

Global Expertise. Local Solutions.
Sustainable Democracy.

Elections in Zimbabwe

July 31 General Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

1850 K Street, NW | Fifth Floor | Washington, D.C. 20006 | www.IFES.org

July 25, 2013

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the July 31 election in Zimbabwe significant?.....	4
Why was a power-sharing arrangement in place before this election?	4
When did the constitutional referendum process take place and what were the results?	5
What sets the new constitution apart from the old one?	6
Under the new constitution, what institution has the mandate to carry out the country’s elections?	6
What are Zimbabwe’s treaty obligations related to holding democratic elections?	6
What elections are taking place on July 31?.....	7
What is the structure of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission?	7
How were the Zimbabwe Electoral Commissioners chosen?	7
How many poll workers are employed by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission?	8
Does Zimbabwe have an electoral law that governs the details of the electoral process?	8
What type of electoral system will be used to translate votes into seats?	8
How was voter registration conducted? How many people are registered to vote?	9
Was the voter roll allowed public review and scrutiny?.....	9
Who is qualified to vote in the July 31 election?	9
Who is eligible to run as a candidate in this election?	10
Do candidates need to be affiliated with a political party in order to run for office?.....	10
Is there a term limit for the President?	10
How long are presidential terms in office?.....	11
What time do polling stations open and close on July 31?	11
How many polling stations will there be?.....	11
Who will observe the Zimbabwean elections?	11
What social media outlets does the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission use to reach the media and citizens?.....	12
Will members of the diaspora vote in this election?.....	12
Does Zimbabwe allow early voting?	12
What percentage of the Zimbabwean population has some form of disability and what provisions have been made to make this election accessible?	13
Will prisoners be able to cast a ballot?	13

Disclosure:

These FAQs reflect decisions made by Zimbabwean elections authorities, to the best of our knowledge as of July 25, 2013. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

What are the steps for voting?	14
Will voters use any form of electronic voting?	15
How, when and where will the results be counted and transmitted?	15
Resources	16

Disclosure:

These FAQs reflect decisions made by Zimbabwean elections authorities, to the best of our knowledge as of July 25, 2013. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

Why is the July 31 election in Zimbabwe significant?

The July 31 election will be the first under the country's new constitution, bringing a formal end to the Global Political Agreement established after the violent and disputed 2008 election.

In the run up to this year's contest, both domestic and international attention has focused on the country's human rights situation, including its readiness to hold free and fair nationwide elections, as well as the lack of meaningful reforms to the media and security sectors.

The July 31 election will enable registered Zimbabweans to vote for the President, seats in the bicameral Parliament and other sub-national political offices. The presidential poll will feature five candidates, including the country's current President, 89-year-old Robert Mugabe, and current Prime Minister, 61-year-old Morgan Tsvangirai.

Why was a power-sharing arrangement in place before this election?

On March 29, 2008, Zimbabwe held nationwide presidential, parliamentary and local elections. The official election results took nearly five weeks to be released by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) amid claims of vote rigging and State interference. When the ZEC finally released those results, Morgan Tsvangirai had received 48 percent of the vote and Robert Mugabe received 43 percent. As a result, no presidential candidate received the absolute majority needed to secure an outright victory; the country needed a runoff election to decide the winner.

However, during these five, protracted weeks of waiting, extensive election-related violence occurred that resulted in nearly 200 deaths and 5,000 cases of torture.¹ With this, Tsvangirai eventually withdrew from the runoff election, citing fears of further violence against himself and his supporters. The second round went as scheduled, which led to a sweeping, virtually unopposed victory for Mugabe.

The international response to the conduct of the election and violence thereafter ultimately led to a governing solution, brokered by the Southern African Development Community,² between the ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC-N.³ This solution was the Global Political Agreement, which created the framework for the power-sharing arrangement now known as the Government of National Unity (GNU). The GNU arrangement installed Robert Mugabe as President and Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister. Together, they have jointly, albeit contentiously, governed Zimbabwe.

¹ Human Rights Watch. (June 2009). *Perpetual Fear: impunity and Cycles of Fear in Zimbabwe*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/03/08/perpetual-fear-0>.

² The Southern African Development Community, South Africa in particular, remains the primary organization taking the lead for the adherence to the GPA among actors in Zimbabwe.

