

Bulletin

Zimbabwe general elections dashboard – voting to results

Zimbabwe holds its presidential, parliamentary and local government elections on August 23.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Voting Day Polling times	23 August 2023 0700-1900
Vote Counting	Immediately after close of polling station
Posting of results	Results for local authority elections will be posted at the polling stations soon after vote counting
Election of 2 Senator Chiefs	24 August 2023
Election of People With Disability Representatives	26 August 2023
Announcement of Presidential Results (up to five days after polling)	August 2023

* The winner of the presidential election must have at least 50 percent plus one vote

Source

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

Can they tell who you voted for?

Claim: In a video clip which went viral on Zimbabwe social media platforms, ZANU PF parliamentary candidate for Zvishavane-Ngezi, Mecky Jaravaza, is shown telling a campaign rally that the ruling party can verify how people voted by tracking ballot paper serial numbers



In the 140-second video, Jaravaza claims in the local Shona language that his party had no means in the past elections of establishing individual voter choices.

“In the past we did not have the means to know who you voted for but we now know.

When you enter the ballot box you will be given different ballot papers, one may be blue paper or any other colour, and when you look at it, you will see that it has a number.

“That number will be used to record your name,

and our election agents have been trained in Harare to identify which serial numbers voted for CCC (opposition

Citizens Coalition for Change). You therefore can no longer deceive us if you vote for (Nelson) Chamisa and come out claiming you voted for (President Emmerson) Mnangagwa,” Jaravaza claimed.

Verdict: False

The Electoral Act prescribes the duties, conduct and responsibilities of election officers which do not entail identifying the electorate’s vote of choice or ballot serial number as claimed by Jaravaza. Section 86 (1) of the Electoral Act states that: “Every electoral officer, monitor, candidate and chief election agent or election agent in attendance at a polling station shall maintain, and aid in maintaining, the secrecy of the voting at that station and shall not communicate, except for some purpose authorised by law, to any person any information likely to defeat the secrecy of the voting.”

Election agents do not have access to the electorate’s ballot and are mandated by the Electoral Act’s section 86 (3) not to coerce voters from revealing their votes, which states: “No person shall, directly or indirectly, induce a voter to display his or her ballot paper after he or she has marked the same in such a manner as to make known to any person the name of the candidate for whom the voter has so marked his or her vote.”

Section 86 (6) of the Electoral Act makes it a criminal offence for any election stakeholder including election agents to attempt to contravene previous provisions of this section and if found guilty of an offence are liable to a fine not exceeding level six or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

Conclusion

The claims are in breach of The Electoral Act’s provisions and his comments undermine a free and fair election process where the electorate are obligated to vote for candidates of their choice under a secret ballot.

Sources

Zimbabwe Electoral Act

What you cannot do at a polling station

Zimbabwe holds its general election on Wednesday, August 23 from 7am to 7pm, with voting designated to take place at 12,374 polling stations around the country. This factsheet outlines what voters can, and cannot do in and around the polling station.

Can you hang around a polling station?

After voting people are not allowed to hang around a polling station. However, the regulations allow for people to be at least 300 metres away but not in crowds. Under sweeping national law and order statutes, the police can separately remove people from situations deemed to be a threat to the maintenance of peace.

What of people who refuse to leave the polling station after they vote?

The Electoral Act states, in Section 90, that any person who, without lawful excuse, refuses or fails to leave a polling station when lawfully required to do so by the presiding officer shall be guilty of an offense and liable to a fine ... or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

What you are not allowed to do at a polling station

- Enter a polling station without the permission of an electoral officer
- Willfully disrupt voting

- Interfere with a voter who is marking his or her ballot paper
- Be intoxicated by liquor or drugs
- Chant political party slogans
- Distribute leaflets or pamphlets on behalf of any candidate or political party
- Use cameras or phones inside of polling stations
- Wear party regalia

What are you expected to do at your polling station?

