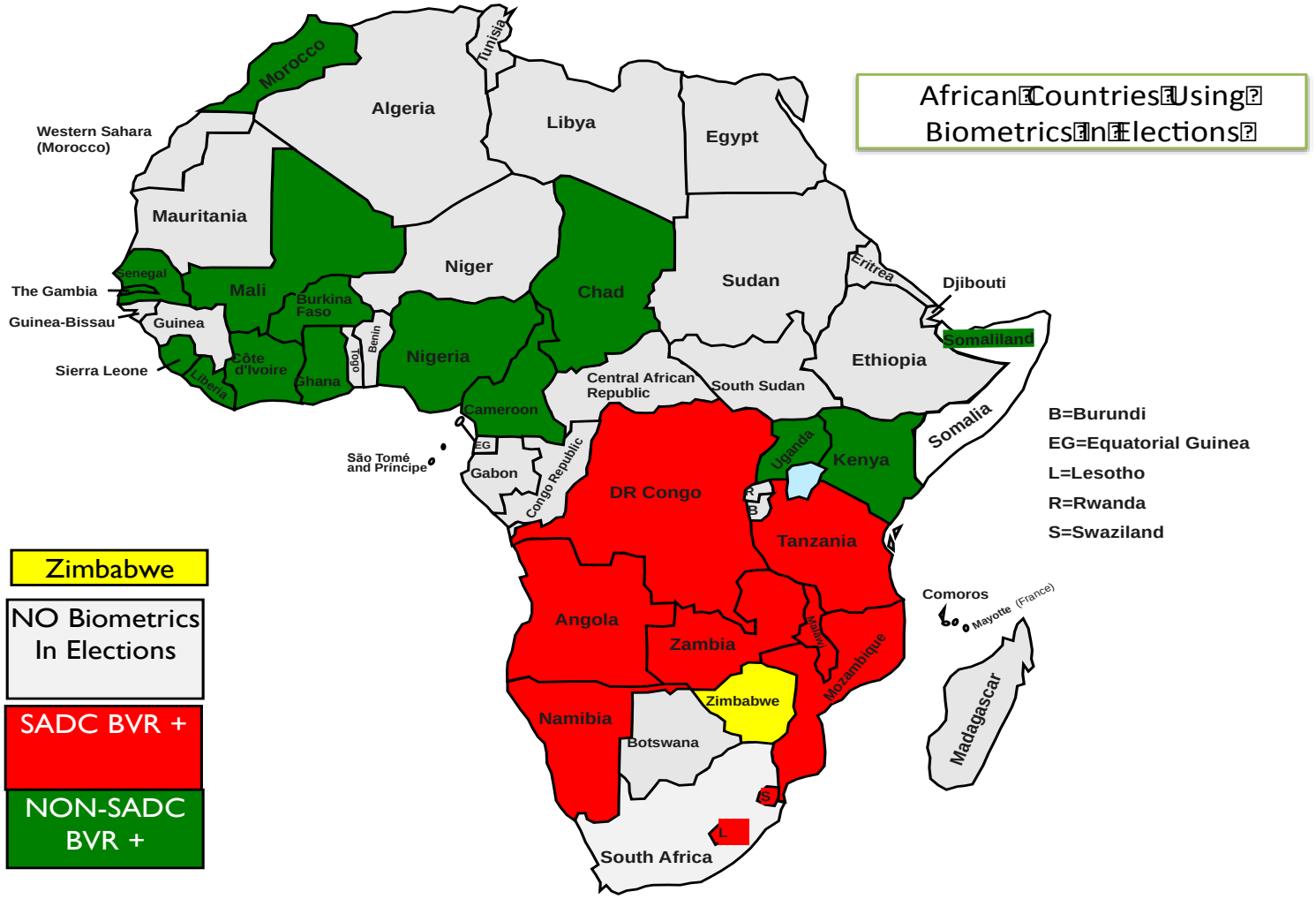

Figure 2: Map of African Countries using Biometrics in Elections - developed from list of countries from IDEA ICTs In Elections Database

4. THE ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT

4.1 Historical Context of Voter Registration and the Voters' Roll

Zimbabwe's switch from manual Voter Registration to BVR was a product of necessity based on challenges associated with the voters roll from previous elections. Issues around Voter Registration, the resultant voters' roll, access to it, and its integrity have been at the centre of many election petitions and disputes in Zimbabwe since the 1990s.[14] From the 1990's, seminal cases like that of Margaret Dongo and Fidelis Mhashu[15] revealed serious irregularities and defects with the Voters Roll and highlighted the deficiencies of the manual Voter Registration processes. For instance, it was found that of the 33, 261 voters registered voters in Harare South constituency where Dongo was a candidate for Parliament, at least 13,600 had either no address in the constituency or the addresses were suspicious.[16]

The above, and other, challenges with the voters' roll during the 1995 election, led to Dongo winning her case and eventually a rerun was ordered in the Sunningdale Constituency, which she was contesting to represent as MP. This case provided evidence to claims on the lack of integrity of the voters roll. Commentators estimated that at least 41% of the close to 5 million names on the 1995 voters roll were inaccurate[17], and there was a consensus among local observers like the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the state-run media like The Herald that the election, while free, was unfair on the strengths of these irregularities.[18]

Challenges associated with voter registration and the voters' roll intensified in 2000 with the Registrar of Elections, also the Registrar General, in office since 1981, being accused of manipulating voter registration and the voters roll to ensure ZANU-PF victories. Accusations were levelled mainly by opposition political parties and were based on civil society observations included routine denial of access to and inspection of the voters roll, errors in the voters' roll including duplications and suspicious registrations. These and other issues prompted ZESN to recommend in its 2008 Post-election report that there be a complete transfer of the management of the electoral process including preparing of the voters' roll to the ZEC, in both law and practice.[19]

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[14] Sithole, M., & Makumbe, J. (1997). Elections in Zimbabwe: The ZANU (PF) hegemony and its incipient decline. African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique, 122-139.

[15] Dorman, S. R. (2005). 'Make Sure They Count Nicely This Time': The Politics of Elections and Election Observing in Zimbabwe. Commonwealth and comparative politics, 43(2), 155-177.

[16] Makumbe, J. M., & Compagnon, D. (2000). Behind the Smokescreen: The politics of Zimbabwe's 1995 general elections. University of Zimbabwe Publications Office.

[17] Makumbe and Compagnon (ibid) at 220.

[18] As seen through 'Elections free, not fair', Sunday Gazette, 23 April 1995; '1995 elections unfair', Sunday Gazette, 13 Aug. 1995; 'Election was unfair: ZCC', Herald, 21 Aug. 1995, and 'State Press snaps at watchdog's "unfair poll" verdict', Horizon, July 1995, 9. All cited in Dorman, S.R. (2005) above

[19] ZESN (2008). Report on the Zimbabwe 29 March Harmonized Election and 27 June 2008 Presidential Run-Off. Harare. Zimbabwe

Election observers and scholars noted that in the post-2000 elections voter registration was deliberately made difficult for urban residents and easy for rural communities, an observation that ZESN noted in its 2008 and 2013 election reports. These challenges centred on different voter registration requirements and processes for urban and rural communities, which favoured rural areas where ZANU-PF was perceived to be strong.

As a result, while voter registration in rural areas was 99%, it was only 67% in urban areas.[20] Another telling statistic on challenges associated with the voter registration process and the voters' roll in pre-BVR Zimbabwe was the rejection rate of voters at polling stations on Election Day. In 2013, a significant number of voters were turned-away on voting day. The bulk of these were in urban areas where 25 people or more prospective voters were turned away at 82% of polling station observed by ZESN, compared to 38% of polling stations observed by ZESN in rural areas on Election Day.

In the absence of access to the electronic voters' roll in 2013, ZESN, based on its demographic analysis and observation of the voters' roll inspection and registration process, concluded that the final roll, maintained (1.) unequal and inequitable patterns of access, (2.) was exclusionary, (3.) was prejudicial and (4.) disenfranchised urban and youth voters. The voters' roll as a result, severely undermined the credibility of the entire electoral process, and violated the principle of full participation of citizens in electoral processes and the equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote as expressed in the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. [21]

Increased speculation that other flaws existed in the voters' roll exacerbated the historical challenges with the voters' roll stated above. This speculation included allegations on how the voters' roll had 60,000 police officers registered to vote, yet the police force in total numbered 33,000, and also how an estimated 838,000 people on the voters' roll shared the same name but different identity numbers. Also, the voters' roll had over 109,000 people over the age of 100, and 350,000 over the age of 85, which is not demographically supported by other national statistics.[22]

According to the Research and Advocacy Unit's (RAU) audit of the 2013 voters' roll, the voters' numbers was inflated by over a million, as a result of duplications, and errors on the voters' roll. RAU also noted massive under registration of young people and urbanites. Some of the findings in the RAU report did find some corroboration after ZESN conducted a voters' roll audit of Marondera Central constituency ahead of a by-election in 2015. [23]

A historical analysis of voter registration trends in Zimbabwe shows that registration has been relatively high when compared to the population of eligible voters. Figure 3 shows the registration figures from

[20] ZESN (2013). Report on the 31 July 2013 Harmonized Election. Harare. Zimbabwe
[21] ZESN (2013) Report on the 31 July 2013 Harmonized Elections. Harare. Zimbabwe
[22] Southall, R. (2013). How and Why ZANU-PF Won the 2013 Zimbabwe Elections. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, *35*(2), 135.
[23] ZESN (2015) Analysis of the Zimbabwe Voters' Roll: A comparative analysis of the main and Supplementary Voters' register of Marondera Central Constituency. Harare. Zimbabwe.

1979 to date. However, as ZESN noted in its 2013 report, the voter registers used in previous elections are arguably inflated with dead people on the voters' roll and are also not reflective of the actual population of the country as per census figures. There were more people registered in some constituencies than are recorded by the census figures in many instances.

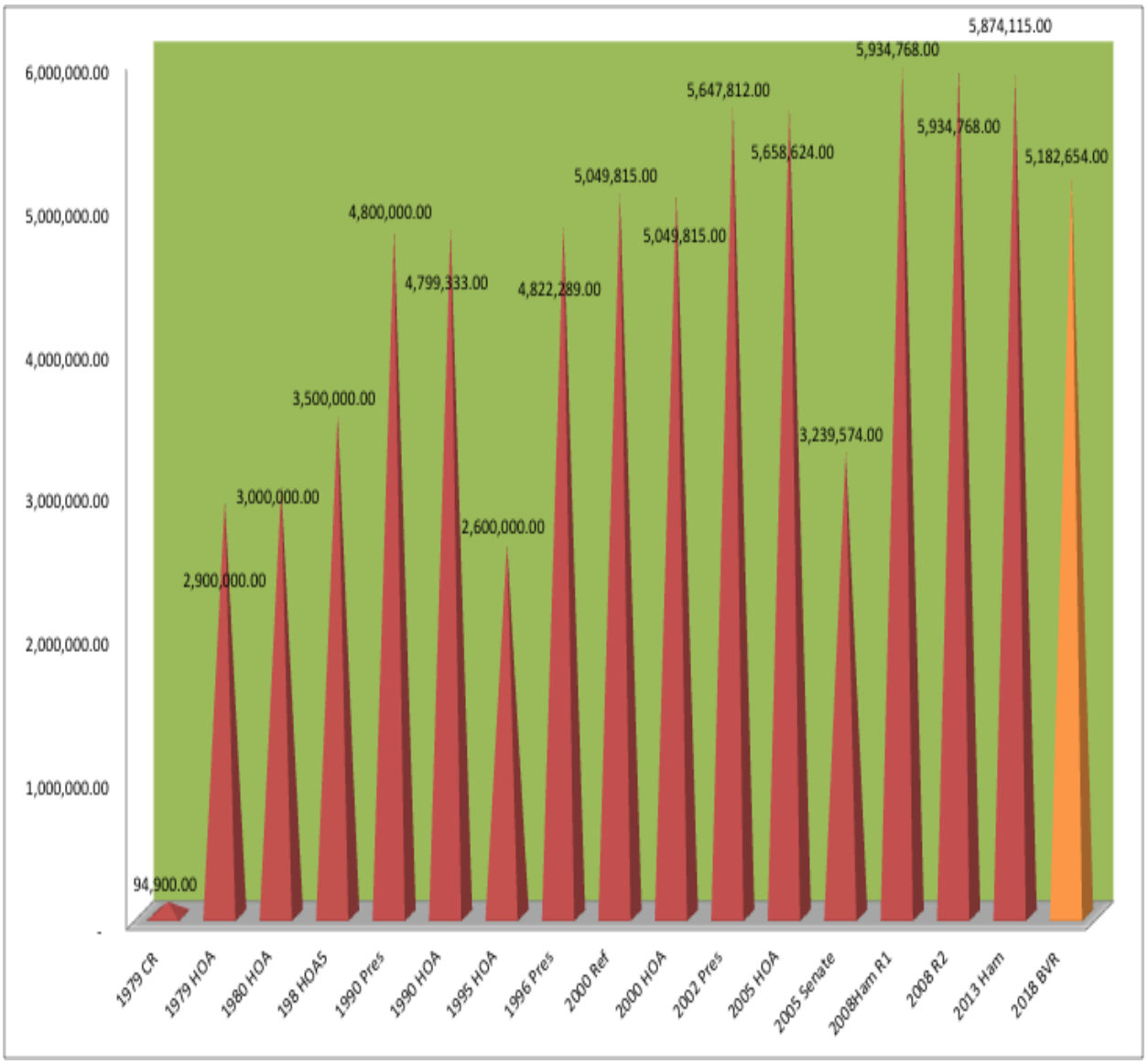

Figure 3. Voter Registration Figures in Zimbabwe's elections. Table multi-sourced from ZESN records, ZEC, African Elections database, IFES Elections archive and scholarship

The preceding constitutes the potted historical context that informed the need and final adoption of the Biometric Voter Registration process in Zimbabwe.

4.2 Contemporary Context of the 2017-18 BVR Process Implementation

The BVR process was inaugurated amidst a highly dynamic political environment characterized by intense political competition around the succession question in the ruling party ZANU-PF, and massive contestations in the opposition around the need for an opposition alliance. These internal political party dynamics were in addition to uncertainties around when precisely the 2018 election would occur, the legal and procedural regime under which the poll would be conducted, and whom the key players in that election would be.

The political context was so dramatic and fluid that by the time of the BVR processes conclusion:

1.) President Robert Mugabe who launched the BVR process vacated office on 21 November 2017, leading to the swearing in of President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, on 24 November 2017. The new President is a former Vice President and Minister of Justice until he was relieved of his duties on 8 November 2017. In the same month the military intervened staffing a move on November 13 2017 leading to the resignation of President Mugabe and Mnangagwa's ascension to the state Presidency, who would appoint a new government on the 29 November 2017.

2.) The ZEC chairperson at the start of the Process Justice Rita Makarau resigned as chair on 7 December 2017, leaving ZEC deputy chair Mr. Emmanuel Magade as acting chair. This development was adjudged to have severe and direct ramifications of the electoral process, leading ZESN to encourage the government to expedite appointment of the Chair in-line with section 238 of the constitution.[24]

3.) Zimbabweans of foreign descent, labeled "Aliens" in the Registration system, and who hitherto could not vote or be registered as voters and were being turned away at the beginning of the BVR process, were granted voting rights by the Courts. This was after Sarah Kachingwe labbled an Alien, the MDC-T and MDC-N petitioned the High Court of Zimbabwe seeking an order to compel ZEC to register aliens as prospective voters for the 2018 general elections during the ongoing BVR exercise. On 30 November 2017, High Court Judge Justice Nyaradzo Munangati-Manongwa issued an order granting aliens the right to register to vote with the proviso that they produce for registration their "Alien" endorsed Identity documents together with a birth certificate and Proof of residence.

Aside from this high political drama and the new national political dispensation, the BVR exercise also marked a new Voter Registration dispensation with the ZEC taking over full control of Voter Registration from the Registrar General's office, for the first time since independence, and introducing Biometrics The shifts in voter registration responsibilities, and the introduction of biometrics, which were well received by various election stakeholders on account of past challenges with the RGs handling of registration and the voters' roll, also entailed the production of a new/fresh voters' roll. In this sense,

[24] ZESN, Press Release, 12 December 2017, Call To Expeditiously Appoint New ZEC Chairperson Key To Successful Implementation Of Electoral Processes. Harare. Zimbabwe.

the BVR process marked a break with the past and is part of a new modus operandi and constitutional order on the conduct of electoral processes in Zimbabwe.

However, while the new constitution promulgated in 2013 was supposed to bring new legislative and regulatory regimes (see Legal and Institutional Framework section) some grey areas remained between the old and new constitutional orders, as they did regarding the old and new political orders. Legislatively the law still has gaps regarding alignment with the constitution, which has led to the mooting of a third amendment, this despite two amendments to the Electoral law. Added to this legislative grey zone, ZEC has been less than transparent on the regulatory framework and procedural regime it will use to administer the 2018 elections, in the absence of a clear electoral calendar. As ZESN noted, a clear election calendar, including a detailed electoral roadmap for the 2018 elections would allow stakeholders to plan interventions in support of free and fair elections adequately.[25]

Despite these grey areas, ZEC did institute the biometric voter registration process with relatively clear procedures through Statutory Instrument 85 of 2017, "Electoral (Voter Registration) Regulations". These regulations had some concerning gaps. Amongst these concerning gaps was the lack of clarity on the role of observers and political party agents, roles that are crucial in enhancing transparency of electoral processes. ZEC's inability to explicitly state the position of observers and party agents left discretion in the hands of voter registration officials, who inevitably dealt with this matter in different ways, with ZESN and other CSOs having to appeal for observers to be allowed to monitor the process. Also, the regulations made provisions for the issuance of voter registration certificates by Section 26 of the Electoral Act; a glaring gap was the inability of ZEC to use the regulations to safeguard the electoral system from the fraudulent use of the registrations slips, through enhanced security features like watermarks and security threading. It is these regulations that guided the September 8, 2017, Presidential order on a new voter registration exercise and ZEC's subsequent compliance with the law through the BVR process under review in this report.

ZESN also noted that the BVR process occurred in the context of continuing economic hardships characterized by increasing cost of goods and services hence an inflation rise estimated at 4.6% after two years of deflation, and marginal growth rates of 1.6% to the economy towards the end of 2017.[26] Cash shortages continued as did the triple unofficial prizing index, which pegged commodities at different prices depending on whether one paid in hard currency (US Dollars), Bond Notes or through a bank or mobile money transfer. High levels of formal unemployment also constituted the context with most Zimbabweans finding relief through petty trade in the precarious informal sector, which is estimated to represent 94% of the country's economy. The bulk of informal sector activity is petty trading, with the number of vendors invariably expected to be in multiple millions.