³ These three parties are the largest in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF is the acronym for the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, led by Robert Mugabe. MDC-T is the acronym for the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai, led by Morgan Tsvangirai. MDC-N is the acronym for the Movement for Democratic Change-Ncube, led by Welshman Ncube.

When did the constitutional referendum process take place and what were the results?

As part of the Global Political Agreement, political parties agreed in 2008 to create a new constitution for Zimbabwe. After a prolonged drafting period, Zimbabwe held a nationwide constitutional referendum on March 16, 2013. Three days later, on March 19, the election commission announced the draft constitution had received 3,079,966 votes in favor of its passage, representing approximately 95 percent of total votes cast.

While voter turnout was high and the voting environment was peaceful, the process leading up to the referendum was not without challenges. For instance, Zimbabweans had less than four weeks to review and familiarize themselves with the referendum, which was more than 170-pages long. Voter education was extremely limited in both quantity and timeliness, and the Zimbabwe Constitution Select Committee, commonly known as COPAC – the State institution charged with leading the constitution-making process – openly advocated for the draft constitution’s passage. Additionally, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) needed to recruit and train 70,000 polling officials and prepare almost 9,500 polling stations in a matter of weeks – an enormous task for even the most seasoned and sufficiently-funded election commissions around the world.

Despite the extremely short notice, the ZEC successfully recruited approximately 70,000 polling officials, opened 9,456 polling stations and supplied those stations with 12 million ballot papers and other required voting materials. The commission also established a four-tier election results system that generated official results within three days – well within the required five-day time limit.

However, crucial questions were raised about the integrity of the results. Voter turnout was at a record high for any electoral event in the nation, despite reports on Election Day that indicated lower numbers of voters in polling stations than in previous elections.^{4,5} Additionally, the results tabulation system lacked transparency – only the total combined results were released, which made it impossible for observers to verify results at the polling station level.

Moreover, there was also concern the ZEC allowed the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to use their official radio system to unofficially call in results from polling stations. This potentially enabled the ZRP to know referendum results before the election commission. Despite these questions, President Mugabe signed Zimbabwe’s new constitution into law on May 22, 2013.

⁴ Election Resource Center. (March 2013). “*Miracle Votes*” – *An Analysis of the March 2013 Referendum*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/15PrFXG> (PDF). See also, Gumbo, Tatenda. (March 26, 2013). Zimbabwe Constitutional Referendum Turnout Sets Voters Record. *Voice of America*. Retrieved from <http://www.voazimbabwe.com/content/zimbabwe-election-turnout-report-election-resource-center/1629246.html>.

⁵ While many reports indicated lower turnout than previous elections, no evidence of ballot stuffing or an artificial inflation of turnout figures have been presented.

What sets the new constitution apart from the old one?

The new constitution differs in a number of ways from its predecessor. One of the more progressive changes is the introduction of a five-year presidential term with a two-term limit. This stipulation, however, does not apply retroactively. This means if President Mugabe was elected twice, he could remain in power for another 10 years before the term limit would apply. Further, the new constitution includes a bill of rights stipulating freedom of expression and a free media, while the old constitution had no specific obligations.

The new constitution also calls for greater gender equality, evidenced by gender quotas in Parliament, a broader mandate for the electoral commission and the protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination. Other changes in the new constitution include some devolution of power to the 10 provinces, creation of an independent prosecuting authority, an anti-corruption commission, the allowance of dual citizenship and a ruling that the seizure of farms under the land reform program can no longer be legally contested.

Under the new constitution, what institution has the mandate to carry out the country's elections?

According to Chapter 12, Part 2 of the new constitution, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has the mandate to prepare for, conduct and supervise the country's elections.

What are Zimbabwe's treaty obligations related to holding democratic elections?

Pursuant to Chapter 18, Part 2, Section 322 of Zimbabwe's new constitution, the President of Zimbabwe can sign an international treaty, convention or agreement into law, but it does not bind the country until approved by Parliament and incorporated into law by a legislative act. The international treaties and/or conventions relevant to Zimbabwe's upcoming election are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides an enumeration of basic rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees basic civil and political rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which commits States to end racial discrimination; and, the Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women, which outlines a bill of rights for women.

Additionally, Zimbabwe is also a member State of the African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). As part of the latter, the country is a signatory to SADC Principles and Guide-

lines Governing Democratic Elections, which binds member States to uphold certain electoral principles and guidelines.⁶

What elections are taking place on July 31?