1. Enter the polling station where you are registered
2. Present your valid national ID so the polling officer checks that you are on the voters roll for that polling station
3. You are then issued with a ballot paper by the polling officer
4. The polling officer then marks your finger with indelible ink
5. Make your way to the ballot booth to mark ballots and deposit them in respective ballot boxes
6. You then exit the polling station

Sources

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

Yes, remove nail polish or artificial nail from your voting finger

Claim: Voter education material circulating on social media warning the electorate that nail polish or artificial nails on the voting finger (smallest finger on your left hand) is not allowed during voting in Zimbabwe's elections.

Verdict: True

There is no specific law or regulation in Zimbabwe that bans the wearing of nail polish during voting but the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) clarified the matter in a factsheet on the application of indelible ink which states that:

- On arrival at the polling station, election officials inspect voters for any signs of previous voting by checking for indelible ink markings on their left-hand small fingers.
- If a voter's fingernails appear soiled, stained or have polish on them, they will be cleaned using acetone and cotton wool before being marked with indelible ink on the small finger of the left hand.
- If a voter has a physical handicap that prevents ink marking on their small left finger, the next finger in the sequence will be used.

Sources

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU)

Zimbabwe general elections dashboard – key numbers

Zimbabwe holds its presidential, parliamentary and local government elections on August 23. The following are some key numbers sourced from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission:

WHAT?	NUMBERS?
Registered voters	6,623,511
Polling stations	12,374
Polling officers	150,000
Presidential candidates	10
Total voters for presidential election	6,623,511
Presidential ballots printed	7,126,600 (including 7.6 percent contingency)
National Assembly Constituency Seats	210
National Assembly Candidates	518
National Assembly ballots printed	7,098,750 (including 7.6 percent contingency)
Local authority candidates	4,914
Seats won without contest	91
Local authority ballots printed	6,854,250 (including 3.5 percent contingency)
General election voting day	Wednesday, August 23 (0700-1900)
*Presidential runoff	October 2, 2023

***The winner of the presidential election must have at least 50 percent plus one vote**

Source:

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

The law and defacing of political campaign posters

Zimbabwe social media platforms have carried reports of people defacing campaign posters for the 2023 general election. One such report included a video that went viral which showed a confrontation between Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) members and a police officer accused of tearing down the party's campaign posters close to a toll gate in Beitbridge.

Below is a snapshot of what the law says about tearing down campaign posters

Regulations regarding the destruction of political campaign posters

Section 152 of the Electoral Act states that, from the date on which an election is called until its result is declared, no person shall deface or remove any billboard, placard or poster published, posted or displayed by a political party or candidate contesting the election.

What are the exceptions to the law?

The law does not apply to the removal or defacement of a billboard, placard or poster by or at the direction of the person who published, posted or displayed it; or the owner or occupier of the land or premises on which it is published, posted or displayed.

Regulations on defacing property for political purposes

Section 153 of the Electoral Act states

that, any person who, with the object of supporting or opposing any political party, political cause or candidate, whether or not in reference to any election, places any bill, placard, poster, pamphlet, circular or other document, writing or painting on, or otherwise defaces, any house, building, wall, fence, lamp post, gate or elevator without the consent of the owner or occupier thereof, shall be guilty of an offence.

What are the penalties for people convicted of defacing posters?

Subject to Part XIX of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act [Chapter 9:07], a court which has convicted a person of any offence of defacing shall forthwith award compensation, including the costs of restoring the property to its former condition, to any person whose right or interest in property of any description has been lost or diminished as a direct result of the offence.

Any person who destroys political posters or defaces property for political purposes shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine, not exceeding Level 1, or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

Sources

The Electoral Act

Veritas

Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act

What about ZANU-PF erroneously withdrawing candidates?

Claim: On 10 August 2023 the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) published a notice announcing the withdrawal of three ZANU PF local government candidates from the election. News reports have surfaced alleging that the withdrawal of the three was erroneous.

Verdict: True or False? True

On 14 August ZEC published a notice of correction in daily newspapers announcing the reinstatement of three ZANU PF candidates Gasho Kudzai, Zhandu lameck and Rutter Luke who are local government representatives for ZANU PF in Karoi Town Council Ward 8, Zvimba RDC Wards 4 and 31 respectively.