[25] ZESN, Press Release 11 January 2018, A Clear Electoral Roadmap critical for successful 2018 Elections – ZESN. Harare. Zimbabwe

[26] *AFDB, Zimbabwe Economic Outlook for 2017*

The new political dispensation was, however, on a charm offensive, trying to send the right signals economically to both the local population and international community. President Mnangagwa in his first week issued an order for those who had externalized foreign currency to return the money by March 2018 with no questions asked and also pronounced a zero-tolerance attitude to corruption especially by public officials. The President also engaged multiple stakeholders including business and the youth on his vision for economic development and seeking inputs on same issues, ahead of his attendance of the World Economic Forum in Davos. The President´s message in Davos was that Zimbabwe is open for business and ready to be a partner in the Commonwealth of Nations. This positive messaging was also part of the environment in which the ZEC BVR process was conducted.

5. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The BVR system launched in 2017 was designed to facilitate the compilation of a new voters' roll under the management of the ZEC. This change entailed changes to the legal and institutional framework of managing voter registration and accommodating the new BVR system. ZEC therefore, is the central pillar of the BVR process based on its constitutional mandate to register voters and to compile the voters' rolls, as provided for in the 2013 Constitution. This section specifically gives ZEC exclusive powers to register voters and to compile and maintain the voters' rolls. Section 239 of the Constitution, provides ZEC with the mandate ***"to register voters; to compile voters rolls and registers; and to ensure the proper custody and maintenance of voters rolls and registers".***

The institutional changes to voter registration entailed by the new constitution are supposed to provide ZEC with greater independence, which should facilitate the production of a higher quality voters' roll. The voter registration process and compilation of a new voters' roll is thus a major test of character for ZEC.

5.1 Rules of Eligibility for Voter Registration

The registration of voters is a central process in the electoral system. It is the primary determinant of who is eligible to vote in an election. While all citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to vote, only those who are registered and appear on the voters roll can actually participate in the voting process. Voter registration must, therefore, be inclusive so that all persons who are eligible to vote can register. This constitutional right to vote makes voter registration integral, while the credibility of the BVR system in turn hinges upon its ability to facilitate the registration of all persons who are eligible to vote. However, specific details regarding methods of registration are left to legislative and administrative functions of ZEC.

Section 67 of the Declaration of Rights in Zimbabwe's Constitution guarantees that every citizen who is 18 years and above has the right to make political choices and to vote freely and in secret during elections. Section 155(2) (a) of the Constitution fortifies the duty of the State to ensure that every eligible citizen is registered and able to vote. It also compels the state to "…*ensure that all eligible citizens, that is to say, the citizens qualified under the Fourth Schedule, are registered as voters"*.

The Fourth Schedule to the Constitution outlines the requirements for voter registration. Stating that a person must be a Zimbabwean citizen who is18 years old and above and is not otherwise disqualified as a voter. The category of persons who are disqualified from registration as voters includes persons who are legally certified as mentally ill, persons who have been declared by the court as being incapable of managing their own affairs, or persons convicted of violating the Electoral Law and are declared by the High Court as disqualified for registration for a maximum period of five years.

Section 1(2) of the Fourth Schedule also provides that the Electoral Law may prescribe additional residential requirements, but such requirements must be consistent with the Constitution, particularly section 67. This essentially means that these *"additional residential requirements"* must not infringe upon the fundamental right to vote.

The above stated rules of eligibility are broadly inclusive of all citizens except the few who are either disqualified or do not satisfy residential requirements. This is consistent with the principle of universal adult suffrage, which is one of the key Constitutional principles on electoral participation in Zimbabwe.

During the BVR process in the run-up to the 2018 Harmonized Elections, ZEC exercised its discretion favorably towards greater enfranchisement rather that disenfranchisement regarding residential requirements by relaxing proof of residence requirements. Citizens were allowed to use affidavits declaring their places of residency to meet the requirement for registration. This was especially beneficial and made voter registration easier than in the past as many people lack official place of residence documentation. ZESN did, however, record residual cases of exclusion from voter registration based on lack of proof of residence, and exhorts ZEC to deal decisively with this unnecessary form of exclusion. Other eligibility related issues relate to the rights to registration of two categories of citizens, the Diaspora, and so-called aliens.

5.2 Diaspora

The Diaspora refers to Zimbabwean citizens who are domiciled outside the country. Their right to vote as citizens is protected under the Constitution. However, the residential requirements in the 2017-18 BVR process, as well as the limitation of the exercise to physical attendance at registration centers in Zimbabwe disenfranchised the bulk of this population group, as they could neither register online or physically in their current places of residence. This reality has led to increased calls to ZEC to exercise discretion in favour of inclusivity so that those living in the Diaspora can be permitted to vote. The argument is that the residential requirements referred to in the Fourth Schedule must not conflict with the right to vote under section 67. ZEC has generally been flexible, allowing members of the Diaspora to register but only when they return to Zimbabwe to do so, but not through extending facilities for BVR to Diaspora locations. Consequently, the franchise has been limited through the widespread exclusion of the Diaspora, which is a weakness in need of redress.

5.3 Zimbabweans of Foreign Descent: The So-called “aliens”

“Aliens” as an exclusionary and almost derogatory category of Zimbabweans is applied by the Registrar General’s office to Zimbabwean citizens who were born of migrant parents. This is despite the fact that the Zimbabwean Constitution outlawed this categorization when it restored citizenship to all persons whose parents were migrants from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. The process of regularizing documents to reflect this change has also been costly, onerous, and at times exclusionary. The State has a positive duty to ensure that citizens who were previously excluded on the grounds that they were aliens are given proper documentation without charge so that they can enjoy their full rights of citizenship, including the right to register as voters.

At the beginning of the BVR process, Zimbabweans of foreign descent, so called "Aliens", were being turned away. The constitutional position, articulated above, was buttressed by a decision of the High Court of Zimbabwe when Sarah Kachingwe and the MDC- political party formations successfully sought an order to compel ZEC to register “aliens” as prospective voters for the 2018 general elections during the BVR Blitz exercise. High Court Judge, Justice Nyaradzo Munangati-Manongwa, issued an order granting so called “aliens” the right to register to vote on condition that they satisfied residency requirements and produce their "Alien" endorsed Identity documents together with a birth certificate, on 30 November 2017.

Despite the November 30 ruling, some so-called “aliens” faced difficulties in securing identity documents that confirmed their status as full citizens leading to the BVR processes inclusive nature being limited.

5.4 Continuous Registration

Section 17A of the Electoral Act, provides for continuous and on-going voter registration. There should never be a time where ZEC refuses to register citizens as voters. This is contrary to the common belief among citizens that voter registration only takes place a few months before the elections. It is true, however, that interest to register is heightened just before elections. Nevertheless, a citizen must be able to attend at the voter registration offices to register at any time. This position was reaffirmed by the High Court in a 2015 case in which the judge stated that the law requires that;

> ***“There be a continuous system of registration of voters. This is a mandatory duty from which the commission and its chairperson cannot abdicate or postpone as it is an ongoing process which they cannot suspend”.***

5.5 Compilation of the Voters’ Roll

As already stated, ZEC has the constitutional mandate to compile the voters’ roll. The said voters’ roll must be suitable for polling station-specific voting i.e. polling station-specific voters’ rolls. The process of compiling the voters’ rolls can be complex, since it involves a huge amount of data that has to be analyzed and categorized according to the different rolls. There is always a risk of duplications, and a viable voters’ roll compilation process has to involve de-duplication of names on the rolls to ensure he accuracy and credibility of the voters’ rolls.

5.6 Inspection and Audit of Voters' Rolls

Apart from voter registration, a key process is the inspection of the voters roll. This process enables voters to verify the accuracy of their details on the voters' rolls. Some voter details may have been incorrectly entered onto the voters' rolls and some may be missing. The law requires that the voters roll must be availed in time to allow voters to make appeals and for any queries to be resolved by the relevant authorities. Parties and other interested stakeholders should also be able to audit the voters roll to ensure that it is a true and a fair reflection of the electorate. These processes are fundamental as they reduce exclusion of voters from the roll, and help improve the credibility of the voters roll. ZEC announced that the inspection of a provisional voters roll would take place between 19 May and 29 May 2018. It also announced a new voter registration blitz throughout the country within the same period.

5.7 Provision of voters' rolls

The Electoral Law provides that ZEC must give parties and candidates' copies of the voters roll. In the past, printed copies have been provided but are not *"searchable and analyzable."* ZEC must provide soft copies that can be analyzed free of charge, facilitating easy auditing of the voters' rolls to ensure credibility of the roll and easy redress of concerns.

6. OBSERVATIONS

6.1 ZEC preparedness

ZEC conducted the BVR exercise within a constrained timeframe. Although ZEC acquitted itself well and was up to the task of leading the BVR process, the time constraints showed up throughout the process in various ways. As the BVR process was not being conducted in an electoral vacuum, the absence of an enunciated comprehensive electoral roadmap, and timeous availing of crucial electoral information, impeded the seamless operation of both ZEC and other electoral stakeholders. For ZEC, the constrained time frame meant that it had less than three weeks to train its people from receipt of BVR equipment at the beginning of September 2017 to the onset of the BVR exercise on the 20th of September 2018.

There is little doubt that the 8 September 2017 order by the President to start a new voter registration process in every ward placed ZEC under pressure to execute the exercise. Obliging the President's order, timely, came with costs, including the absence of a proper feasibility study ahead of BVR implementation and limited engagement with stakeholders. The challenges of execution within a constrained timeframe emerged most visibly during phase 1 displays of unpreparedness, including shifting dates and schedules, limited voter education ahead of the process, and as the evidence would suggest, not enough training and practice for ZEC technical people conducting the BVR exercise, as further explained below.

6.2 Logistics: Observer Accreditation

ZESN noted that logistical challenges in the BVR process started before the blitz with the accreditation of observers. First, ZEC shifted the dates for observer accreditation a few days before the BVR Blitz began. This late shift led to serious logistical challenges for organisations who intended to observe the process and now under pressure to train and deploy observers..[27] ZESN had to appeal to ZEC to make special considerations for alternative registration arrangements, which ZEC, to their credit, obliged. However, the accreditation process was not smooth. For instance, in Harare and Bulawayo, observer accreditation was interrupted as some names of observers that ZESN had submitted to ZEC were missing, while in Gwanda, ZESN observers could not be accredited, as there was no electricity in the area where the centre was located. At other accreditation centres in Marondera and Bindura the centres did not have lamination machines, while in Chinhoyi, the printer malfunctioned. These logistical challenges on ZECs part accrued as costs to observing groups who had to accommodate observers over an extended period, in addition to the already high cost of accreditation at $10 per observer. The net consequence was that some observers failed to commence observation in their respective wards by the time the Blitz ensued on 10 October 2017.

[27] See ZESN (2017) Statement On The Changes To The Observer Accreditation Dates· 6 October 2017· Harare

6.3 Logistics BVR Process

The logistical challenges experienced during observer accreditation continued into the BVR Blitz exercise, albeit at a low scale. ZESN observations were to the effect that the logistical challenges were not significant regarding proportions, although in some instances these challenges affected the ability of aspiring registrants to register. Most of the logistical problems were however dealt with by phase 4 of the registration process, with ZEC responding to equipment failures, shortages, especially of stationary, and most registration centres opening ahead of and on time over 90% of the time. The figure below lists the kind of logistical challenges that ZESN noted during the BVR process during all phases.

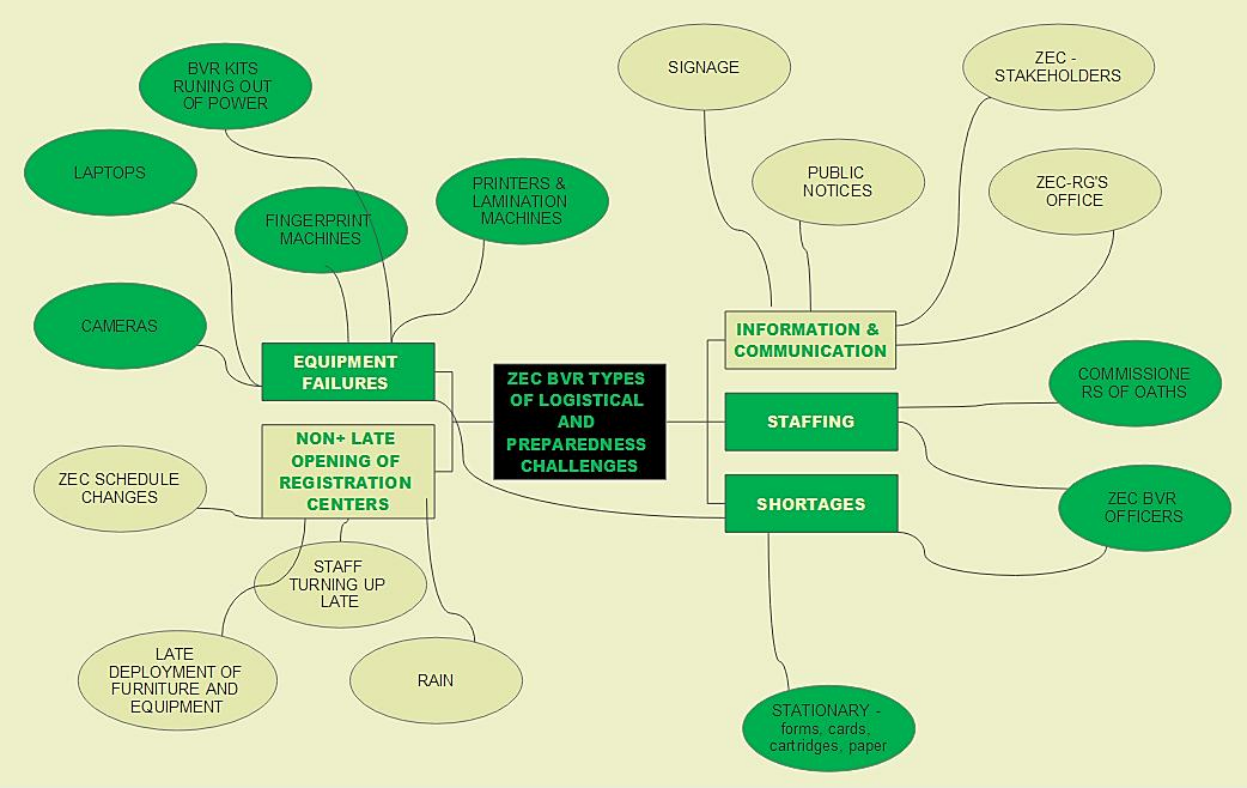

Figure 2 ZEC BVR Logistical & Preparedness Challenges

6.4 Significant Logistics and Preparedness Challenges

Preparatory and logistical challenges included failure to open and late opening of some registration centres. During phase 1, ZESN noted that Gokwe, Bikita, Binga, St Mary's Ward 3, and other areas failed to open due to rains. The Mabvuku Tafara Sub-regional office was unable to open for registration after ZEC had changed the location without prior communications to the community and the Registrar Generals staff who operated at the sub-regional office. Unannounced changes of registration centres were also reported in Budiriro amongst other places. Late openings were noted at various registration centres with the worst being the registration centre at Ward 5 in St Mary's Chitungwiza, which opened at 1300 hours instead of the advertised 0700 hours. In Phase 2 this challenge was witnessed at Nyaradzai Hall in Zvishavane, Mberengwa, East, West and South, in wards 5, 27, and 3 respectively, as well as Nyanga North (ward 28). This challenge persisted into Phase 3 and 4 but at lower levels.

Other challenges emanated from ZEC's failure to take into account the rainfall season which was disruptive to the voter registration process as a significant number of Registration tents were affected with some centres having to close down on account of the weather during all phases of the registration process. During the last week of phase 2 some areas such as Mberengwa, Zvishavane, Harare, Mutasa, Nyanga, Mutasa and Masvingo experienced heavy rains and had to either, close down, or remain open but served few registrants. In addition to potential rain damage of tents and equipment, the BVR kits in use were solar powered, but given the weather there were numerous reports of delays in charging equipment on account of the weather conditions especially during Phase 3. Examples of registration centres affected include at Mahusvu, Mushambamuto and Masasa A, and Gomba Primary Rengwe Primary school, Mberengwa Primary School, Cheshinga Primary in Mberengwa district, Madzima Business centre ward 10, Makonde district, and Gapara Masosonwa Hall Ward 15 Uzumba district.

6.5 Training and Deployment of Voter Registration Officials

Training of BVR Officials

As highlighted earlier in this section, the ZEC training process for its BVR teams took place within a short window between receipt of kits and onset of the BVR process. Despite this, ZEC was able to fully deploy BVR officers at all registration centres throughout all the 4 phases. ZESN observers noted that ZEC officers were able to acquit themselves well regarding the necessary registration procedures, following the stipulated registration steps including correctly capturing the biometric features of fingerprints and facial photographs. However, beyond the basic registration process, there were efficiency problems, especially in phase 1 and 2 where the registration process in some instances took much longer than anticipated, with the slow pace discouraging some potential registrants.

While there was evidence of sound basic training on the BVR process for ZEC Officers, there was also evidence of gaps in the training process regarding BVR Officials extant **(1.) Skills, (2.) knowledge of other stakeholder's roles in the process, (3.) understanding of the BVR in context, and (4.) citizens with the right to register.** These issues negatively impacted on the transparency of the BVR process, and infringed the suffrage rights of certain classes of citizens, as explained below.

1. Variation in Skills as an explanation for variation of data capturing and process timings: At the onset of the BVR process ZEC had stated that its centres were expected to process a minimum of 20 aspiring registrants every hour. However, ZESN observers recorded massive variation in registration times with less than 25% of centres able to meet the ZEC threshold, while the rest varied to servicing between 10 to 20 people an hour, and in the worst cases some serving less than 5 people an hour. ZESN Observers explained this variation regarding BVR officials' competences, computer literacy and general efficiency, pointing to challenges in recruitment and training of officials.
2. Differentiated understandings of BVR process: Some registration centres were initially turning away potential registrants citing that the aspiring registrants were in the wrong ward despite ZEC's announcement that people could register at any registration centre, not just the one at the polling centre they would vote.