Zimbabweans will cast three ballots during the July 31 election. One ballot will be for the election of the President, a second will be for the election of constituent members to the National Assembly and the last ballot will be used to elect the councilor of an urban or rural council.

Voters will also elect 60 senators, 60 women members of the National Assembly and 80 provincial councilors using a party-list proportional representation system based on provincial National Assembly constituency results.

What is the structure of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission?

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) consists of a Chairperson (Justice Rita Makarau), a Deputy Chairperson (Mrs. Joyce Kazembe), seven commissioners and a Secretariat that manages day-to-day tasks of the commission.⁷

The Secretariat is divided into three divisions, and is headed by Chief Elections Officer Lovemore Sekeremayi. Those three divisions are: Administration and Finance; Operations; and the Inspectorate. The first two divisions are headed by Deputy Chief Election Officers and the latter is headed by the Chief Inspector.

The ZEC also has an extensive presence throughout the country with permanent offices at both provincial and district levels, making it one of the largest commissions in the Southern African Development Community region.

How were the Zimbabwe Electoral Commissioners chosen?

The current Zimbabwe Electoral Commissioners were chosen as part of the Global Political Agreement appointment process, but had to undergo a public review process prior to selection.⁸

After the passage of the new constitution, Zimbabwe Electoral Commissioners will now be appointed by the President for a six-year term and may be re-appointed for one additional term. Also, the Chairperson must be a judge or former judge.

⁶ Those principles can be read at <http://www.idea.int/africa/southern/upload/The-SADC-Principles-and-Guidelines-Governing-Democratic-Elections.pdf>.

⁷ More information on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commissioners can be found at <http://www.zec.gov.zw/site-map/the-commissioners>.

⁸ The current Zimbabwe Electoral Commissioners were all chosen as part of the initial Global Political Agreement appointment process, with the exception of Chairperson Rita Makarau, who was appointed by President Mugabe after former ZEC Chairperson Justice Mutambanengwe resigned in early 2013.

How many poll workers are employed by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission?

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has employed more than 96,000 poll workers for this election. Each polling station will be serviced by 10 polling officials.

Does Zimbabwe have an electoral law that governs the details of the electoral process?

Yes. The country has an Electoral Act that was recently amended by President Mugabe using a presidential power to enact temporary measures. A number of scholars have questioned the legality of this measure, as the statutory tool President Mugabe used is meant to amend an Act of Parliament when inexpedient to wait for Parliament to do so. This temporary measure was enacted while Parliament was still in session.

What type of electoral system will be used to translate votes into seats?

For the presidency, the winner is decided by an absolute majority. If no candidate has received 50 percent + 1 of valid votes in the first round, a second round will be conducted between the top two candidates on September 11, 2013.

The National Assembly will consist of 270 members. Out of that total, 210 will be directly elected from the 210 single-member constituencies into which Zimbabwe is divided. Those races will be decided by a plurality, first-past-the-post electoral system. In addition to these members, the National Assembly will contain 60 women members (six from each of the 10 provinces). These reserved seats will be elected under a party-list system of proportional representation, calculated at the provincial level and based on the provincial return of votes for parties who fielded candidates in the National Assembly constituency elections.

The Senate consists of 80 senators. Of that group, 60 senators (six from each of the 10 provinces) are elected through a party-list proportional system. Again, the results will be calculated at the provincial level based on the provincial return of parties whose candidates were nominated in the National Assembly constituency elections. On each party list for Senate, male and female candidates are listed alternately, with every list headed by a female candidate. Additionally, 16 of those senators are Chiefs elected by the eight non-metropolitan provincial assemblies. Two senators will be the President and Deputy President of the National Council of Chiefs. The remaining two senators (one male and one female) are elected by persons with disabilities.

How was voter registration conducted? How many people are registered to vote?

In recent months, there have been two mobile voter registration efforts. The first took place between April 29 and May 19, 2013. The second took place after the new constitution was passed between June 10 and July 10, 2013.^{9,10} According to the Registrar-General of Voters, there are approximately 6.4 million registered voters in the final voter list. However, as of July 24, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has not yet released the exact figures.¹¹

Was the voter roll allowed public review and scrutiny?