ZEC announced, "It is hereby notified that the persons specified below, nominated for election with the elections to be held on 23 August 2023, who, in a notice published in the daily newspapers of 10 August 2023, had been erroneously indicated as having withdrawn. The persons remain candidates for their respective wards and their names will be included on the ballot paper for their respective wards,"

Conclusion

The reinstatement of the candidates by ZEC shows that their initial withdrawal was erroneous. As a result they will be contesting in the elections in their respective Wards.

Sources

Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

Does Mwonzora's name remain on the 2023 Presidential Ballot?

Claim: On 8 August 2023 Zimbabwe presidential aspirant, Douglas Mwonzora of the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai (MDC-T) announced his withdrawal from 23 August 2023 general election. But despite his decision local state media quoted the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) stating that Mwonzora's name would remain on the presidential ballot for 2023 since he missed the 21-day deadline for candidates to pull out of the race.

Is this True or False?

Verdict: True

What is the procedure for the withdrawal of a presidential candidate?

This is captured in section 107 subsection 1 and 2 of the Electoral Act which states that a nominated candidate for election as President may, by notice in writing addressed to the Chief Elections Officer, withdraw his or her candidature at any time before twenty-one days from the day ... on which the poll in an election to the office of President is to be taken.

On receipt of a notice of withdrawal in terms of subsection (1), the Chief Elections Officer shall cause the withdrawal to be published in the Gazette and in all newspapers of mass circulation in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

In light of the above provision of the Electoral Act, it is too late for ZEC to remove Mwonzora from the Ballot, as he made his announcement 15 days before polling day. What about votes for Mwonzora? Any votes cast for a candidate who has withdrawn will be considered as spoilt ballots.

Sources

Zimbabwe Electoral Act
Zimbabwe Election Commission

Bilharzia Hotspots in Zimbabwe

The Ministry of Health and Child Care launched a Bilharzia Elimination Pilot Project in Shamva through the National Institute of Health Research under the Zimbabwe-China Co-operation in June, 2023 with the aim of assessing the possible use of various new diagnostic tools for testing bilharzia (schistosomiasis) in communities where the disease is common.

In its 2023 bilharzia information factsheet, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says Zimbabwe is endemic to 14 Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), with the top four NTDs being bilharzia, intestinal worms, elephantiasis and blinding trachoma.

This is a summary of some basic facts on bilharzia in Zimbabwe.

Which are the Bilharzia Hotspots in Zimbabwe?

- Madziwa
- Mutare
- Triangle
- Lake Kariba
- Goromonzi
- Masvingo
- Chiredzi

What is Bilharzia, or Schistosomiasis?

Bilharzia is the common name for a disease known scientifically as "Schistosomiasis", which is an infection caused by a parasitic worm that lives in fresh water in subtropical and tropical regions.

How do you get Bilharzia?

The worms that cause schistosomiasis live in fresh water, such as:

- ponds
- lakes

- rivers
- reservoirs
- canals

Symptoms of Bilharzia

You often don't have any symptoms when you first become infected with schistosomiasis, but the parasite can remain in the body for many years and cause damage to organs such as the bladder, kidneys and liver.

According to research, a person cannot notice that they have been infected, although occasionally people get small, itchy red bumps on their skin for a few days where the worms burrowed in.

After a few weeks, some people develop:

- a high temperature (fever)
- an itchy, red, blotchy and raised rash
- a cough
- diarrhoea
- muscle and joint pain
- tummy pain
- a general sense of feeling unwell

Treatment for bilharzia

Schistosomiasis can usually be treated successfully with a short course of a medication called praziquantel, which kills the worms.

Praziquantel is most effective once the worms have grown a bit, hence treatment may need to be repeated a few weeks after your first dose.

Steroid medication can also be used to help relieve the symptoms of acute bilharzia, or symptoms caused by damage to the brain or nervous system.

How can it be prevented?

You can check whether the area you are visiting is known to have a problem with schistosomiasis.