3. Differentiated understanding of BVR Stakeholders and Role Players: This was poignant in cases were ZEC BVR officials refused observers access to registration centres despite accreditation, insisting on additional clearance at District level. This happened in many places during phase 1 with Zvishavane at Nyaradzai Hall in Ward 8, Lundi Hospital in Ward 10 and Weleza in Ward 13 as well as at Thekwane High School in Bulilima East as examples.
4. Narrow Understanding of Potential Registrants and citizens eligible to register: ZEC BVR Officials were turning away aspiring registrants with "Alien" endorsed ID's despite having proof of regularisation of citizenship, and later despite a High Court Order to ZEC to allow so-called "Aliens" to register. This was reasonably widespread with Kuwadzana Wards 38 and 44 and Highfield East Ward 25 in Harare Province and some areas in Mashonaland West, as examples.
5. Misapplication and misinterpretation of other statutes: Throughout the registration exercise ZESN observers reported numerous challenges with registration officials that were seconded to ZEC from other government departments. This category of ZEC officials was the least cooperative to requests for basic information, erroneously citing the Official Secrecy Act to deny access to information.

Deployment of Officials and Equipment

ZEC was able to comprehensively deploy BVR Officials and Equipment to all registration centres throughout the BVR Blitz process. Observers however noted differences in the numbers of people working at registration centres with ranges 1 to 4 and 6 to 10 invariably being recorded at various centres. While anticipated traffic to the centre could be the explanation, this was not readily made apparent by ZEC.

After the initial 4 phases of the BVR Blitz process, figures and rates of registration per province released by ZEC showed that Harare with 54.5% and Bulawayo 50.3%, recorded the lowest registration rates. However, an analysis of Kit usage rates revealed that the two had the highest rates registrants per BVR Kit, with Harare averaging 49 registrants per kit per day, and Bulawayo 39 registrants per kit per day. This indicated that the two Metropolitan provinces were possibly being under-serviced, and ZEC should have deployed more registration centres, equipment and personnel to the two cities, especially for the mop-up exercise to increase the number of registrants in these areas. Instead, ZESN noted that while ZEC publicized during the Mop-Up Exercise that it had allocated 33 kits for deployment to Harare, at actual implementation, ZEC reduced these to 26.

The above issues indicated some limitation in ZEC's deployment strategy for BVR regarding the optimal targeting of potential registrants. While the registration process was polling station based, the process would have benefited from the deployment of staff, equipment and services to high population areas such as shopping centres, bus terminus and growth points on a more permanent basis during the BVR process. Inadequate publicity of registration centres also hampered the deployments during the 5 stages of the process (BVR Blitz's 4 phases and the mop-up exercise), including poor signage within the vicinity

of registration centres. These challenges could open up ZEC to allegations of rural bias and urban voter suppression if not adequately explained (See Analysis of Voter Registration Statistics).

Gendered Dimensions of Preparedness

ZESN has observed that some of the voters' registration centres especially the mobile centres such as tents (especially in rural areas) were not sensitive to the needs of women and other special needs groups on account of being far from sources of clean water and ablution facilities. Future mass electoral processes like registration; inspection, and voting, must ensure that centres are set up in conducive locations that cater for the needs of women and other special needs groups mainly female registration officials, women registrants, women observers amongst others. While there was no direct formal complaint on this matter from ZEC officials, some ZESN female observers raised the issue, with suggestions that ZEC considers hiring mobile toilets for places that do not have proper ablution facilities, as well as the provision of habitable facilities.

Stakeholder Involvement

While voter registration is a technical electoral process conducted by the EMB to compile or update a voter register, as highlighted in section 3, the process exists in an electoral ecosystem where success is also a function of perceptions, trust, and credibility of the EMB administering the process. Electoral procedures, in this regard, are not just about electoral contests but also about collaboration and co-creation of the electoral environment within which fair competition between political parties, independent candidates and different protagonists can ensue. The best technical processes can, therefore, be undone by lack of trust from other stakeholders, making stakeholder engagement an essential ingredient for success, and the extent and quality of their involvement by Elections Management Body, in Zimbabwe’s case ZEC, becomes critical.

During the BVR process, ZEC's engagement with stakeholders took various forms with varied stakeholders. Amongst the critical stakeholders in Zimbabwe's electoral process are Political parties, Civil Society Organization's, Government, Members of The Public, Local and International Technical Assistance Groups, and Vendors of different products and services key to the electoral process, as indicated in the diagram below.

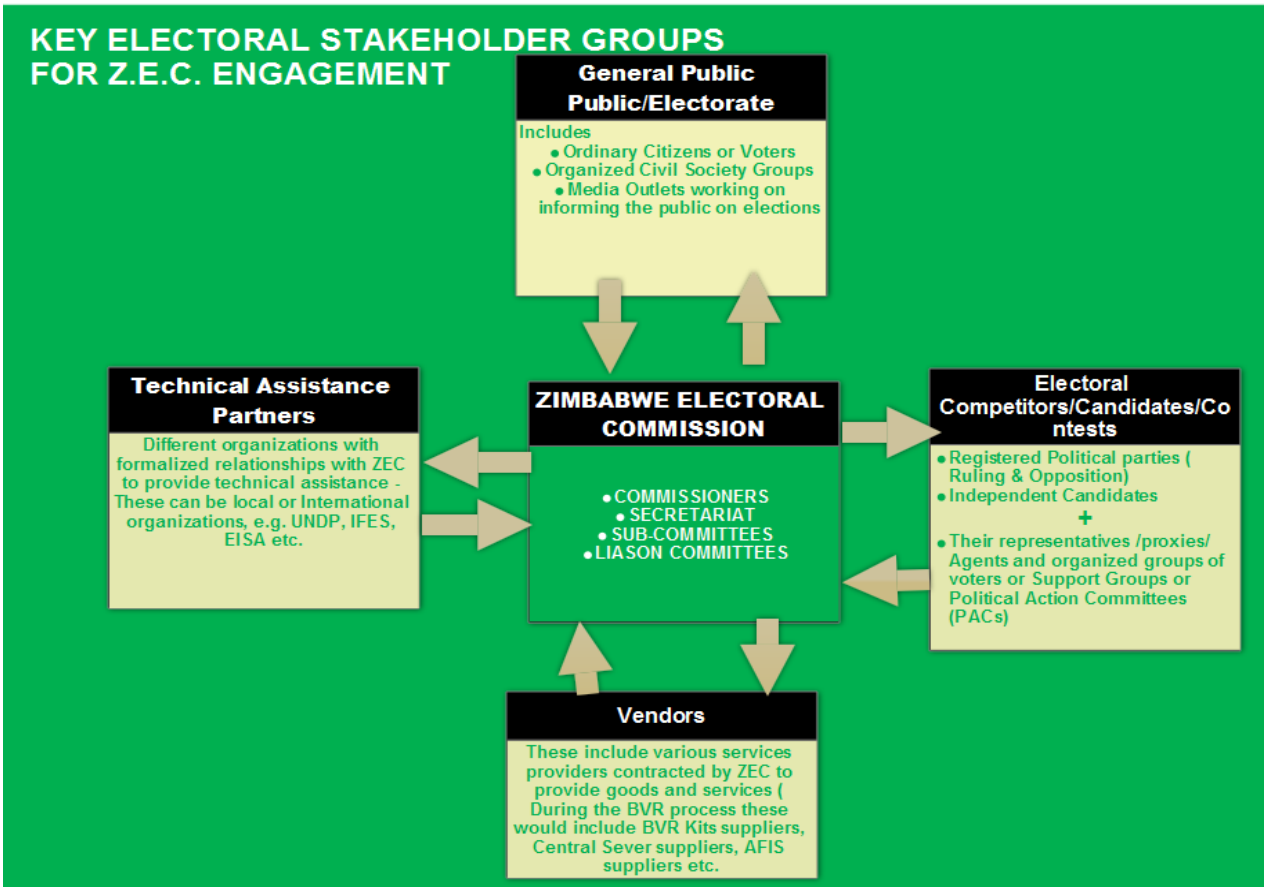

Figure 3 ZEC Stakeholder Engagements

ZEC-Electorate Engagement

Stakeholder engagement during the BVR process took various forms with the different stakeholders. For instance ZEC's engagement with the public was mainly channeled through the media (radio, television, social media [Twitter and Facebook], and print adverts as well as participation in radio and television talk shows and interviews), periodic public releases of information on the process, 3 toll free lines, and notices on critical issues brought to ZEC's attention to which it had a response. This engagement was, however, informational with limited if any two-way communication between ZEC and the Public, except in instances where individual commissioners and officers would engage with the public online, often through their accounts. ZEC could have used technology and ICTs for more engaging and practical purposes using secure web-based platforms, as is the case in Kenya, South Africa, Indonesia and Pakistan. For instance in Pakistan and Indonesia, the EMBs used SMS to have voters check whether their voter registration details and statuses were accurate, with 55 out of 85 million registered voters successfully utilising the SMS platform in Pakistan at a nominal financial cost to both the Commission and the voters.

ZEC, Contestant, Vendor and Technical Partners Engagement

ZEC engagements with electoral contestants were mainly through the Multi-Party Committees established and through petitions, letters and meetings. ZESN, however, noted the absence of political parties or their agents at other critical processes like the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) tender process, where CSOs were invited to observe. It was not readily evident whether the parties had been asked, especially given ZEC's late dispatch of invitations to CSOs. Engagements with technical assistance groups, vendors, other statutory bodies and government departments followed modalities established in memoranda of understanding between ZEC and the particular groups. During observation of the BVR process, it was noted that some of these engagements especially between ZEC and other statutory bodies and government departments like the Registrar Generals office were not as coordinated as they could be leading to information asymmetries that hampered the BVR process and at times confused the public. A case in point from the BVR Blitz Phase 1 was the lack of communication between ZEC and the Registrar's office around the use of Mabvuku Tafara sub-district centre for BVR purposes, which ZEC had listed but RG's staff on the ground stated they did not know about. Also, the delays in dealing with cases of electorate intimidation could be put down on the limited coordination between ZEC and other statutory bodies like the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the police with each authority said to be conducting its investigations.

ZEC-CSOs Engagement

ZEC-CSO stakeholder engagement took the following forms
1. Periodic Briefing meetings like the one conducted on 15 December at ZEC Headquarters, a mid-term review of the BVR process in November 2017 at Mazvikadei, as well as other BVR Update engagements in July and March 2017 in Harare before the onset of the BVR Blitz. The engagements took the following format: i. General Progress updates – ZEC released close to 60 daily updates on BVR statistics during the initial four phases and almost daily updates during the Mop-Up exercise ii. BVR Roll out updates (e.g. Blitz Extension in December, or BVR Kits tender updates in July and AFIS Tender processes in December) iii. ZEC Voter Education methods and progress iv. Political environment and associated issues. v. Feedback from Multiparty Liaison Committees on political environment related issues. vi. Briefing on key issues and plans (e.g. to compliance with High Court Order on the eligibility of "Aliens" to register and Resolution of Registration Slips shortages in December).
2. Ad hoc meetings to engage on critical emerging issues that needed near real term redress.
3. Letters on issues that needed ZEC's attention stemming from observations, especially critical incidents and other urgent matters that ZEC could address without the need for face-to-face contact.
4. Statements to and from ZEC on critical issues and recommendations from CSOs.
5. ZEC-CSO Collaborations on activities in the field, e.g. ZEC Official participation at CSO organised

meetings, talk shows, road shows, voter education and other activities.
6. Participation in key BVR processes like testing and tender process, e.g. BVR Kit validation and AFIS demonstrations, which improved ZEC transparency relating to these critical processes. This also enhanced stakeholder confidence in the process, and also enhanced stakeholders' understanding of how the BVR system works, although this could have been increased had observers been allowed to ask questions and engage with bidding and assessing teams, even on the sidelines of the test process.

6.6 Adequacy of Time Allocated to the BVR Blitz

In Zimbabwe voter Registration is an on-going process which is also periodically updated ahead of elections through deliberate voter registration drives. Under this system, citizens interested in voting must take action to register, which entails that interested potential voters can register at any time at designated registration centres. ZEC, however, allocated 72 days for the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) Blitz. The initial schedule that ZEC produced for this exercise, as well as the target, 7 million voters registered indicated an admirable ambition well in line with ZESN's estimated voter population of 7,224,128.[28] The 72-day period could have been adequate on the assumption that everything would go according to plan, people would flock to registration centres, and the exercise would be devoid of equipment malfunction and human errors and inefficiencies. But even if this had been the case, ambition did not factor in contingency, i.e. unique confluences of unanticipated developments in the operational environment that could hamper the attainment of the said ambitious target within the stated period. This turned out to be the case on two fronts. The first being the dramatic political developments of November 12 to 24 2017, and the high court judgment on the participation of Zimbabweans of foreign descent (so called "Aliens").

In addition to contingent factors, the last day of the BVR Blitz, 19 December 2017, saw 97 281 citizens successfully registering signifying an increase from the daily average for the phase which stood at about 78,000. This high turn out on the final day was indicative of a rush which pointed out that there were a proportion of potential voters still willing to register to vote.at the time of designated closure of the process. Also, ZEC had only been able to achieve registration of less than 68% of its targeted 7 million voters with cumulatively registered voters at 4,879,482.

On account of the stated contingent factors and the success rate at the end of BVR Blitz phase 4, it is safe to argue that the initial 72-day period that ZEC had earmarked for the BVR Blitz proved inadequate. To its credit, ZEC faced this reality head on and heeded calls from various stakeholders to extend the BVR Blitz process. The extension, which ZEC called a Mop-Up exercise, covered an additional 30-day period from January 10 to February 8, 2017. By 20 January, two weeks into the extension, ZESN noted that turnout was generally high across the country with registration centres such as Harare Town House, Mabvuku-Tafara, and Epworth Local Board recording figures of more than 800 per day, 143 people on

[28] ZESN (2017) 2018 Population Projections for Zimbabweans Aged 18+. Harare

19 January and a total of 70 by 1430 hours on 20 January, and 92 by 1530 on 20 January, respectively. Other centres such as Tsungubvi Community Hall in Mazowe District Ward 17 registered 276 in two days while Queen Elizabeth Primary School in Bulawayo Ward 23 registered 103 people on 23 January and Dunuza Primary School in Chiredzi Ward 18 registered 162 voters on 24 January.[29]

The high turnouts in the extension period buttress the argument around the fundamental inadequacy of the 72 day period, with the extension helping to give some room for other prospective registrants who had missed the opportunity to register during the Blitz, to do so.

[29] See ZESN (2018) Biometric Voter Registration Update - Number 17. Harare

7. PRE –BVR PROCESSES

7.1 BVR Tender Processes

The procurement process for Biometric Voter Registration Kits commenced under a public tender jointly flighted by ZEC and UNDP in December 2016. Over 50 firms initially expressed interest in the solicitation, but only 12 submitted bids within the stipulated timeframe by 17 January 2017. A team comprising officials from ZEC and UNDP reviewed the proposals, with ZEC inviting three companies to participate in site validation tests. One of the three companies, ZETES from Belgium, withdrew from the process for reasons that ZEC did not share publicly, or with electoral stakeholders including CSO observers. The Laxton Group Limited from China and Dermalog Identification Systems from Germany were the two companies left in the bidding process.

7.2 BVR Site Validation Tests

ZEC staged the BVR Site Validation Tests from 21 -26 April 2017. The processes involved stakeholder briefing[30], power-point presentations from bidders on how their kits (hardware and software) met the specification in the ZEC-UNDP bid documents, lab tests by ZEC's Technical Assessors, Training of Data Operators (data capturers), field Tests at two Schools (urban and rural) and a series of shock and waterproof test. The table below shows the schedule of events for the Biometric Voter Registration Kits Site Validation Test**.**

Table 2: BVR Kits Site Validation Test

Event Observed	Date (s)	Venue	Time
Observer Briefing	20 April 2017	ZEC HQ	11:00 - 12:00
Presentations by Bidders	21 April 2017	ZEC HQ	08:30 – 16:00
Laboratory Test (Hardware & software checks	22 April 2017	ZEC HQ	09:00 – 16:00
Training of voter registration operators	23 April 2017	Harare Polytechnic	09:00 – 15:00
Field Test (mock BVR registration)	24 April 2017	Mabvuku High School	08:30 – 16:00
Field Test (mock BVR registration)	25 April 2017	Murape Sec School – Seke	08:30 – 16:00
Field Test (shock and waterproof tests)	26 April 2017	ZEC HQ	08:15 – 11:00

[30] ZEC accredited one observer from the following institutions: Government Departments, ZEC's cooperating partners, Independent Commissions, Media, CSOs and political parties (9 representatives from the ZEC-Political Party Committee).

Below is a summary of ZESN observations of the site validation exercise.

Observations	
i.	***The Assessment:*** The Commission made considerable efforts to make the assessment process fair for both bidders. Its team of assessors alternated between the vendors allowing the two teams to observe the same processes.
ii.	***Technical Support:*** Both bidders proposed to partner with local firms, who in all likelihood would provide most of the required ongoing technical support during the voters' roll out of the voter registration exercise, but ZEC had not assessed the local partners' competencies.
iii.	***Data Capturer & Registration Speeds:*** During the Test, it was clear that the data capturers used for mock exercise had varied computer literacy, affecting the speed at which they captured registrants' details. As the operators became more acquainted with the machines, the average rate of registering voters was reduced drastically from around 12 minutes to an average of five minutes per voter. This demonstrated that with appropriate recruitment and sufficient training of data capturers, the desired target of registering about 20 people per hour per kit could be met.
iv.	***Back up documents*:** Training included taking pictures of supporting documents like the ID documents and the registration form. While the webcams used by both bidders met the requirements outlined in the bid, the operators needed more training on how to operate them. Most of the documents were captured out of focus resulting in pictures of the backup documents that were not clear and would be difficult to use during the claims and objection phase of the voter registration exercise. The webcams used by both bidders were of high quality taking high-resolution passport-sized photographs in different ambient settings.

The Mock Voter Registration exercise

The registration kits for the two teams were used in mock voter registration exercises at Mabvuku High School (urban setting) and Murape Primary School, in Seke (rural setting). 150 students were selected to participate in the exercise, but will not be part of the voting 2018 population as they would be less than 18 years of age by 31 December 2017. The mock registration included:

- Registering voters with visual, physical impairments,
- Double registrants,
- Transferring of voters,
- Removing and deleting of a record, and
- Voters with missing fingers.