A preliminary voter roll was provided for public scrutiny on June 19, before the final voter registration drive was finished. A number of local groups scrutinized the list by comparing it to the country's 2012 census and found significant underrepresentation of voters under the age of 30, over-representation of voters over the age of 30 and extensive discrepancies between urban and rural registrants.

For instance, the Research and Advocacy Unit in Zimbabwe found there were likely 2 million potential voters under 30 who were not registered, and 30 percent of constituencies had more registered voters than inhabitants. They also found there were likely over 1 million individuals on the register who were either deceased or had departed the country.^{12,13}

Who is qualified to vote in the July 31 election?

According to the country's new constitution, a person is qualified for voter registration if he or she has reached 18 years of age and is a Zimbabwean citizen.¹⁴ One is a citizen in Zimbabwe either by birth, descent or by successful registration (i.e. for reasons such as marriage or adoption).

In regard to descent, the new constitution entitled many people living in Zimbabwe who were previously classified as "aliens" to register for citizenship. For instance, if they were born in Zimbabwe to parents who were citizens of a Southern African Development Community member country, they are now enti-

⁹ Mobile registration ended on July 9, but voters could still register until the close of business on July 10 at the permanent registration offices operated by the Registrar-General's Office.

¹⁰ Domestic media reported long lines at many mobile registration centers, particularly in urban areas. In some cases, these three-day registration drives were not enough time to register all those who wanted to do so.

¹¹ The constitution is vague as to when the election commission needs to provide a final voter register. The Electoral Amendment Act only stipulates it be within a "reasonable period of time" after nomination day (Art. 21).

¹² Research & Advocacy Unit. (July 2013) *An Audit of Zimbabwe's 2013 Voters' Roll*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/13QYF3M>

¹³ For additional analysis by domestic observation groups, see also Sibanda, T. (July 12, 2013). ZESN Claims 750,000 Voter Missing from Voters Roll. *SW Radio Africa*. Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201307130022.html> or press releases from the Research and Advocacy Unit (www.researchandadvocacyunit.org).

¹⁴ The Government of Zimbabwe. (2013). *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013*. Fourth Schedule, Sec. 1.

tled to citizenship.¹⁵ However, it was reported that thousands of these new citizens found their right to register as a voter to be challenged or denied because of an inability to obtain new documentation stating they are now a citizen.¹⁶ In some cases, individuals dealt with long queues, uneven application of rules or guidelines or referrals to distant district offices.

Who is eligible to run as a candidate in this election?

According to the country's new constitution, a person is qualified for election as President if he or she is registered as a voter, has reached 40 years of age and is a resident of Zimbabwe. The individual must also be a Zimbabwean citizen by birth or descent.¹⁷

To qualify for election as Senator, one must be registered as a voter and be at least 40 years of age. To be elected as a member of the National Assembly, one must be registered as a voter and be at least 21.¹⁸

Do candidates need to be affiliated with a political party in order to run for office?

It largely depends on the race the candidate is running in for office. According to the new constitution, 60 senators, 60 women members of the National Assembly and 80 provincial councilors need to be affiliated with a political party, as they are elected under a party-list system of proportional representation.¹⁹

However, candidates for the presidency, constituent members of the National Assembly and local and urban councils are all directly elected and do not need party affiliation.

Is there a term limit for the President?

Yes. According to the new constitution, there is a two-term limit.²⁰ However, this provision is only effective as of May 22, 2013, when the constitution was signed into law. As such, it does not prevent President Mugabe from running for his seventh consecutive term as the leader of Zimbabwe.

¹⁵ Tshuma, Nduduzo. (May 11, 2013). Constitution: 'Aliens' Celebrate Milestone. *NewsDay*. Retrieved from <http://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/05/11/constitution-aliens-celebrate-milestone/>.

¹⁶ Sibanda, Tichaona. (July 3, 2013). Voter Registration Nightmare Continues for Aliens. *SW Radio Africa*. Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201307040307.html>.

¹⁷ The Government of Zimbabwe. (2013). *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013*. Chap. 5, Part 2, Sec. 91.

¹⁸ For Senatorial requirements, see The Government of Zimbabwe. (2013). *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013*. Chap. 6, Part 3, Sec. 121. For National Assembly requirements, see The Government of Zimbabwe. (2013). *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013*. Chap. 6, Part 4, Sec. 125. For a list of all candidates nominated in the 2013 harmonized election, please see <http://www.sokwanele.com/zimbabwe-elections-2013/candidates>.