If you're visiting one of these areas:

- avoid paddling, swimming and washing in fresh water - only swim in chlorinated swimming pools
- boil or filter water before drinking - as the parasites could burrow into your lips or mouth if you drink contaminated water
- avoid medicines sold locally that are advertised to treat or prevent schistosomiasis - these are often either fake, sub-standard, ineffective or not given at the correct dosage
- don't rely on assurances from hotels, tourist boards or similar that a particular stretch of water is safe - try to find out from an official or reliable health authority source

Health experts say the mere practice of quickly drying yourself with a towel after getting out of the water is not a reliable way of preventing infection. But it's still advisable to dry yourself as soon as possible if you're accidentally exposed to potentially contaminated water.

Sources

Ministry of Health and Child Care

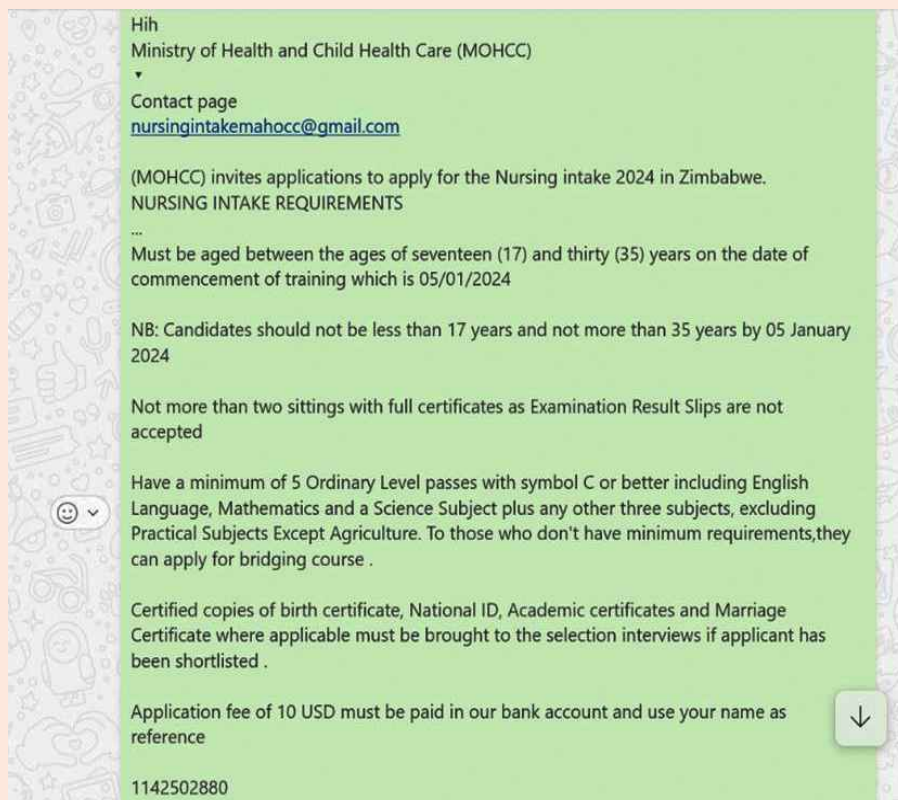
WHO

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/schistosomiasis/>

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Zimbabwe-showing-locations-of-case-studies-reviewed-produced-by-Mrs-A-Makati_fig2_225087370

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/23311886.2023.2215632>

No, this is not a genuine call for 2024 Nursing applications



Claim: A message on Zimbabwe social media platforms claims that the Ministry of Health and Child Care is inviting applications for the 2024 nurse training programme. It says the requirements includes an application fee of US\$10.

Verdict: False

Ministry of Health and Child Care spokesperson Donald Mujiri dismissed the message as fake.

“When we recruit, applicants are not required to make any application fee, it's free. We always use our social media platforms and our website to post such adverts,” he said. The authentic application process was done online through a computer-based portal, which did not include emails.

Mujiri said the message circulating on social media did not have the ministry's official email and bank account details, and urged the public to always verify such posts to avoid being duped.

Sources:

Ministry of Health and Child Care



- National Capital (1,686,000 in 99)
- over 200,000
- over 100,000
- over 25,000
- other main city
- other city
- Capital of province

ZIMBABWE

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