ZESN noted that ZEC organised the planning of the mock registration well. However, on the first day, the instructions to the operators of the BVR kits seemed to have been different as the operators were not

following the same processes. For instance, the range of data captured was different with some teams electing not to capture addresses of voters, and with other teams having more than two operators working on one machine. This was corrected on the afternoon of the first day

***Comparison of the Two Vendors*.**

- The hardware and software of both bidders met the requirements outlined in the tender advert, with none of the equipment sets breaking down during the site validation exercise, with both sets working after the shock and waterproof tests. However:
- Laxton (Chinese Firm) had a better operator interface. It was easier to use and understand. The operators were guided on what steps they would be working on during the process. However, the least reliable component on the Laxton BVR kits appeared to be the Machine Readable Zone Scanner (MRZ), which often struggled to read data on the plastic identity cards, but could quickly read the details on the passport's data page.
- Dermalog (German Firm) appeared to have better equipment and technology. Their MRZ reader did not struggle to read the details of ID cards. Their camera and light source was more convenient to use; both devices could be moved beyond the kit to scan documents. Their fingerprint reader provided much clearer fingerprints. However, there appeared to be a problem regarding the issues of charging a back battery for one of their kits. Since Observers could not interact with the Assessment teams or the bidders, it was unclear whether it was an issue of equipment failure or human error on account of an operator not correctly connecting cables.

Process Progress and Conclusions

- ZEC awarded the tender to Laxton Group on 30 May 2017, and the equipment and software procured were administered during the BVR process.

7.3 AFIS Tender Processes

ZEC conducted a 'limited special tender' to upgrade the existing IT infrastructure for the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) system, through inviting companies to submit bids to supply Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), a principal software that checks for multiple registrations that may occur during the registration exercise.

ZEC informed stakeholders that seven companies expressed interest, but only 3 submitted bids within the required time, with only 2 of the 3firms (Laxton and IPSIDY) meeting the set bid requirements. The 2 firms were invited to demonstrate how their proposed solutions for the de-duplication process would work over a one and half hour period through PowerPoint presentations and live demonstrations of the software. Below are brief remarks about critical elements of the process.

The presentations were attended by a few civil society organisations, some representatives of various government departments, and ZEC personnel, the bulk of whom served as technical evaluators of the presentations. The low turnout could have been due to the rushed nature of the process and late dispatch of invitations, which ZEC only dispatched a day before the presentations.

OBSERVATIONS

i. *The ZEC invitation: The ZEC invitation to stakeholders was late and unclear about the purpose of the meeting, and silent about the bid adjudication process for the AFIS software.*

ii. *Quality of the proposed solutions: It was evident from the demonstrations that both firms had experience developing and providing similar solutions in an African setting. Both Laxton and IPSIDY were working with technical partners in developing the AFIS software. However, it was also clear that Laxton has a distinct advantage, as the firm had also supplied the BVR software and hardware that was in use BVR process, and could have had enhanced knowledge of ZEC's solution requirements for the de-duplication process.*

iii. *Turnaround time: Laxton indicated that the firm's proposed software is already configured to meet interface with ZEC's, but would have needed one and a half months to integrate their proposed solution with that of ZEC if the circumstances were different, i.e. if the ZEC did not currently engage them for the enrolment process. IPSIDY indicated that they would need ten weeks from the date of award of the tender.*

At the end of the demonstrations, ZEC had indicated that its team of assessors would make a determination and recommend to the commission within a week. However, as at 14 December 2017, when ZEC briefed CSOs, a decision had not yet been made, although a report on the process from the state procurement board had been received.

8. SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS, WOMEN AND YOUTH AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

8.1 Special Needs Groups

Throughout the voter registration process, special needs groups and traditionally marginalized communities were observed participating in the process. At 100% of the registration centres where ZESN observed ZEC officials made deliberate efforts to ensure that the elderly, nursing and pregnant women and persons with disabilities received necessary assistance, including preferential treatment. The later took the form of moving them ahead of the queue whenever there were queues at the registration centres, assistance with completing the Voter registration forms and help to access registration centres in instances where there were no ramps for those using wheelchairs.

ZESN noted and commended the setting up of mobile registration centres at places like the Parliament of Zimbabwe building, old people's homes, hospitals and institutions housing people with disabilities. However, the Network also noted that these centres were not sufficiently publicized in all the ten provinces to ensure that eligible special needs citizens could take advantage of them to register.

Challenges observed by ZESN:

i. Some registration centres in rural areas especially those in tents were not equipped to deal with women and other special needs groups as they were distant from sources of clean water and ablution facilities. This situation affected female registrants as well as female registration officials and observers.

ii. Limited mobilisation and education efforts towards special needs groups like people with disabilities.

iii. Accessibility of some centres: Some registration centres were inaccessible to special needs groups like people with disabilities due to the absence of PWD friendly facilities. ZESN observers noted such facilities at registration centres in Gokwe, Murombedzi, Gweru, Mudzi, Zvimba, and Chipinge. Shiku School in Runde Ward 4, Mount Belingwe in Ward 4, Mberengwa North. Invariably, these registration centres were either in multi-floor buildings, difficult to navigate terrain or didn't have facilities like ramps for ease of access.

8.2 Youth Participation

Youth participation (citizens aged below the age of 30) in electoral processes in Zimbabwe has always been low, with previous registration processes and resultant voters' rolls severely under-representing the youth demographic. In the 2013 Voters' roll, the Research and Advocacy Unit in two reports post an audit of the voters' roll argued that those under 30, were under registered in comparison with their older counterparts. RAU noted massive under registration of young women in the urban areas at 69 190 entries versus 556 264 in the over 30 group. For rural areas it was 293 408 entries for those under 30 years versus 1 860 609 entries for those over 30 years, while for mixed rural-urban areas it was 41 462

under 30 years and 229 655 over 30 years.[31] RAU noted that there were very few adults aged less than 30 years registered on the 2013 roll, with those 18-19 age band registering 8%, and over 1, 920,424 (29% of the total adult population) people under the age of 30 who ought to be registered as voters but were not.[32]

In light of this background of apathy and under-registration of the largest demographic group in the country, improvements in youth participation were anticipated in the 2018 BVR process. However, although ZEC did not release age-disaggregated data, despite numerous requests by stakeholders, ZESN observers presented anecdotal evidence that suggests that the low trend of youth participation, and their under registration is likely to continue with the new roll. While improvements are anticipated, the increases are unlikely to match national demographic statistics which suggest that there is a youth bulge in Zimbabwe constituting about 60% of the population.

[31] RAU (2013) Gender Audit of the June 2013 Voters' Roll. Research and Advocacy Unit. Harare
[32] RAU (2013) Key Statistics from The June 2013 Voters' Roll. Research and Advocacy Unit. Harare.

9. POLITICAL CLIMATE

On the surface, the BVR process took place in a peaceful environment with limited harassment, coercion and violence against potential registrants. However, the process did not occur in a political vacuum and was affected by the political climate in the country, primarily related to the leadership changes through a military involvement in civilian political processes that occurred in November 2017. While the apprehension that followed these developments affected everyone in the country, the military, ZEC and later, the new government, encouraged citizens to continue with normal business. It is worth noting that this significant political development occurred in Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the BVR process, where it was supposed to peak. The beginning of Phase 2 recorded some spectacular figures including the highest (131,719), second highest (127,500) and third highest (116,881) daily statistics of the BVR Blitz process on the 2nd and 1st of November 2017 and 31st October. This upward trend seemed to have been checked by political developments, with the BVR process affected by the climate of uncertainty. Phase 2 eventually averaged 75,542 daily registrants despite the high showing at the beginning, and Phase 3 produced the lowest daily average at 67,716 registrants per day.

At the height of the November political developments, ZESN noted some worryingly low figures at some centres. The following examples illustrate:

- Arex House, ward 12 Bikita west, five people registered on 16 November 2017,
- Luveve Depot Hall, in Ward 16 of Bulawayo recorded four people on 17 November 2017,
- Silver stream, Umguza in Matabeleland South registered two people on 18 November 2017,
- Masuku primary school A, in Bulawayo South, registered three people on 21 November 2017.

Outside this significant political development, the BVR Blitz political climate was also characterized by intimidation, harassment and obstruction of observers, intimidation and harassment of registrants, misinformation of citizens on the purpose of the BVR process. In most instances, the perpetrators of harassment and intimidation did so with impunity, with no recorded reprimands or arrests registered.

In addition to intimidation, the political climate was also characterized by uncertainties regarding ZEC, the BVR process, the electoral process and future role of the military as well as disposition of the new dispensation on free, fair and credible elections in the aftermath of the November Political developments. The Figure below highlights these key variables, some of which are described in detail below it.

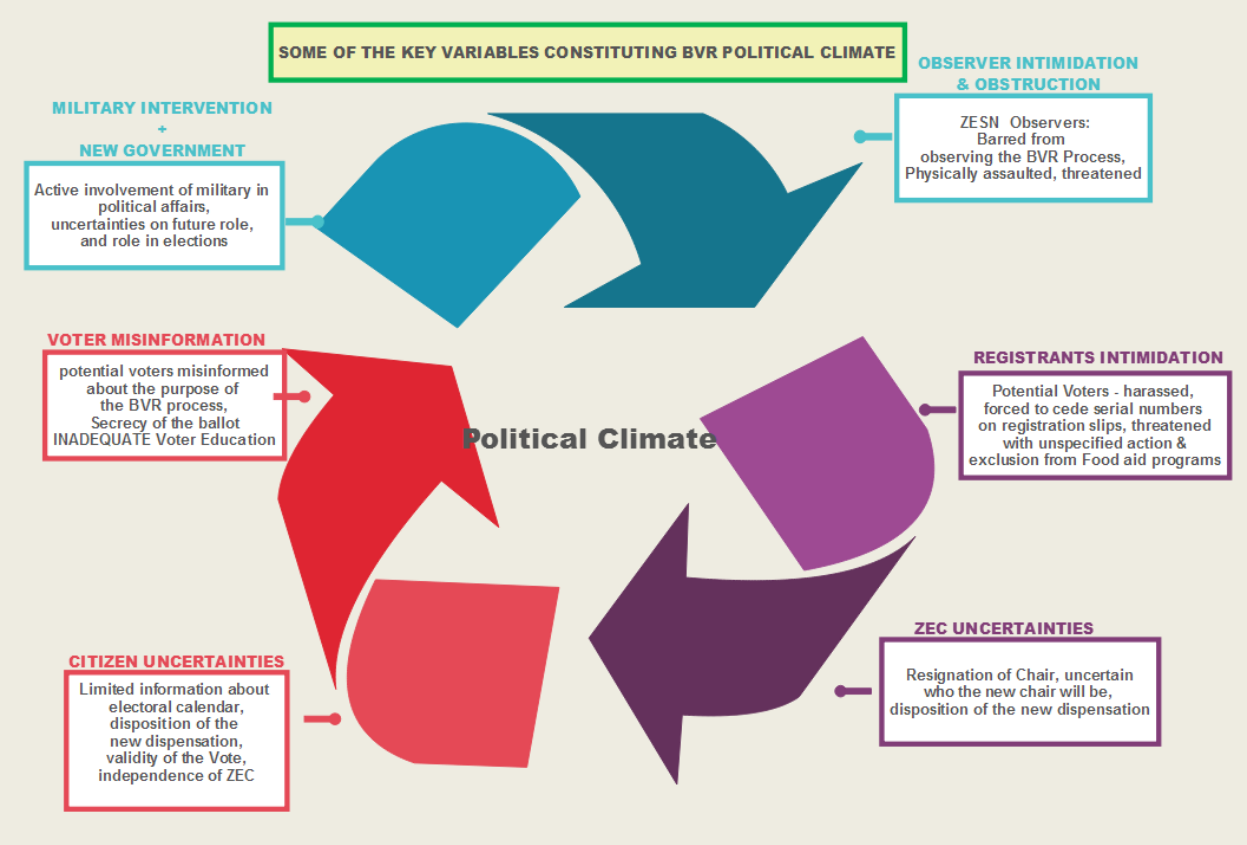

Figure 4 Key Variables in the Political Climate

9.1 Demands for and Recording of Voter Registration Confirmation Slips Serial Numbers

This practice was prevalent in most villages and some urban centres, with traditional leaders, district ZANU PF party chairpersons, ZANU PF Councilors, Members of Parliament and other party officials reported having demanded registrants to submit their registration certificate's serial numbers to them. These incidents which were intimidatory, and have the impact of misleading registrants into losing faith in the secrecy of the ballot were recorded throughout all Four Phases of the BVR Blitz and the Mop-Up period. Registrants were at times threatened with unspecified actions if they did not comply, while in other instances they were threatened with not being included in food aid programs. Examples of areas where this occurred include Honde Valley, Nyanga North, Greystone Park, Dzivarasekwa, Bikita East, Murehwa South, Rushinga, Mpopoma, Mbire Mudzi North Motoko North, Gokwe Gumunyu, Mt Darwin, Mudzi North, Murewa North, Muzarabani, Chivi Central, Sanyati, Gweru and Murewa.

In some areas like Mbire and Mudzi, political parties were reported to have set up 'camps' within the vicinity of some registration centres and were noting down details of registration certificates and informing registrants that they will be able to use that information to track voting preferences during elections. While in Motoko North Ward 10, the village was reported to have escorted his subjects to the registration centres to register, after which he took down details of their registration certificates.

ZESN Observers noted that in some instances, registrants who needed proof of residence were given the pre-filled affidavits and asked to submit serial numbers of their registration slips in return. This challenge was exacerbated by the absence of Commissioners of Oaths at registration centres, especially during Phase 1 and 2. In later phases, ZEC allowed some of its officers to act a Commissioners of Oaths, while civil society organisations and lawyers facilitated the presence of commissioners of oaths on a pro bono publicas basis at registration centres.

9.2 Intimidation and Obstruction of Observers

During the BVR process ZESN recorded numerous reports of accredited observers being intimidated for observing the BVR process and in some instances being denied access to the centres by ward Councillors and suspected ZANU PF members.

The following are illustrative examples of this obstruction and intimidation	
i.	Ward 6 Chipinge Central, where a ZESN observer was threatened and intimidated by the Ward Councilor and his supporters resulting in the centre being closed by the registration officials who felt the situation was threatening to get out of hand.
ii.	Epworth Ward 2 at the Local Board, where a physically challenged ZESN observer was forced out of a registration centre by a ZANU PF Ward Councilor. The Councilor insisted that observers should not be granted access to the registration centre. This illegal action was observed and allowed to continue by registration officials.
iii.	Ward 10 of Mwenezi West, where the registration officials, insisted that in addition to being accredited by the Commission, the observer needed additional clearance from the ZEC district offices, denied a ZESN observer access to a registration centre.
iv.	Ward 1 Rushinga where a ZESN Observer was summoned and admonished by the Chief of that area for observing the BVR process in his area without seeking his permission first.

9.3 Voter Misinformation

ZESN recorded a worrying number of incidents of voter misinformation. Most of these incidents occurred in the course of demands for registration confirmation slip serial numbers, where perpetrators misled registrants that the BVR process notably the capture of their biometrics would allow them to track their voting preferences. In addition to this common trend, ZESN Observers also noted deliberate misrepresentation of BVR procedures. For instance, 10 December, potential registrants were misinformed by suspected ZANU PF party members on the registration procedures near Kuwadzana High in Kuwadzana Ward 44. Potential registrants were duped into writing down their details in a book without producing Identification Documents and proof of residence. After this, the perpetrators informed the duped registrants that the registration procedure was complete.

9.4 ZEC and Other Statutory Bodies Responsiveness

As this report highlights, there were some issues in need of ZEC and other statutory bodies' attention. The responsiveness of ZEC, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the Police were especially critical to the quality of the BVR process and were varied. ZEC proved very responsive on all matters technical regarding the process. Some ZESN reports on challenges at registration centres regarding observation, equipment failure, shortages, and clarification of process were often dealt with promptly after acknowledgement of receipt of communications. ZEC commendably responded to issues like shortages of VR9 forms, scarcity of paper for registration confirmation slips, amongst others, often seeking civil society's assistance in resolving these issues. ZEC also handled well issues of observation obstruction, clarifications on information transmission and security. The table below summarizes ZEC and other statutory Bodies responsiveness during the BVR process.

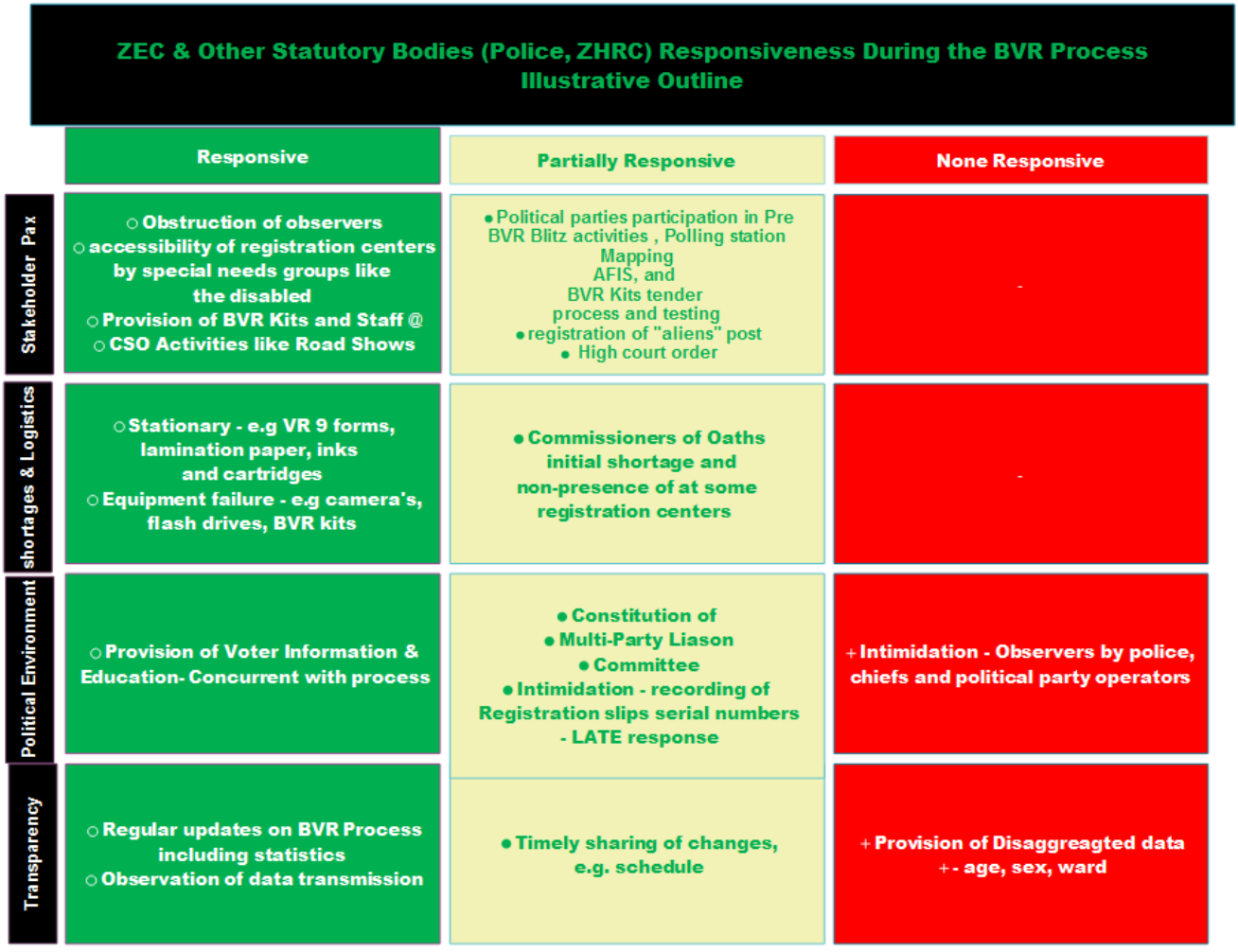

Figure 5 ZEC & Other Statutory Bodies' Responsiveness

The table below explains the two major issues on which non-responsiveness was noted

Issue	Description	Possible Consequences
Incessant requests for ZEC to release age and sex-disaggregated data	ZESN appreciates that ZEC was able to improve information sharing on the BVR process and outputs from a situation where briefings and updates were limited to regular presentations, especially on registration figures. However, part of the request for improving communications and information sharing included gender and age-disaggregated data at ward level. Throughout the process, ZEC proved unresponsive to this matter and request, leaving electoral stakeholders with aggregate figures, which did not share enough details on the critical characteristics of registrants, like age, gender and enhanced location.	The consequence of this non-disclosure has been that electoral stakeholders were unable to appropriately target other initiatives like information sharing and civic education to areas, age cohorts and sexes that could have been lagging behind. As a result, traditional problems of registration processes' marginalising and under registering young people, women, and people with disabilities could have recurred.
Intimidation of Registrants & observers	ZESN and other electoral stakeholders forwarded information on intimidation of registrants to ZEC, the ZHRC and the Police. ZESN requested the ZEC to institute a Multi-party liaison Committee, and investigate and sanction perpetrators of intimidation. While ZEC was able to activate the Multi-Party Committee, ZEC, the ZHRC and the Police were unable to address cases of impunity by perpetrators throughout the entire 4 phases of the Blitz. Intimidation of various forms mentioned earlier in this report continued unabated, with ZEC reporting back in December 2017 that they had failed to have a joint investigation with other statutory groups who preferred to conduct their own investigations. ZEC and the police were only able to put out notices on the illegality of intimidation through recording of voter registration confirmation slips late in January 2018 during the Mop-Up exercise	As a result, this form of intimidation and attack on the integrity of the process, privacy, and secrecy of the ballot continued unabated throughout the greater part of the BVR Process. When ZEC and the Police did act, the actions were limited to information, with no known sanctions executed on perpetrators of these acts of intimidation. This was a classic case of bolting the stable when the horses had already left.

10. CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION

Civic and Voter Education on the BVR process was the jurisdiction of ZEC, which elected to partner and or allow at least 40 Civil Society Organisations to participate in the process. However, during its December 2017 briefing to CSOs and FBO, ZEC reported that only half of the organisations it had selected hand been visible on the ground providing civic education

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ZEC and civil society made use of various forms of civic education, including through:

- ✓ **Door to door engagements with prospective voters, where ZEC and CSOs provided information on the BVR process,**
- ✓ **Radio and television adverts, including influencer marketing where famous personalities were used to spread information on the BVR process.**
- ✓ **Radio, television, and Talk shows and town hall meetings.**
- ✓ **Fliers and poster distributions,**
- ✓ **Billboards**
- ✓ **Social media – twitter and Facebook,**
- ✓ **Roadshows**

The materials used for civic education were of a high standard and had been vetted and approved by ZEC for participating CSOs. While ZEC provided a lot of civic and voter education, there were challenges with timeliness and adequacy of the voter education.

10.1 Timeliness

From the onset, the BVR process Voter and Civic education process suffered from a sequencing problem. In part, as already highlighted the BVR process was a rush job, which ZEC executed well under the circumstances. However, standard practice is that voter education should be conducted before the registration process, to allow prospective voters to know about the process, its prerequisites, and how to optimise opportunities presented through the process.

There was a tiny window in between critical BVR decisions on Kits, process and legislative regularization and the onset of the exercise. In the main, ZEC and its partners were not able to provide BVR Voter and civic education well ahead of the process. The observable implications of this were that voter and civic education were mainly conducted concurrently with the BVR process instead of before it, resulting in challenges associated with the second key challenge of adequacy.

10.2 Adequacy

Also due to the late onset of civic and voter education, the process also became inadequate. Multitudes of prospective registrants went to register with limited knowledge of what the process entailed, what was required of them and what the BVR process involved.

The observable implications of the inadequacy of the civic education process mainly manifested or could be seen through the following issues, amongst others:

- The high number of potential registrants who were being turned away from registration centres on account of wrong, inadequate or inappropriate documentation (see screen short of ZEC update of 8 February 2018– the last column contains reasons prospective voters were being turned away). This figure totalled a staggering 91,643 at the end of the Mop-Up exercise, close to 2% of registrants.
- The ease with which potential registrants were misinformed about the BVR process and its impact on the secrecy of the vote, and voting preferences. Numerous counts of misinformation were recorded, especially in rural areas, where potential and actual registrants were misinformed that the BVR process entailed that their voting preferences would be known.
- Obstruction of observers, Misinterpretation of statutes regulating the BVR process and misapplication of others that had nothing to do with the BVR process. For instance attempts by some ZEC officials to invoke the official secrets act to bar observers from accessing information showed that civic and voter education was not adequate not just for potential registrants but also for BVR process administrators. Another example was the attempts by some BVR officials and political party agents to bar observers from participating in the process, which demonstrated either limited knowledge of the BVR process or deliberate obfuscation of the process and its requirements.

REPORT ON BIOMETRIC VOTER REGISTRATION AT DISTRICT OFFICES, PROVINCIAL OFFICES, BLITZ CENTRES AS AT COMPLETION OF MOP-UP EXERCISE

Below are Provincial Cumulative voter registration statistics per Province:

Province	No. of kits (Mop-Up)	Total Registered as at 08.02.18 Mop-up	Cumulative to Date (Phases 1,2,3, 4 & Mop-Up)	Provincial ZIMSTATS 2018 Projected Voter Population	Percentage Registered to Date	Centres Submitted on 08.02.18	Centres Not Submitted on 08.02.18	Turned Away as at 08.02.18 (Mop-Up)	Cumulative Turned Away to Date (Phases 1,2,3,4 & Mop-Up)	Reasons for Turned Away (Mop-Up)
Bulawayo (Makokoba, Bulawayo East, Bulawayo Central, Pelanda-Mpopoma, Emakandeni-Entumbane, Lobengula, Bulawayo South, Nkulumane, Luveve, Pumula, Magwegwe, Nketa)	17	28,526	243,146	409,389	59.4	17	0	170	1,887	**Aliens without long birth certificates,** Non Citizen Residents
Harare (Chitungwiza, Epworth, Harare Central, Mt Pleasant, Harare East, Harare West, Harare North, Hatfield, Mabvuku -Tafara, Sunningdale, Harare South, Southerton, Highfield East, Highfield West, Glen Norah, Glen View North, Glen View South, Mbare, Warren Park, Kambuzuma, Budiriro, Mufakose, Kuwadzana, Kuwadzana East, Dzivarasekwa)	59	102,955	849,128	1,345,818	63.1	59	0	692	4,652	**Defaced IDs,** underage, **aliens without long birth certificates,** broken ID, Non Citizen Residents
Manicaland (Chipinge, Chimanimani, Buhera, Mutare, Mutasa, Nyanga, Makoni)	48	42,391	693,874	912,762	76.0	48	0	1,580	12,663	**No IDs,** defaced IDs, underage **Aliens without long birth certificates**
Mash Central (Mbire, Muzarabani, Mt. Darwin, Rushinga, Shamva, Guruve, Mazowe, Bindura)	47	25,504	505,576	620,279	81.5	47	0	1,084	10,751	**No IDs,** defaced IDs, underage, **aliens without long birth certificates**
Mash East (Mudzi, Mutoko, UMP, Murehwa, Marondera, Chikomba, Wedza, Seke, Goromonzi)	58	39,219	590,609	735,790	80.3	58	0	848	13,135	**Aliens without long birth certificates,** underage, Non Citizen Residents, defaced IDs ID numbers on the same ID document not matching
Mash West (Kariba, Hurungwe, Makonde, Zvimba, Chegutu, Mhondoro-Ngezi, Sanyati)	56	36,979	557,729	834,414	66.8	56	0	2,242	16,565	**Aliens without long birth certificates,** no IDs, drivers licence, defaced IDs, photocopied IDs, Non Citizen Residents
Masvingo (Chiredzi, Mwenezi, Chivi, Masvingo, Gutu, Bikita, Zaka)	50	42,301	585,785	754,314	77.7	50	0	756	12,359	**Aliens without long birth certificates,** defaced IDs, **no IDs**
Mat North (Binga, Lupane, Tsholotsho, Umguza, Bubi, Nkayi, Hwange)	36	20,437	319,549	389,592	82.0	36	0	773	6,453	**Aliens without long birth certificates,** defaced IDs, no IDs
Mat South (Insiza, Umzingwane, Matobo, Bulilima, Mangwe, Gwanda, Beitbridge)	50	25,670	239,367	356,586	67.1	50	0	336	3,739	**Defaced IDs, no IDs,** drivers licence, aliens without long birth certificates, Non Citizen Residents, **underage**
Midlands (Gokwe North, Gokwe South, Mberengwa, Zvishavane, Chirumanzu, Kwekwe, Gweru, Shurugwi)	69	67,270	725,971	865,185	83.9	69	0	440	9,439	**Aliens without long birth certificates,** no IDs, **defaced IDs,** underage, drivers licence, photocopied IDs
TOTALS	**490**	**431,252**	**5,310,734**	**7,224,129**	**73.5**	**490**	**0**	**8,921**	**91,643**	

Figure 9 ZEC BVR Mop-Up Exercise Statistics Release

10.3 Accessibility by Marginalized Groups, Especially Those with Hearing and Visual Impairments

In addition to the general challenges mentioned in the previous section, the civic and voter education efforts and materials that ZEC and its voter education partners provided were initially deemed as missing traditionally marginalized groups especially the disabled with hearing and visual impairments.

People with disabilities staged a demonstration in August 2017 over the lack of universal accessibility to polling centres, which impinged their ease of participation. In September 2017 Senator representing people with disabilities in Parliament, Nyamayabo Mashavakure argued that ZEC ought to ensure that that sign language, voter education material in braille and accessible registration centres, were part of their logistical preparations. While ZEC dealt with the third issue, the first two issues were primarily neglected although then ZEC Chair Rita Makarau acknowledged the requests presented by the senator.[33] Despite these submissions and protests, in October 2017 after the BVR Blitz had started, Bensen Banga a disability activist argued that "The campaigns being launched by civic organisations and ZEC are discriminatory in nature as they don't cater for the deaf, dumb and the blind."[34]

Although ZEC and Civil Society organisations noted the above challenges, the BVR Blitz processes and civic education programmes fell short of the inclusiveness standard where people with hearing and visual impairments are concerned.

10.4 Role of the Media

The media plays a critical role in governance and democratic processes. This role is usually even more pronounced in electoral procedures, through the media's active facilitation of debate and provision of knowledge and information. Throughout this process, the media is expected to conduct its tasks in an independent and professional fashion as well as accurate and impartial manner. While these roles are most pronounced during the campaign periods, the media also plays a critical role in voter registration processes, like the BVR Blitz process.

During the BVR process, the media in Zimbabwe in its print and electronic format, as well as social media played the following roles:

1. Provided information about the BVR process to citizens. Most of this information was forwarded to the public in mostly accurate, unbiased, objective fashions, especially given that the Voter Registration process is by character non-competitive and serves to establish the field of eligible participants that electoral competitors will eventually have to win over. This non-competitive character allowed public and private media to be fairly impartial in their reporting on the BVR process, as well as in their information provision. The media played this role through radio and

[33] Machamire, F. (2017) PLWDs raise concern over 2018 Vote.https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2017/09/19/plwds-raise-concerns-over-2018-vote

[34] Open Parly (2017) BVR registration: The disabled cry foul. https://openparly.co.zw/2017/10/24/bvr-registration-the-disabled-cry-foul/

television programs on the BVR process, flighting advertorials, and carrying stories on the process, especially the registration figures, trends and process as it progressed.

2. Mobilising citizens to register. The media in Zimbabwe also assisted with mobilisation processes through some of the mechanisms described in point 1 and even through some of the civic education methods mentioned above. Also, two additional points are worth noting on mobilisation. These are the emergence for the first time in a registration process in Zimbabwe of new media as a potent aid in voter registration, as well as the use by the press of editorials to mobilise as well as critique the BVR process.
   i. *ZEC and CSOs developed several hashtags on social media, especially twitter and Facebook to assist with mobilisation processes for the BVR exercises. These included ZESN's #usasarire #ungasaleli #ZimVote2018s, #BVR, other CSOs' #RegisterElectEngage and ZEC's #BVRZW in addition to mobilisation specific hashtags like Heal Zimbabwe's #Vote4Peace amongst others.*
   ii. *Almost all the leading newspapers ran editorials on the process focusing on different elements of the BVR process from mobilisation to appeals around some of the requirements for registration and also allegations around intimidation of prospective voters.*
3. Investigative role in exposing any malpractices. The media also served this vital purpose during the BVR process. However, due to the nature of the registration process, most of these were exposed around perceived inefficiencies, as well as intimidation. In the process, an important point to note was the media's role in debunking "fake news" and half-truths. This function, which was rampant amongst citizens especially in rural areas, and also in some instances promoted on social media, was carried out through sharing of accurate information in statements, radio and television programs, as well as news articles and editorials.

Media and ZEC as well as other electoral stakeholders frequently engaged in different ways, some of which are captured in the section on ZEC's engagement with critical stakeholders. These engagements assisted the media in its various roles to carry out independent analysis, share pertinent information and be better informed about the electoral process in service to their audiences.

11. ANALYSIS OF REGISTRATION DATA

The Biometric Voter Registration Blitz and the Mop-Up Exercise registered 5,325,631 eligible voters. This figure represented 73, 5% of the estimated voting population in the country, surpassing the 70% target that ZEC had set. As can be seen from the BVR dashboard below, the overall trend for voter registration from previous elections is downwards, although Seven (7) out of the ten (10) provinces registered increases in the number of registrants. Bulawayo, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland all recorded a downward trend from the 2013 figures.

The overall downward trend is possibly explained by the possibilities as argued in the past, that previous voters' rolls were grossly inflated with deceased people and duplications as notable concerns. The expectation is that the BVR exercise produced roll will have fewer duplications and dead people on account of its newness. The figure below shows the BVR process outputs in comparative historical perspective. It indicates a reduction in numbers of registrants from all post-2000 elections except the 2000 House of Assembly and 2005 Senate Elections. Bearing in mind that previous voters rolls had various integrity, coverage and accuracy questions on account of factors highlighted in the context section.

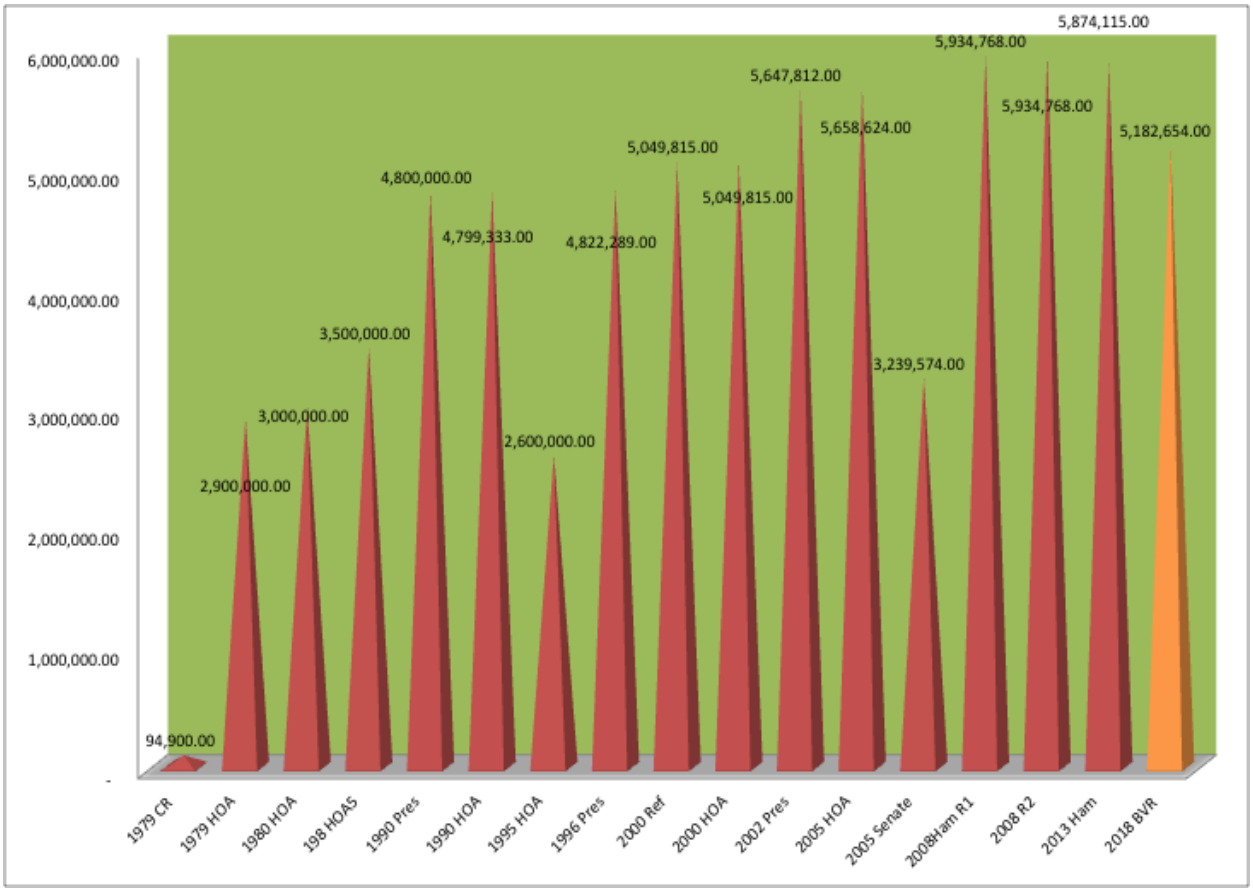

Figure 6 Zimbabwe's Registration Figures Over Time

11.1 Performance of Provinces

Harare Province recorded the highest number of registrants, at 747,920 registered voters followed by the Midlands with 717,510 registrants. The lowest number of registrants was recorded in Bulawayo with 211,276 followed by Matebeleland South, which registered 246,550. However, proportionally, the best performing province was Matebeleland North, which recorded 83, 1%, the Midlands (82, 9%) Mashonaland Central (79, 1%) and Mashonaland East (79, 5%) follow Matebeleland North regarding high performance. Figure 10 below shows the overall BVR Statistical picture compared to ZESN 2017 Voter Population Projections.