¹⁹ The Government of Zimbabwe. (2013). *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013*. Chap. 6, Part 3, Sec. 120.

²⁰ The Government of Zimbabwe. (2013). *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013*. Chap. 5, Part 2, Sec. 91.

How long are presidential terms in office?

A presidential term in office is five years.

What time do polling stations open and close on July 31?

Polling stations will be open continuously for voting at 7:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m.²¹ Voters who are in line by 7:00 p.m. will still be eligible to vote.²² If a polling station opens late, provided there is a good cause, a constituency election officer may keep the polling station open for at least 12 continuous hours on polling day.²³

How many polling stations will there be?

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is scheduled to open 9,670 polling stations across the country.

Who will observe the Zimbabwean elections?

The July 31 election will be monitored by domestic organizations and a limited number of international observation missions. Domestically, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) – which is an umbrella group of 31 organizations and has coordinated large domestic monitoring efforts in the past – was not allowed to register observers under its name for this election. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission mandated that no “consortium, confederation or similar association of local organizations may apply for accreditation of its constituent members.”²⁴ As a result, members of ZESN’s umbrella group will apply under the auspice of their own organization. Despite this stipulation, it is expected that approximately 7,000 representatives from these various organizations will still participate as observers.

Internationally, the regional or sub-regional organizations that will send delegations to observe include the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Other prominent international observation organizations, such as the Carter Center and the European Union, were either not invited or denied accreditation.²⁵

²¹ Share, Felix. (July 8, 2013). Zimbabwe: 871 Candidates to Contest Elections. *The Herald*. Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201307080727.html>.

²² The Government of Zimbabwe. *Electoral Act*. Part XIII, Section 53.

²³ The Government of Zimbabwe. *Electoral Act*. Part XIII, Section 53.

²⁴ *Zimbabwe: ZEC Invites Local, Foreign Observers*. *The Herald*. Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306210570.html>.

²⁵ For reference, see The Carter Center’s press release at <http://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/zimbabwe-070913.html>.

What social media outlets does the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission use to reach the media and citizens?

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) has a very limited social media presence. The organization has an official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ZimbabweElectoralCommission>), but has not posted any update to that page since its inception. There are no Twitter or mobile-phone based SMS initiatives, like many countries in the region, to assist civic and voter education efforts.

Moreover, the ZEC website (<http://www.zec.gov.zw>) is not being used to its fullest extent, as it includes a large amount of irrelevant or out-of-date information.

Will members of the diaspora vote in this election?

No. The constitution states that every citizen should be allowed to vote; however, it makes no direct provision for out-of-country voting. In February, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights ruled that Zimbabwe must allow its diaspora to vote by postal ballot. However, the government has largely ignored that request.²⁶

The current electoral law only provides for postal voting for those Zimbabweans (and their spouses) who are on duty in the service of the government.²⁷ By law, the Chief Electoral Officer must receive ballot envelopes no later than 14 days (at noon) before Election Day.²⁸ However, as of that deadline, many ballots had not yet been sent to eligible out-of-country voters.

Does Zimbabwe allow early voting?

Yes. Zimbabwe does allow early voting – or “special voting,” as it is called in Zimbabwe – for police officers, soldiers, prison service officers and electoral officials expected to be on duty on Election Day.²⁹ For this purpose, special voting across the country was held on July 14 and 15. As widely reported, the vote was mired by problems, such as inadequate provision of polling materials including ballots, late opening of polling stations and long waits.³⁰ Additionally, some voters were turned away because their names could not be found on the voter list or the envelopes containing their ballots were not available.³¹

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) pointed out that the chaos that characterized the start of the special voting was due to delayed printing of ballots, which (at least in part) was a result of delayed electoral court decisions. However, it was also clear the ZEC had underestimated the logistical challenges of

²⁶ Moyo, Nomalanga. (June 3, 2013). Constitutional Court Delays Diaspora Vote Case, as Government Remains Defiant. *SW Radio Africa*. Retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306040166.html>.

²⁷ The Government of Zimbabwe. *Electoral Act*. Part XIV, Section 72.

²⁸ The Government of Zimbabwe. *Electoral Act*. Part XIV, Section 75(1)(d).