Province	ZESN 2017 Projections			ZEC provisional BVR statistics			
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	% registered
Mat North	177596	211996	**389592**	140898	182689	**323587**	**83.1%**
Midlands	397689	467496	**865185**	328247	389263	**717510**	**82.9%**
Mash East	341616	394173	**735790**	263840	321358	**585198**	**79.5%**
Mash Central	296783	323496	**620279**	230406	260332	**490738**	**79.1%**
Masvingo	321247	433067	**754314**	242715	340884	**583599**	**77.4%**
Mash West	411007	423407	**834414**	299849	311902	**611751**	**73.3%**
Manicaland	405871	506891	**912762**	284962	381981	**666943**	**73.1%**
Mat South	160059	196527	**356586**	104578	141972	**246550**	**69.1%**
Harare	651540	694278	**1345818**	366467	381453	**747920**	**55.6%**
Bulawayo	186055	223334	**409389**	99168	112108	**211276**	**51.6%**
Total	**3349462**	**3874665**	7224128	**2361130**	**2823942**	5185072	**71.8%**

Figure 7 ZESN Voter Population Projections Vs BVR Registration

Figure 10 shows the overall picture of both ZESN 2018 population projections and ZEC provisional BVR statistics. ZESN 2018 projections for the voting age population indicated that Harare has the highest number of people aged 18+ (134 818), followed by Manicaland (912 762), Midlands (865 185) and in fourth place is Mash West (834 414). The Province with the least number of projected population aged 18+ is Matabeleland South (356 586).

ZEC provisional BVR statistics (in the last column) shows that a substantial proportion of adult Zimbabweans (2 039 056) did not register in the BVR Blitz and mop up exercise or are yet to register. For example, Harare has a projected adult population of 1,3million (1 345 818) fewer than 800 000 (747 920) have registered to vote. Thus the registered population of Harare, in light of the projected figure is

55.6%. The province with the highest proportion of registered voters is Matabeleland North (83.1%), followed closely by Midlands (82.9%). Bulawayo (**51.6%**) and Harare (**55.6%**) are at the bottom of the ladder of residents registered to vote.

11.2 Possible Urban Voter Suppression

The two Metropolitan Provinces, which are mostly urban, anchor the registration standings proportionally, amidst speculation that there could have been active urban voter suppression through the deployment of un-proportional registration centres and equipment. For instance, during the Mop-Up exercise, the Midlands province, despite being the third largest province by population after Harare and Manicaland, received the largest supply of Registration kits (69). Harare, which had close to 500,000 more eligible voters than the Midlands, received 59 kits and Manicaland only 48. 11 kits serviced Bulawayo (with an additional 6 provided on the 7th of February 2018), a quarter of the number of kits offered for the Midlands province, and less than half of the kits supplied to the next province (36) Matebeleland North.

All other provinces had over 36 kits. This was despite ZESN observations that turnout of people wanting to register at district and sub-district centres was highest in Harare, Chitungwiza and Bulawayo.

The anomalous distribution of kits witnessed during the Mop-Up Exercise proved to be a trend throughout the BVR Blitz exercise, which saw the Midlands being serviced by 353 kits during the BVR Blitz pre-Mop-Up, over a hundred more than Harare which had 248 Kits servicing it. The Midlands figures were over three times more than Bulawayo, which was serviced by 110 kits, the lowest of all the provinces. This was despite Bulawayo having higher numbers of eligible voters than at least two other provinces, Matebeleland North and Matebeleland South. For the Midlands, the favor was despite the Midlands having a smaller eligible voter contingent than at least two other provinces, Harare and Manicaland.

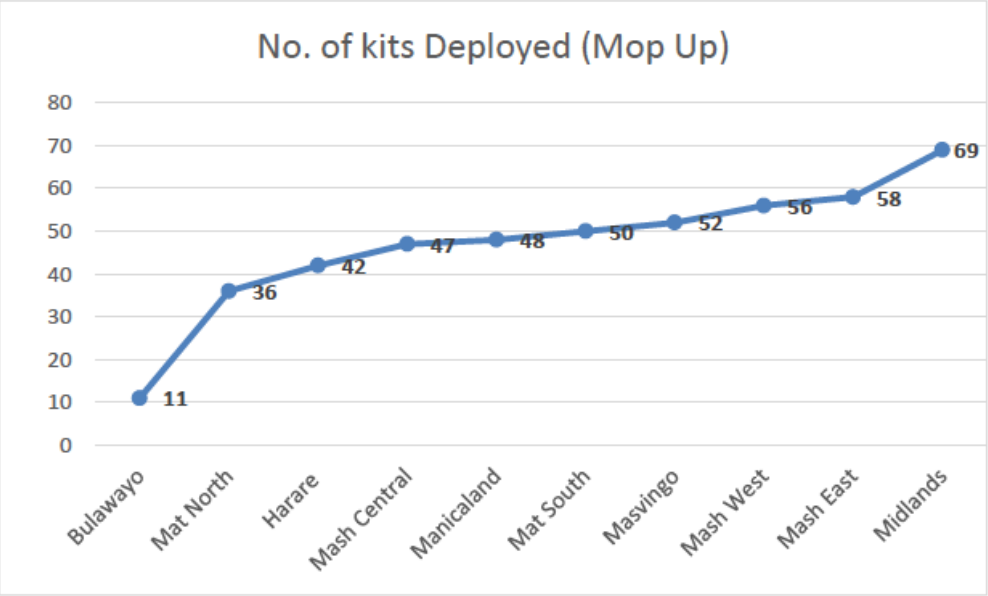

Figure 8 ZEC Mop UP BVR Kits Deployments

BVR Dash Board - Registration by Province as At 22/02/18							
Province	**BVR Registrants**	**Projected Voter Population**	**%age Registered**	**Turned away**	**2013 Registered Voters**	**2008 Registered Voters**	**Trend from 2013 Roll**
Bulawayo	211,276	409,389.00	59.4	1,887	310,390.00	313,459.00	↓
Harare	747,920	1,345,818.00	63.1	4,652	798,264.00	766,478.00	↑
Manicaland	666,943	912,762.00	76.0	12,663	798,677.00	709,664.00	↓
Mashonaland Central	490,738	620,279.00	81.5	10,751	568,600.00	488,369.00	↓
Mashonaland East	585,198	735,790.00	80.3	13.135	710,323.00	547,272.00	↑
Mashonaland West	611,751	834,414.00	66.8	16,565	656,036.00	524,655.00	↑
Masvingo	583,599	754,314.00	77.7	12,359	769,263.00	699,199.00	↑
Matebeleland North	323,587	389,592.00	82.0	6,453	383,267.00	345,264.00	↑
Matebeleland South	246,550	356,586.00	67.1	3,739	371,143.00	342,280.00	↑
Midlands	717,510	865,185.00	83.9	9.439	821,040.00	739,510.00	↑
TOTALS	**5,185,072**	**7,224,128**	**73.5**	**91,643**	**6,187,003**	**5,476,150**	↓

11.3 Registration by Phase

The BVR process did not follow an expected standard curve regarding its registration patterns. The peak phase was Phase 4, registering a total of 1,346,905 potential voters, while Phase 3 recorded the lowest figures of 1,083,453. The mop-up exercise as an extension period, as expected, had a smaller registrant turn out than the 4 Programmed phases.

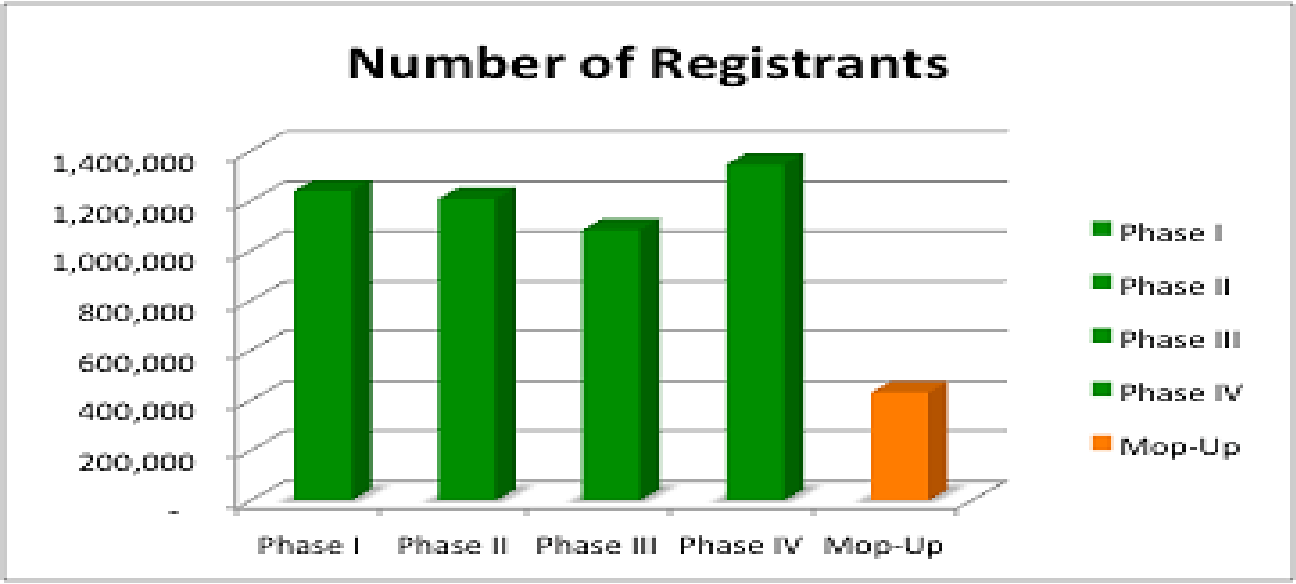

Figure 9 Number of Registrants by Phase

Phase Two and Three would have been expected under normal circumstances to be when the process peaked, but other contingent factors may have disrupted this typical pattern. However, as the diagram below shows, Phase 2 had the three highest peak days from the 1-3 November 2017.

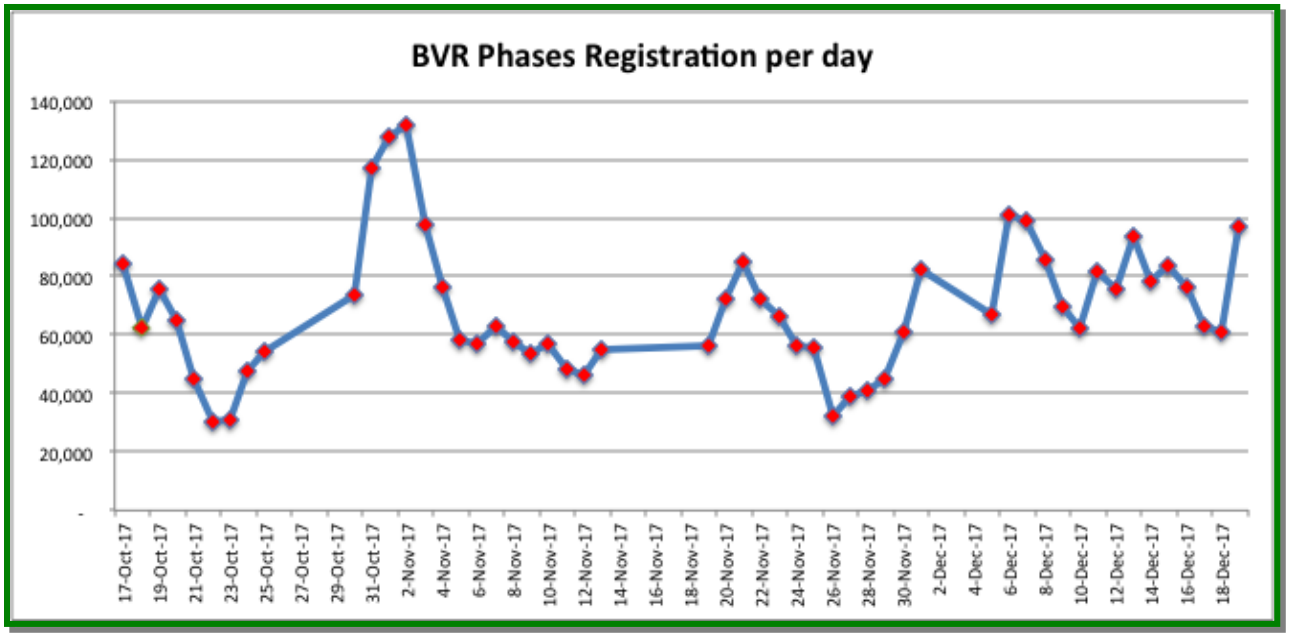

Figure 10 BVR Registrations By Day –Phase t 1o Phase 4

As highlighted under the political context and climate section, the political developments from the 7th of November, when President Emmerson Mnangagwa was fired as Vice President to the 24th of November when he was inaugurated, as President appeared to have an impact on the BVR process. From the peaks of early November, the numbers dipped, increasing on the 21st of November and lowering again only to rise in the Fourth Phase of the BVR process.

11.4 BVR Registrant by Age as At 22/02/2018

According to ZEC Provisional statiscs released 22 February 2018, the BVR Blitz did not significantly altered the voter proportions make-up on the voters' roll. Social and maintream media indicated that the majority of potential voters on the voters'roll would be young, ranging between the ages of 18 and 40. ZEC's statistics bear this enthusiasm , and shows that 54% of registrants were below the age of 40. As the table below shows, those over the age of 80 constitute less than 3 percent of the registered voting population. The ZEC results also indicate that 70% or 3 612 039 out of the total 5 185 072, are aged between 20 years and 44 years. Only 13.9% are in the 45-60 age categories. Of the 70%, the highest population is 35-39 years (667 555, 13.20%), followed by the 20-24 years (666 467, 13.18%), then 25-24 years (652 726, 12.9%) and in fourth place the 30-34 age category (609942).

Age Range	Number of Registrants	
18-19	214418	4%
20-24	666467	13%
25-29	652726	13%
30-34	722210	14%
35-39	667582	13%

40-44	579226	11%
45-49	436123	8%
50-54	264635	5%
55-59	276294	5%
60-64	242604	5%
65-69	175257	3%
70-75	116566	2%
75-79	85935	2%
80-84	41555	1%
85-89	28999	1%
90-94	7138	0%
95-99	4122	0%
100+	797	0%
Totals	**5182654**	**100%**

While the enthusiusm for the Young vote is warranted, and the position that Youth constitute the biggest voting cohort from the BVR exercise is true, the reality is that only marginal increases in the 18 to 19 cohort were registred, indicating that there is still a need to intensify voter mobilisation of first time voters, especially those still in or just leaving school.

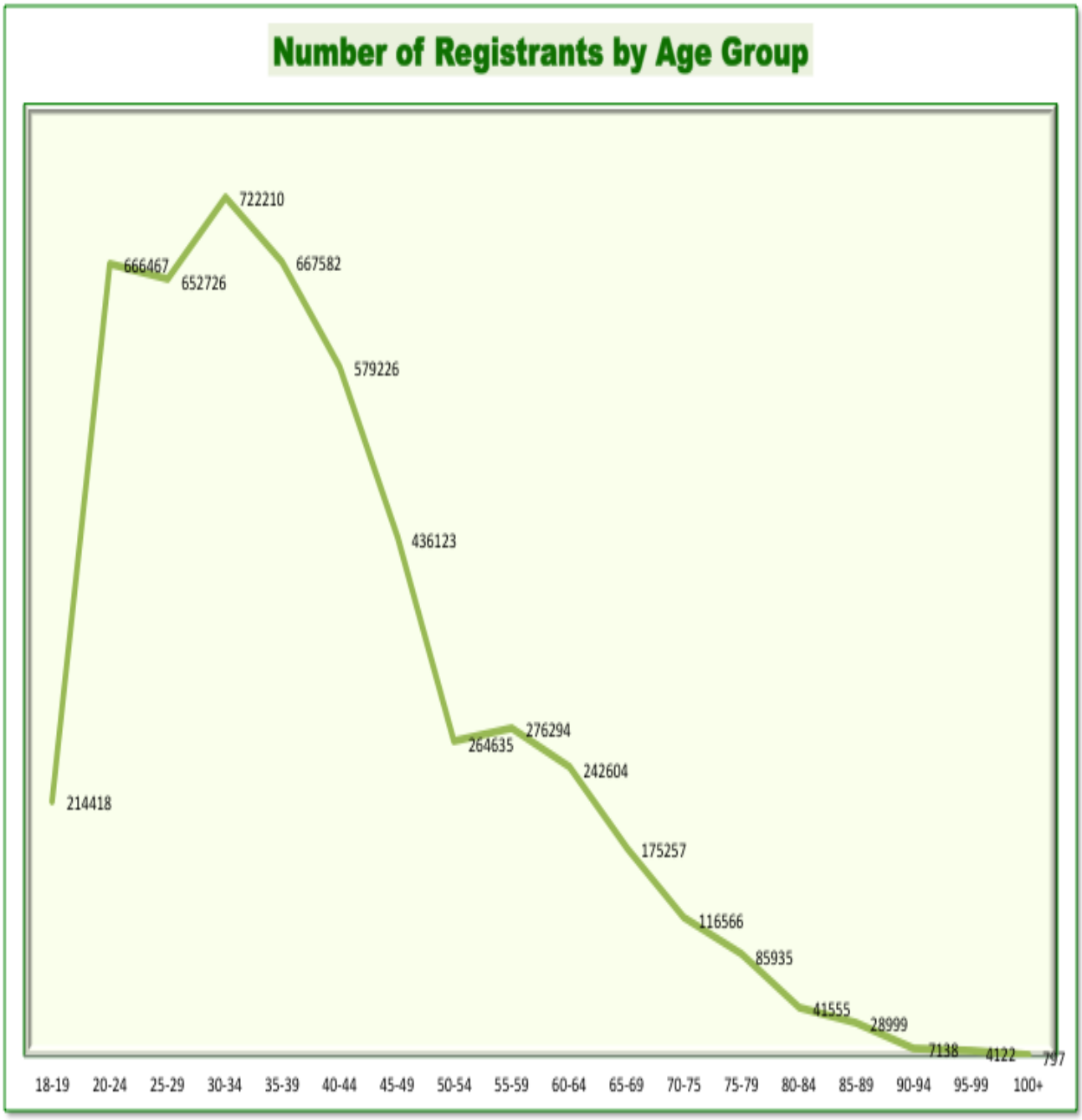

Figure 11 BVR Registrations By Age As at 22/02/2018

However, while the 18-29-age range jumped from 13,7% in 2013 to about 30% in 2018, the rest of the age groups mirror the 2013 proportions but with some up-ward and downward movement as the table below shows. The 30-39 age group was 33% of the voters' registered in 2013, and has dropped to 27% in 2018, while the 40-49 age group has dropped from 21% to 18% of registrants. The 50-59 age group has dropped from 15% of registrants in 2013 to 10% in 2018, while the 60-69 and 70 to 79 age groups have held constant at around 8-9% and 4 to 6% respectively. The over 80 age group has reduced from 5% to 2% (See Table below).

Age Range	2018 Registrants	2013 Registrants
18-29	0.30	0.14
30-39	0.27	0.33
40-49	0.18	0.21
50-59	0.10	0.15
60-69	0.08	0.09
70-79	0.04	0.06
80+	0.02	0.05

As Figure 15 shows, while there has been variation in proportions, the general trend in voter composition by age except for the 18-29 age group has held constant and followed similar patterns to previous elections.

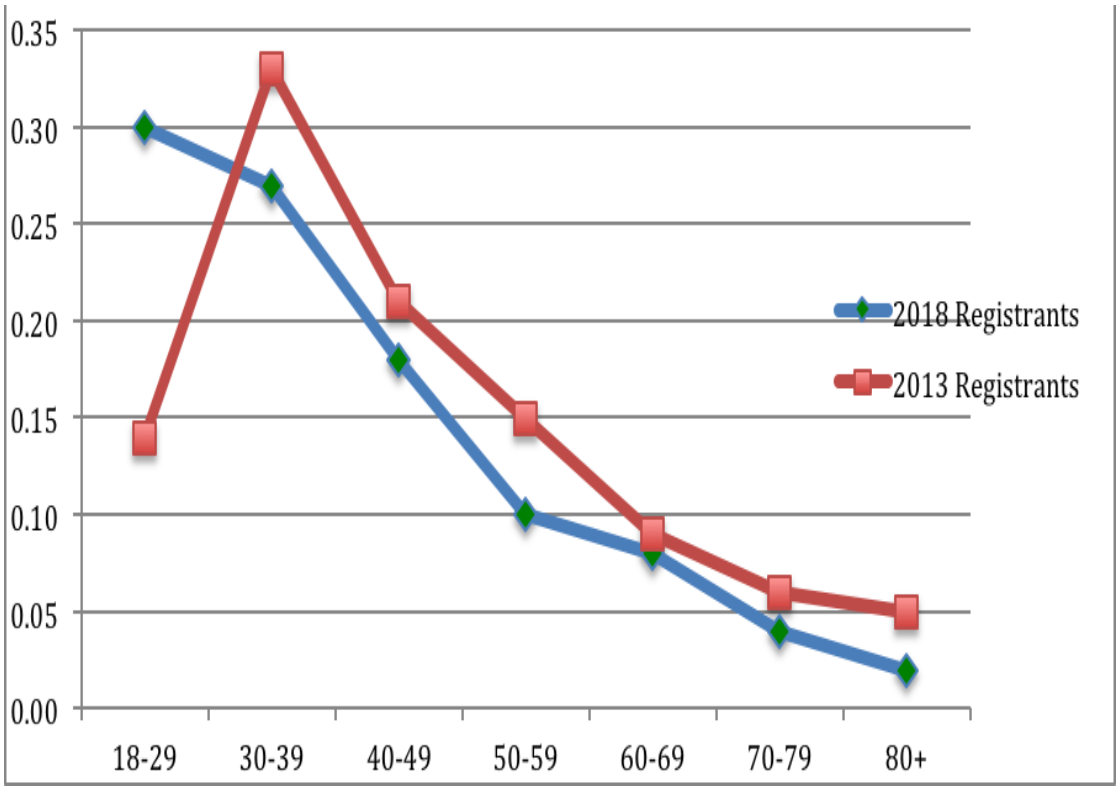

Figure 12 Comparative Registrants per Age-Group 2018 vs 2013

Figure 16 below shows the BVR age breakdown registration per province.

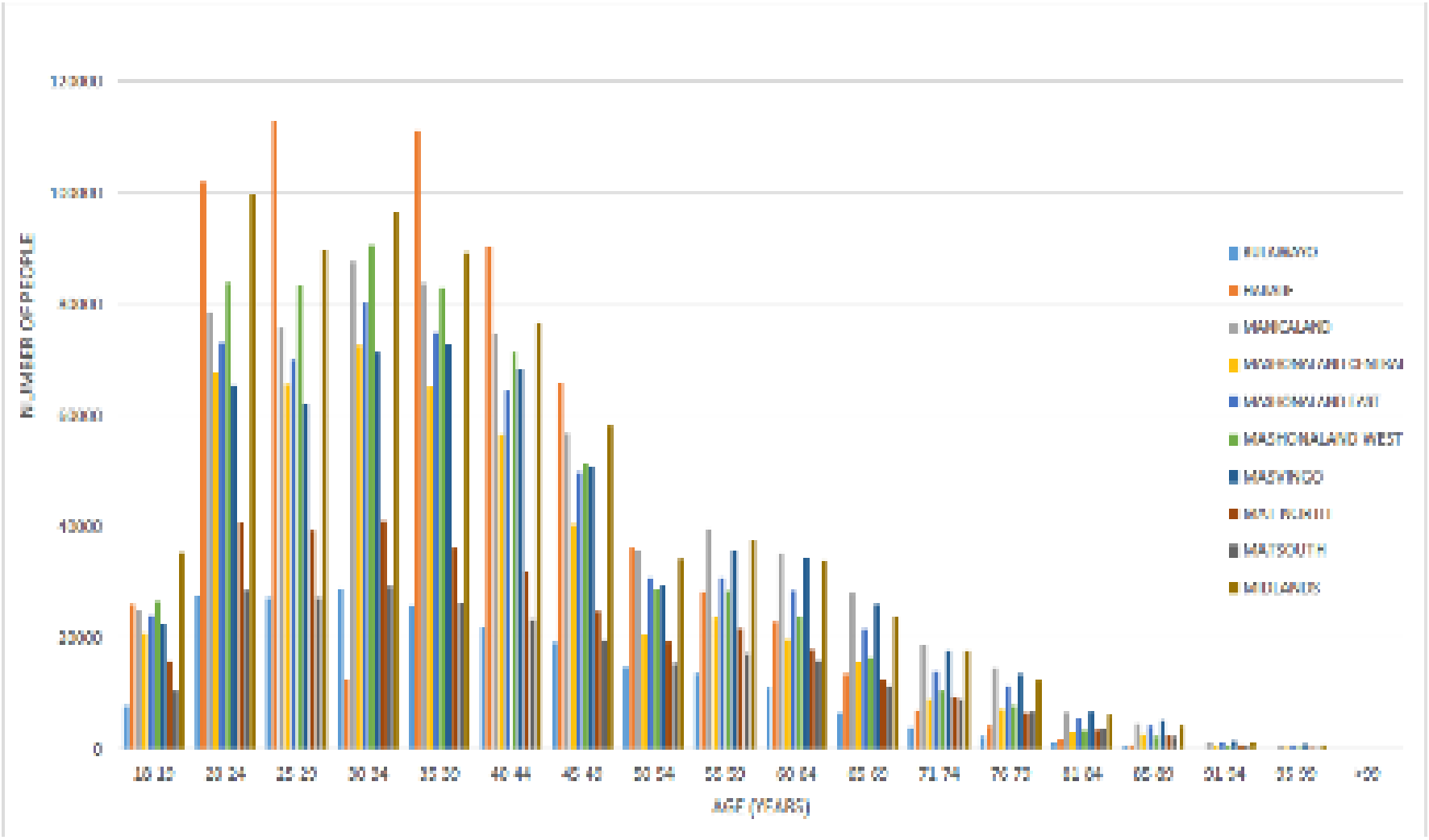

Figure 13 BVR Registration Stats X Age X Province

11.5 BVR Registration by Gender by Province as At 22/02/2018

The table below (Figure 17) shows the gender breakdown of registered voters according to ZEC's provisional statistics release of 22 February 2018, based on actual figure calculations compared to ZESN's projected voting population. When the data is viewed by gender, the general trend is that more women than men across most provinces registered to vote.

Using the population projection, the gender divide is more apparent in provinces such as Matabeleland North (women = 86.2%; men = 79.3%) and South (women = 72.2%; men = 65.3%) and Manicaland (women = 75.4%; men = 70.2%). As such there are minor differences between the totals in red and the totals as given by ZEC. The table shows that the majority of voters in the 2018 election, per registration are women, by about 8 percentage points, as women take up 54% of registered voters while men are about 46%.

Province	ZESN 2017 Projections		ZEC provisional BVR statistics		% of registered women by Population Projection	% of registered men by Population Projection
	Men	Women	Men	Women		
Mat North	177596	211996	140898	182689	86.2%	79.3%
Midlands	397689	467496	328247	389263	83.3%	82.5%
Mash East	341616	394173	263840	321358	81.5%	77.2%
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Manicaland	405871	506891	284962	381981	75.4%	70.2%
Mat South	160059	196527	104578	141972	72.2%	65.3%
Harare	651540	694278	366467	381453	54.9%	56.2%
Bulawayo	186055	223334	99168	112108	50.2%	53.3%
Total	**3349462**	**3874665**	**2361130**	**2823942**	**72.9%**	**70.5%**

Figure 14 Comparative ZESN Voter Population Projection & BVR Stats BY Gender By Province

11.6 What the Provisional BVR Data Tells Us

The BVR Data generally indicates a heightened interest in voter registration, with all provinces recording more than half of the projected population having registered, and more youth and women participation than in previous processes and comparatively across categories. There however, remains a need for concerted efforts to mobilize prospective voters to take part in the continuous registration exercise and to turn out to vote in the 2018 Harmonized elections.

12. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BVR PROCES

In light of observations highlighted above and in line with best practice in electoral processes, the Zimbabwe Election Support network recommends the following for the remaining 2018 electoral processes and future voter registration exercises:

ZEC

1. ZEC needs to institute proper voter and civic education ahead of critical electoral processes including but not limited to voter registration. Such voter and civic education must be extensive, inclusive, and comprehensive, which entails that ZEC:
    a. Coordinates with the Registrar General to facilitate the issuing of National Identification documents especially in farming areas where a lot of people were unable to register due to lack of IDs.
    b. Ensures that the voter processes and education information is also accessible to people living with disabilities especially those with visual and hearing impairments.
    c. Intensifies targeted voter education and mobilisation efforts towards the youths and other segments of the population whose turnout statistics have traditionally been low.
2. ZEC must enhance the quality of training for its officers to ensure consistency in the application of laws and regulations regarding stakeholder participation, access to information, and polling, registration, as well as inspection centres.
3. ZEC must ensure adequate sharing of voter information, and comprehensively publicise any processes that include and or entail citizen participation. Such sharing of information must not just be general and placed in nationally distributed press outlets, but also, tailored to local interests and targets through locally available channels like community newspapers.
4. ZEC should ensure that voter registration, inspection and polling centres are easily accessible to all eligible citizens and ensure that PWDs and other special needs groups are not inconvenienced when they present themselves for the registration process.
5. ZEC must ensure that updates it provides including figures, like voter registration statistics, are in a format that is disaggregated by various filters such as province, constituencies, age and sex among others.
6. ZEC should facilitate the creation of standing multiparty liaison committees to discuss and stem issues related to political parties, actors and supporters adherence to the stipulated code of conduct during the electoral processes.
7. ZEC must proactively address instances of deliberate misinformation by some political parties regarding electoral processes to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and minimise voter intimidation and misinformation that may result in apathy.
8. ZEC should publicise the simplified version of its procedures and regulations governing data transmission during all the critical electoral processes including registration, inspection of the voters roll, voting, and voting returns to increase stakeholders understanding of these critical processes.
    a. These procedures must be standardised and implemented uniformly to ensure consistency.

9. ZEC must consider limited financial disincentives for stakeholders to participate in electoral process like high accreditation fees for observers and monitors.
10. ZEC must consider recruiting election officials not just from government departments and the civil service but also the highly literate and readily mobilisable and trainable community of students in tertiary institutions.
11. The ZEC should continuously provide updated, disaggregated data on the voter registrants on its website, in a timely manner.
12. ZEC must consider establishing more registration centres in large urban centres as Harare and Bulawayo for the continuous registration exercise to increase the numbers of registered voters as the data indicates the lowest registration turnouts in these provinces.
13. There is need for the ZEC and CSOs to amplify its voter education efforts particularly in Harare and Bulawayo since these provinces have the lowest proportions of registered voters.
14. There is need to increase mobilization efforts targeting groups that have, so far, recorded low voter registration. These include the newly turned 18 (18-19), men and those aged 50 and above.
15. Civil Society must complement ZECs efforts in the mobilization of potential registrants in the continuous BVR exercises ongoing at ZEC district offices.
16. ZEC must increase polling stations in constituencies with higher numbers of registered voters' to ensure that voters' are not disenfranchised on Election Day.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

1. Government and political parties must allow ZEC to operate independently and impartially without undue political interference.
2. The Government must avail adequate resources to the ZEC for the completion of other voter registration processes such as deduplication, inspection, final cleaning of the voters roll as well as its certification among other essential electoral processes.
3. National and Community leaders like traditional chiefs and other local authorities must desist from interfering with the integrity of electoral process through coercion, misinformation and harassment of the electorate.
4. Political parties must ensure the prevalence of a conducive electoral environment through desisting from and encouraging their supporters not to engage in political violence, intimidation and harassment of the electorate.
5. Civil Society must enhance the quality and execution of their voter education and mobilisation activities to be inclusive especially of traditionally marginalised groups like women, youth and people living with disabilities.
6. Constitutional commissions with roles in electoral processes must act timely to investigate and stem electoral corruption, violence and intimidation.
7. Police must conduct their constitutional roles and roles in electoral processes professionally and without favour, including stemming impunity on political violence, intimidation and harassment.

8. Constitutional Commissions and other statutory bodies involved in elections must coordinate to ensure timely response on key issues and incidents like violence and intimidation during electoral processes.

Annex 2

CRITICAL INCIDENTS LOG – PHASE 1 TO PHASE 4

2017 Biometric Voter Registration Exercise				
DATE	**INCIDENT TYPE**	**CONSTITUENCY**	**WARD**	**Action Taken**
12/10/2017	A ZESN observer was hindered from entering the voter registration centre, by ZEC officials, therefore the observer spent the day observing the registration process from a distance.	Epworth	2	Issue was reported to the office of the Secretary to the Commission and the Epworth District Election Officer was asked to intervene. ZLHR was also informed of this incident and they submitted a formal complaint to ZEC.
13/10/17	ZEC registration officials refused to give ZESN Observer daily statistics of those who registered at the centre. This is despite ZEC's repeated assurances that such statistics would availed to all observers.	Gokwe Central	15	The issue was brought before the attention of the Commission through a letter which ZEC acknowledged and promised to remind their officers to share daily statistics with observers.
13/10/17	Registration temporarily stopped owing to the fact that the registration centre ran out of the voter registration forms in the morning. Registration resumed in the afternoon when the centre received additional forms.	Hungwe Central	4	Report made to ZEC with a plea to ensure that adequate material is availed to all registration centres countrywide
13/10/2017	At Kapfudza Primary school the laptop malfunctioned in the afternoon. Registration resumed around 5 pm when a replacement arrived.	Mt Darwin North	3	An inquiry was made to the ZEC as to the expected time it would take to replace a malfunctioning kit.

14/10/2017	ZESN Observer faced challenges as she attempted to observe at Kamwa school. ZEC officer permitted her to enter the registration centre whilst one of the two police officers denied her entry alleging that ZESN was sympathetic to the opposition and were opposed to the ruling party. The policeman confiscated the accreditation card and later returned it to the victim however the victim was unable to observe registration at that centre on that day.	Gokwe Chireya	14	A complaint was made to the Commission which promised to ensure that the registration officials assert their authority at the registration centres.
18/10/17	At Musikavanhu Primary registration was temporarily halted to allow for the battery pack to be charged. This process of charging the battery pack using solar was slow owing to the rainy weather that prevailed on that day.	Musikavanhu	21	See comment at the end on how ZEC is addressing this challenge.
10/10/17	Potential registrants faced intimidation by suspected ZANU-PF supporters, at Nyamapanda Primary. Who were misinforming people that the party could establish the voting preferences when the people vote in 2018.	Mudzi North	1	Reports of intimidation of potential registrants have been forwarded to ZEC, ZHRC and ZLHR for investigation. ZESN recommends that ZEC re-establishes Multi-Party Liaison Committees to address issues related to the political environment.
17/10/17	Residents fear to register at Mazhaka polling station as they were intimidated by political parties they were told they	Hurungwe North	2	Report of intimidation of potential registrants have been forwarded to ZEC, ZHRC and ZLHR for

	know how they would vote in 2018.			investigation. ZESN recommends that ZEC re-establishes Multi-Party Liaison Committees to address issues related to the political environment.
18/10/17	At Shingayi primary a man brought a water bill as his proof of residence, ZEC officers refused the bill because it would easily fade and the man left without registering.	Chiredzi West	3	The isolated incident was reported to the Chiredzi District Elections Officer.
18/10/17	Registration equipment was not functioning well at Musikawamatanda from 11 O'clock to 1pm	Chiredzi West	4	See comment at the end on how ZEC is addressing this challenge.
18/10/17	On 18 October 2017, the observer was denied registration statistics. This complaint was address to the ZEC supervisor for ward 18 who intervened. Observer started getting the information on registered voters whenever they asked for them.	Gokwe -Sengwa	18	Situation was addressed.
02/11/2017	The thermal Printer was not printing properly in the morning.	Makoni	10	When one of the ZEC technicians checked the problem they discovered that the roll for the thermal printer was not inserted properly. Once this was fixed registration continued without incident.
03/11/2017	The Registration Equipment was down around 9.30 to 10.00, delaying the registration process. The process proceeded	Mberengwa east	4	Situation was rectified.

	smoothly after 12 noon			
03/11/2017	At Goha business centre a ZESN observer was accused of being from an opposition party by an individual from the ministry of youth in Mberengwa. The observer was unsettled throughout the process. On the next day he resumed to work peacefully though and the youth did not return to this registration station.	Mberengwa west	29	Situation was contained.
3/11/2017	An observer was denied access to the statistics therefore he is collecting information on his own this occurred at Roozberg polling station.	Mutasa South	25	See below on how ZEC has addressed the situation
3/11 /2017	Malfunctioning of registration equipment occurred several times at chief's hall Masvingo for about ten to fifteen minutes thereby causing delay in registration process.	Masvingo Urban	1	The issue was resolved by ZEC technicians
5/11/2017	Thermal Printer not functioning well at Bayiyi polling centre resulted in the centre being opened late at one o'clock pm thereby delaying the registration process.	Mberengwa East	2	When ZESN followed up on this matter the Mberengwa DEO informed ZESN that the issues would be addressed as soon as their technician arrived. The Technician was travelling from the ZEC provincial office at the time of the incident.
5/11/2017	Malfunctioning of equipment from 8am, registration resumed at ten o'clock at Gudo Clinic.	Mberegwa West	3	The issue was resolved. Potential registration who came in the 2 hours that the machine was down were asked to wait.