²⁹ The Government of Zimbabwe. *Electoral Act*. Part XIV, Section 81.

³⁰ Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition. (July 18, 2013). Special Vote Chaos Dents 2013 Election. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/195DBYp>.

³¹ Election Resource Center. (July 2013). *Special Voting a Sham*.

organizing absentee balloting. The commission's decision to individually package three ballot papers for nearly 70,000 voters' from a combination of almost 2,100 ballot paper options proved challenging and time consuming.³²

What percentage of the Zimbabwean population has some form of disability and what provisions have been made to make this election accessible?

The World Health Organization estimates that 15 percent of the Zimbabwean population (about 1.97 million people) lives with a form of disability. Additionally, a survey conducted by the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH) in Zimbabwe indicates that 20.47 percent of persons with disabilities did not vote in the March 2008 general elections due to physical inaccessibility of polling stations.

The new constitution stipulates that all polling stations must be readily accessible to persons with disability. Yet, in practice, thousands of polling stations remain physically inaccessible. This remains a major impediment to the enfranchisement of this group.

Over the past year, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has partnered with NASCOH to work with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to improve the accessibility of polling stations for persons with disabilities. The project was comprised of three phases, including training election officials over accessibility issues, assessing polling stations based on a standardized 14-point checklist and providing concrete recommendations to improve infrastructure and policies to accommodate voting by persons with disabilities. The local authorities have already produced hundreds of temporary ramps to facilitate access to polling stations. From this effort, IFES believes hundreds, if not thousands, of Zimbabweans who have previously not been able to vote will be able to cast their ballot on July 31.

Will prisoners be able to cast a ballot?

According to the new constitution, prisoners should not be excluded from voting unless they have previously violated the electoral law and been disqualified from registering by the High Court. However, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Chairperson has ruled out their participation in this election due to "mechanisms" not being in place to ensure this vulnerable group's enfranchisement.³³

³² As a side note, the ZEC issued a public apology for the "inconveniences" caused due to the poorly run special voting period. At the time of writing, the ZEC is looking into legal options to allow those who did not vote early the ability to do so on July 31.

³³ Ndebele, Hazel. (July 12, 2013). Prison inmates will not vote: Makarau. *Zimbabwe Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2013/07/12/prison-inmates-wont-vote-makarau/>

What are the steps for voting?

There are essentially six steps for voting. The first step requires an usher to check whether a voter has the valid identification to vote and whether he or she already has indelible ink on their finger (indicating that they have already voted). The second step requires the polling officer to verify the voter's registration status using a hard copy of the voter roll for that ward, and if the name is found on the roll, mark through the voter's entire entry with a straight line.

Once the voter is cleared, the voter will be issued three officially-stamped ballot papers. From there, the voter's finger will be marked with indelible ink to ensure he or she cannot vote again, and the voter will then mark their ballot papers behind a privacy screen to ensure the secrecy of the vote. The final step is for the voter to deposit his or her ballots into ballot boxes. The voter will then immediately leave the polling station.³⁴ An example of how a single entry polling station will be set up is below.