7/11/2017	ZEC officers switched off one of the machines at Emakhandeni Secondary because the powers in the batteries were depleted. This was to allow the solar unit to recharge the battery. Registration continued using the other BVR kit that was available.	Entumbane Makandeni	11	The issues were contained.
8/11/2017	Zanu PF councillor assaulted the headmaster of Chavanga secondary school after he gave residents proof of residents .It is alleged that the councillor insisted that he was the only person who could authorise the writing of letters to support registration of person without that proof of residents. Turnout after this incident was affected because the school was a convenient location for residents to get proof of residents.	Mutasa North	28	ZEC DEO for Mutasa promised to investigate this report.
9/11/2017	Registration officers had to temporarily halt registration at Nemazuva Primary School to allow for the battery to be charged above the 50% mark.	Masvingo West	12	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation.
9/11/2017	Malfunctioning of equipment due to solar failure at Chehaya Primary school led many people to fail to register.	Chivi South	26	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
9/11/2017	Registration was halted for three hours at Igusi primary school when the solar kit failed to power the battery pack for the registration kit.	Umguza	12	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation.
10/11/2017	There were heavy rains which lasted for two hours from 8 am to 10a.m and after the rains the	Masvingo Urban	3	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this

	weather became cloudy affecting the registration process. The battery packs for the BVR Kits at Gomba Primary were depleted.			situation.
10/11 /2017	Malfunctioning of equipment due to solar power failure which lasted for 2 hours. ZEC officers had to take the whole kit to a nearby school were they accessed electricity and returned the kit to the registration centre.	Nyanga South	29	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
13/11/2017	Solar failure due to heavy rains experienced at Fatima Primary School. ZEC officers had to recharge their kits at Bonda Mission were there was electricity so registration was halted from 10am to 1pm.	Mutasa Central	12	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
14/11/2017	People are being intimidated at Ruzengwe Township as they were ordered to bring the serial numbers on their registration slips by Zanu PF Chairman at Ruzengwe Township on 15 November at 7.30 a.m.	Mberengwa North	15	The issues was brought to the attention of ZEC for investigation.
16/11/2017	Zhombe Primary did not register people the entire afternoon because the kit had been sent to a nearby school which had electricity for charging.	Zhombe	14	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation *since this was the first day of phase 3 of the registration exercise the kit ought to have been fully charged.
16/11/2017	The polling station was opened at 2pm at Mazeve clinic because the ZEC officer's	Silobela	28	Situation was contained.

	vehicle broke down on their way to the polling station so they started registration late.			
16/11/2017	Registration resumed after 11am at Bonsa dam due to the fact that the ZEC officers vehicle broke down on their way to the registration centre.	Silobela	29	*this was the first day of phase 3 of the registration exercise.
16/11/2017	Registration resumed at 1 pm at St Erics Secondary school after the thermal printer which was malfunctioning was repaired.	Norton	11	Situation was contained
16/11/2017	Registration resumed at 11 o'clock at construction houses because the centre ran out of registration forms.	Norton	6	Situation was contained
16/11/2017	At Forester J primary school registration was halted when power for the battery packs for the BVR kits was depleted. The centre received heavy rains throughout the day, and the solar kit was failing to charge the battery kit.	Mazowe North	27	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
18/11/2017	ZEC supervisor was forced to move the BVR equipment from Forester F school to a nearby shop which had electrify.	Mazowe North	27	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
18/11/2017	All potential registrants who visited the centre after 12 noon, went back home without registering because the BVR machine was out of power at Nyamanzira Primary.	Makoni North	2	The BVR kit was sent to a nearby school which has electricity so that it could be charged.
21/11/2017	Registration was brought to a halt for about three hours and only resumed when the thermal Printer that had malfunctioned had been repaired.	Highfield West	26	Situation was contained.

23/11/2017	Heavy rains affected the ability of the solar kit to power the battery pack at Munyimi registration centre. Voter registration stopped around 3pm, when the kit was sent to a nearby centre which has electricity to charge the battery.	Chikomba	20	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
23/11/2017	Registration was halted at Jabhanga registration centre when the batteries powering the BVR KIT were depleted.	Marondera West	10	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
24/11/2017	Zanu PF supporters were demanding serial numbers from those who registered at Dendenyore chiefs' registration centre.	Wedza South	7	Wedza ZEC District Election Officer confirmed that he had received similar reports about intimidation of potential registrants and had forwarded the same to the Provincial Election Officer for their action.
24/11/2017	Registration resumed after an hour because there was no electricity at Chiendambuya business centre. The registration official stopped registration for an hour to allow for the battery pack to be charged above the 50% threshold.	Makoni North	5	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
24/11/2017	Zanu PF youths at Hamadziripi polling station intimidated people by saying those who did not register will be assaulted and those that registered were to submit their serial numbers as this would show them how they would vote in 2018.	Guruve	20	Report was forwarded to ZEC.
26/11/2017	Magombedze Primary was not registering people from 10 am to 2pm due to heavy rains	Gutu North	12	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this

	which affected the ability of the solar panels to recharge the battery pack.			situation
27/11/2017	Registration only resumed after a 2 hour break when the centre ran out of paper roll for the thermal printer.	Norton	11	Situation was contained
27/11/2017	Registration started late, at 9.30, at Simbi Park shopping centre because the registration officials were waiting for the kits batteries to be fully charged before commencing registration.	Redcliff	6	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
27/11/2017	At Pfupajena Zec officers left the registering centre at 10.55a.m to charge the equipment and the equipment was brought back at 14.22 pm. No back up kit was sent to the center, so no registration took place for almost 3 hours while the kit was being charged.	Bikita West	5	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
27/11/2017	Registration equipment ceased functioning at 3 o'clock pm at Govani shopping therefore no registration is taking place at the station.	Norton	1	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
27/11/2017	At Magombedze Primary school no registration took place from 10am to 2pm while the BVR kit was being charged.	Gutu North	12	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing this situation
28/11/2017	ZESN received reports from an observer at Kasowe primary of a Chief charging a fee $2 US dollars before issuing letters that confirm residency of his subjects.	Zhombe	7	Report was forwarded to ZEC midlands Provincial Elections Officer for investigation.
4/12/2017	Registration centre opened late as ZEC official arrived towards	Sanyati	6	ZEC-DEO confirmed that the registration team's

	midday.			car had broken down en-route to the registration centre.
4/12/2017	The following voter registration centers in Hwange opened late (after 10am) owing to the late arrival of BVR Kits; at Mibinga ward 10, St George pry schl ward 14, Ingagula pry schl ward 15, Jabula pry schl ward 4, Kamativi sub office ward 11, Makwa ward 10, Nyakumbi ward 9 and some centres.	Hwange	10,14, 15, & 4	Registration had started at all centers by 11am following the completion of set up procedures by the respective registration teams.
9/12/17	Potential registrants went back home without registering because machine was out of power at Svuure Primary. The incident occurred in the afternoon.	Zaka East	25	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing situation of this nature.
9/12/17	Potential registrants went back home without registering because machine was out of power at Botious borehole	Zaka East	25	See notes at the end which explain how ZEC has been addressing situation of this nature.
9/12/17	Registration centres ran out of registration slips, registrants left the center without them, but having registered.	Zaka East	25	ZEC officers advised registrants to come back at a later date to collect the registration slips.
11/12/2017	Registration temporarily stopped owing to the fact that the registration centre ran out of the voter registration forms in the morning. Registration resumed in the afternoon when the centre received additional forms.	Goromonzi South	9	Situation was contained. ZESN brought this and similar incidents to the attention of the ZEC and urged the Commission to ensure that registration materials are adequately stocked.
11/12/2017	Registration was brought to a halt for about three hours and only resumed when the thermal Printer that had malfunctioned had been repaired.	Mkoba	16	Situation was contained.

12/12/2017	Registration was brought to a halt for about two hours at Beit Bridge mission and only resumed when the thermal Printer that had malfunctioned had been repaired.	Beitbridge East	4	Situation was contained
12/12/2017	Malfunctioning of equipment due to power failure was reported at Mazunga Primary school delayed registration as the registration officer would intermittently halt registration so as to charge the BVR kits.	Bindura North	2	Situation was contained.
12/12/2017	Malfunctioning of equipment due to power failure at Chisamba grounds led many people to fail to register	Mutare	4	The kit was moved to a nearby school to be charged the better part of the afternoon.
13/12/2017	Registration was brought to a halt when the centre ran out of paper roll for the thermal printer.	Gweru Urban	18	This incident was brought to the Provincial Election Officer who informed the team that registration should not be stopped even in instances where registration slips are finished.
13/12/2017	Tavengerei registration centre ran out of registration slip, registrants went home empty handed as the ZEC officers informed registrants that they would collect them from the village head when they are available.	Bikita South	8	ZESN registered its concern with the DEO for Bikita District as reports of partisan behaviour of village heads have been received. This disqualifies the residence of village heads as neutral venues from which registrant can collect their registration slips.
13/12/2017	Registration centre (Sanyati hot sport) ran out of registration slips. Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips at a later date when they	Kadoma Central	9	ZESN is closely monitoring this development it may affect inspection of the voter register.

	become available.			
13/12/2017	Malfunctioning of equipment due to power failure at Chivaridzo Bus Stop led many people to fail to register	Bindura North	10	Registration was halted intermittently in order to charge the BVR kits above the 50% threshold.
13/12/2017	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, at Mambo Community Hall, A, B secondary school and Mutasa Christon Park.	Mkoba	7	Registrants were advised to collect the slips at a later date.
13/12/2017	Registration centre ran out of registration slip, registrants went home empty handed at Takunda school, Mkoba High 1 and Mkoba poly clinic.	Mkoba	13	Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips at a later date.
13/12/2017	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, registrants went home empty handed at Guinea Fowl Primary School.	Chiwundura	18	Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips at a later date.
14/12/2017	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, registrants went home empty handed at Chitakatira Primary.	Mutare South	15	Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips at a later date.
14/12/2017	Registration centre ran out of registration slips at 12pm at the Poly Clinic therefore registrants left the centre after registering without them.	Mkoba	13	Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips at a later date.
14/12/2017	Registration centre ran out of registration slip at Takunda school.	Mkoba	13	Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips at a later date. It is unclear if a new consignment of registration slips will be received at the centre before the conclusion of the phase 4.
15/12/17	Registration started late, at 12 midday, at Ruvhuneko High	Damafalls	9	Registration commenced after the BVR kit was fully

	School because the registration officials were waiting for the batteries for the BVR kits to be fully charged before commencing registration.			charged. Before that time, potential registration were asked to visit nearby registration centers.
9-15/12/17	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, at Makumire Primary School from 9 to 15 December 2017	Zaka East	25	ZEC started contacting the affected registrations to allow for them to collect their registration slips.
15/12/17	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, registrants left the registration center without the slips at Dodias Borehole.	Zaka East	25	Registrants were advised to collect the registration slips the following day, as the centre was expecting to receive a new consignment of paper rolls later that day.
15/12/17	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, at Mutapa hall and Ascot hall.	Gweru Urban	6	The center received a new consignment of paper roll the following day at 11 o'clock. Officials at the two registration centres contacted registrants that had registered the previous day.
15/12/17	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, at the District Administrators office, Cecil John Rhodes primary and Welfare clinic.	Gweru Urban	18	Registration slip were available the following day at 9am.
15/12/17	Registration was brought to a halt for about three hours at the District Administrators office when the thermal printer malfunctioned.	Gweru Urban	18	Registration resumed when the thermal Printer had been repaired.
15/12/17	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, at Mutasa Criston Park, Mambo A, B secondary school and Mambo	Mkoba	7	Registration slips were available the following day at the four centres as at 4 o'clock in the

	Community hall.			afternoon.
15/12/17	Zesn observer was asked to produce an accreditation card which was valid beyond 14th of December.	Nyanga South	31	ZESN asked the Provincial Elections Officer for Manicaland to intervene
9-15/12/17	Registration centre ran out of registration slips, at Makumire Primary.	Zaka East	25	Registrants were advised to return the center after 2 days to collect their registration slips.
19/12/17	Chitakatira Business Centre ran out of VR.1 forms resulting in registration being halted for about an hour.	Mutare South	15	ZEC supervisors were brought additional registration forms to the registration center.
19/12/17	Nyachuru Secondary School ran out of VR.1 forms resulting in some potential registrants leaving the centre without registering.	Mazowe Central	11	Registration resumed at 16.30 hours when additional VR.1 forms
19/12/17	Nyakudya Primary school, Chinamora Primary school, and Makumbe Mission at one point, ran out of registration forms	Goromonzi West	4 and 2	The issues were resolved when ZEC supervisors brought additional forms.
19/12/17	Registration started around 10.00 am at Rimuka Primary school in because, registration officers spent the first 3 hours, printing registration slips for registrants who had not been issued with the slips upon completion of the registration process earlier on.	Kadoma Central	13	Registration commenced 3 hours later when the registration officials had finished printing registration slips.
19/12/17	VR.9 and VR.1 forms ran out at Welfare clinic around 4.30 pm.	Gweru Urban	18	Registration officials asked people who can to register to go to other centres that were nearby.

Annex 2

CRITICAL INCIDENTS LOG – MOP UP PERIOD

CRITICAL INCIDENTS LOG 2018 Biometric Voter Registration Exercise 30-day Extension Period				
DATE	**INCIDENT TYPE**	**CONSTITUENCY**	**WARD**	**ACTION TAKEN**
05.01.2018	ZESN observer was declined access to the registration centre, because their accreditation card was deemed to be expired. *apparently all the observer accreditation cards were erroneously given an expiry date of 14 December 2017, yet the same card is supposed to be valid until the voters' roll inspection exercise which will occur sometime in February/ March 2018.	Bindura	2	ZESN spoke with the ZEC DEO for bandura and explained that the Accreditation cards were valid until after the Voter registration inspection period. The DEO claimed not to have received a memo to that effect, but promised to check with his supervisor, the Provincial Elections Officer, who confirmed the Commission's position.
08.01.2018	ZESN received reports of intimidation of registrants. For instance in ZAKA east, one of the ZESN observers who is a teachers reported that teachers at their school (name supplied) were asked to produce proof that they are registered and to provide serial numbers of their registration slips. The headmaster has been requested by the ZANU PF Chairman for ward 25 Zaka east constituency in Masvingo province to compile this information.	Zaka East	25	This information was brought to the attention of the Zaka District election officer who informed us that he was already aware of this and similar reports and has in turn asked Chiefs and village heads to desist from such practice as it was illegal.

12.01.18	ZESN Observer at Vutete Clinic, in Ward 1 of Chivi District in Masvingo was denied entry into the registration centre on the pretext that her accreditation card had expired.	Chivi	1	The observer was only allowed entry into the registration center after ZESN discussed the matter with the ZEC ward supervisor.
23.01.18	ZESN observer at Musume Secondary school was denied entry into the registration centre on the basis that their accreditation card had expired.	Mberengwa south	23	The observer was only allowed entry into the registration center after ZESN intervened by calling the ZEC Ward Supervisor to rectify the issue, since the correct position was that observer accreditation cards were valid until the voter inspection exercise was concluded.
24.01.18	A ZESN observer reported that people were coming to the centre to ask for the reprinting of their registration slips claiming that they were needed by traditional leaders, party Chairpersons, and Ward Councillors.	Chiredzi West	2	ZESN has formally brought reports of intimidation of registrants to the attention of ZEC and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. The ZEC has issued a public statement regarding the same.
25.01.18	A ZESN observer stationed at Kuwadzana 2 High reported that people around the area were alleging that ZANU-PF members were moving from door to door recording the details of registered voters.	Kuwadzana	38	ZEC officials at the centre advised people who lodged the complaint to go and report to the police.
30.01.18	A War veteran at Sonungu in Gwandavale was reportedly demanding that villagers give him their voter registration slips' serial numbers as a precondition to get food aid as well as to prove they do not belong to parties that oppose	Matobo North	14	ZESN has formally brought reports of intimidation of registrants to the attention of ZEC and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. The ZEC has issued a public statement regarding the same.

	ZANU-PF.			
31.01.18	ZESN received reports that in Mguza District and Bulawayo, one ZANU-PF man came to the centre with many people who registered using the same address.	Matabeleland North	23	The Matter was brought to the attention of the Provincial election officer who promised to investigate and inform ZESN of his findings.
31.01.18	At Kuwadzana 2 high school people are turned away if they arrive after 15.00 hours despite the fact that the centre closes at 17.00hours. The center is manned by just one ZEC registration official who utilises the 1.5 hours remaining after 15.00 hours to attend to those people in the queue.	Kuwadzana	38	ZESN wrote to ZEC requesting for an additional kit and manpower to be deployed to this center.

Additional Comments

1. The incidents recorded in the table above have been reported by ZESN observers deployed ongoing voter registration Mop up exercise.
2. All observer accreditation cards were endorsed by ZEC to be valid for the period 6 October to 14 December 2018. However ZEC intended for the same accreditation cards to be valid until after the voters' roll inspection period. Unfortunately it appears as if this official position has not been communicated to all ZEC district officials hence some of them are denied accredited observers entry into registration centres believing that the accreditation cards have expired. ZESN has had to intervene by speaking with the ZEC Provincial and District Officials to have this and similar issues resolved.
3. Intimidation in the form of recording of serial numbers on registration slips has been the most prevalent electoral malpractice that has been reported during the BVR mop up exercise. ZESN continues to bring reports of the same to the attention of ZEC and the Human Rights Commission for them to institute independent investigations. Consequently ZEC has issues a formal statement denouncing this practice and warning that electoral offenders would be arrested.