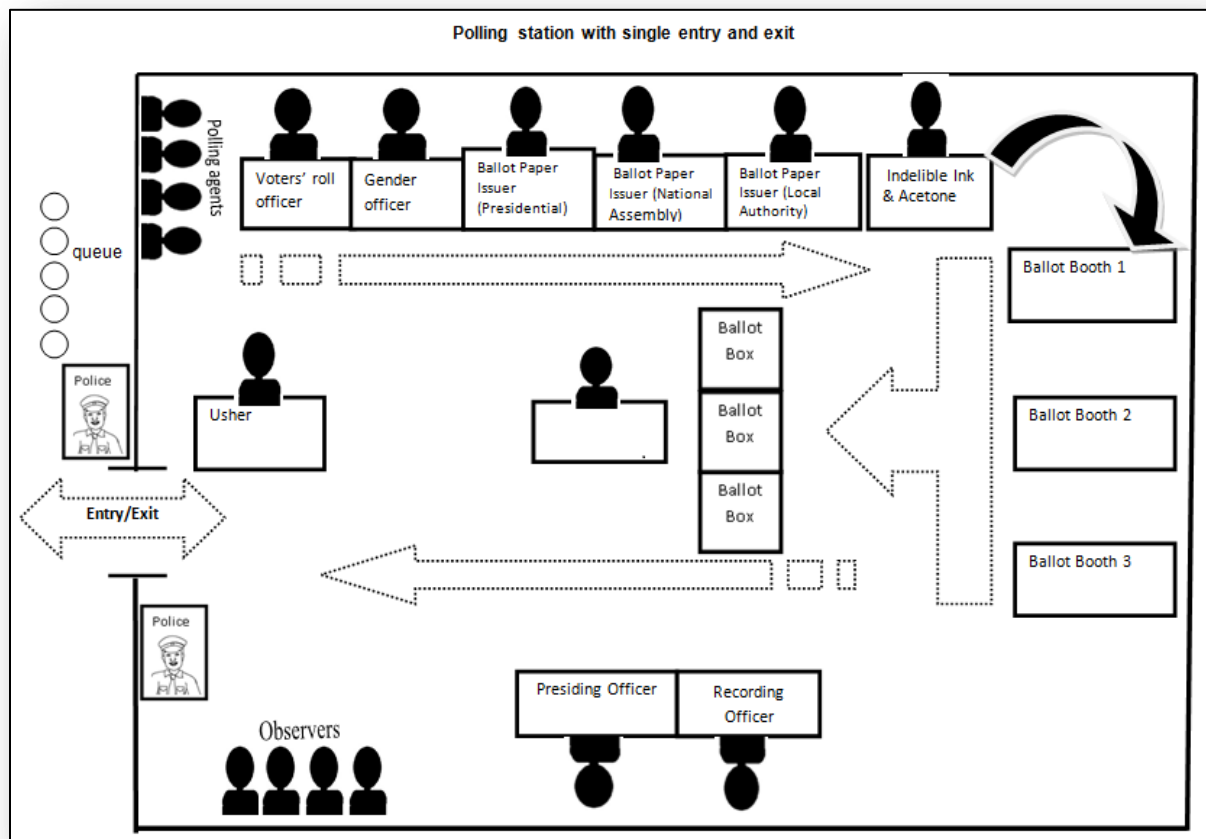


Diagram of basic, single entry/exit polling station. (ZEC Poll Worker Manual)

³⁴ This information is derived from: Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. (2013). Manual for Presiding Officers and Election Officers Conducting Ordinary Poll.

Will voters use any form of electronic voting?

No. The voting process will be entirely based on paper ballots.

How, when and where will the results be counted and transmitted?

The counting and tabulation of results for the July 31 election remains one of the more sensitive issues for this poll, particularly given the memory of the 2008 election. As formulated by Zimbabwe's Electoral Act, there are multiple levels of counting and collating depending on the race in question. Those levels include the polling station, ward counting center, constituency counting center, provincial command center and national command center.

For the presidential election, a polling station will issue two identical returns. Both returns will be sent to the ward counting center, where one will then be sent directly to the National Command Center and the other will be collated with other presidential returns in the ward. From there, the ward results will be sent to the constituency counting center for collation with other ward results. Once collated, the constituency result will be sent to both the National Command Center and the provincial command center for collation with other constituency results. The provincial results will then be sent to the National Command Center.

At that point, the National Command Center will be responsible for collating provincial results and verifying the results tabulated in the field with the polling station results it received directly at its National Command Centre. Before the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) Chairperson announces final results, the commission must reconcile any discrepancies that occurred in the process.



The results system also requires the ZEC, after collation and reconciliation, to release results for candidates at every polling station, ward center, constituency center and provincial center. As such, it will no longer be sufficient for the ZEC to release the aggregated total results for the candidate and parties. In principle, this should allow observers and party agents to verify results.³⁵

³⁵ At the time of writing, the ZEC has shown limited preparations to collect these polling station results forms from almost 2,000 locations across the country and process more than 20,000 results forms within the stipulated five-day legal deadline. If this is not rectified quickly, a transparent, accurate and timely election results process will be in jeopardy.

Resources

- [Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Website](#)
- [Research and Advocacy Unit Website](#)
- [Zimbabwe Election Support Network Website](#)
- [Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe Website](#)
- [Election Resource Center](#)
- [Sokwanele Website](#)
- [Google Zimbabwe Election Hub](#)
- International Crisis Group. (May 6, 2013). *Zimbabwe: Election Scenarios*. Africa Report N. 202. [\(In English\)](#)