

PREPARE

Pre-election Pact on Electoral Reforms



*Seven
electoral
reform
pillars*

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CITIZENS COALITION FOR CHANGE



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**SEVEN
ELECTORAL REFORM
PILLARS**

FOREWORD

The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe was a collective quest to create a nation founded upon the people's sovereignty and the time-tested principle of one-man one-vote.

Our forebears sacrificed life and limb to birth this great nation where the right of every citizen to vote and self-determine is guaranteed and secured.

The right to vote is so fundamental and so precious without which a people cannot truly be free and independent. A vote is the basis of any social contract; the source of authority for any person to govern in a modern democratic society.

Voting is the instrument by which citizens can self-govern and self-correct. It is a people's voice to define and dictate the fate and destiny of society. Voting sculpts the present and future of any society.

The right to vote is the lifeblood of any democratic, progressive and prosperous nation. That right must be protected through peaceful, free, fair, and credible elections that are held through a process that is simple, accurate, verifiable, secure and transparent.

Since independence in 1980, credible and undisputed elections have been a pipe dream in Zimbabwe. The sacrifices of our forebearers have been ridiculed by those who undermine our liberation struggle and its core values.

It is unbearable betrayal that having fought so hard for decades, the survivors of oppression and subjugation can themselves turn the weapon of the colonizer on their own people.

Indeed, Zimbabwe's history of disputed elections is testimony that our nation has long forgotten and in fact abandoned the key gains of our liberation struggle; the real purpose for which the war was fought and won.

Zimbabwe has over the years been deluged by a series of elections that failed credibility and integrity tests. The political climate has consistently exhibited a characteristic perennial failure to uphold the Citizens political rights and freedoms

The 2018 Election Observer Missions and all the other critical election bodies have shared this perspective on electoral reforms. It is however unfortunate that as it currently pertains, there is insufficient appetite to align the electoral laws to the Constitution and to holistically implement progressive laws that guarantee a credible election.

Bad politics corrupts good economics. Hence, in this country, there is an extricable link between good governance and credible regular elections and a stable prosperous economy. Certainly, there

is a direct relationship between the sham elections that have been conducted in Zimbabwe and the challenges the country has been facing for years.

This crisis of disputed elections is the main source of our political problem that manifests itself in a myriad of economic and social crisis for decades.

For Zimbabwe to rediscover herself and prosper, we must all unite, PREPARE and find new national consensus for nation building in the spirit of oneness, peace, and prosperity.

Elections are the epicenter of good governance and prosperity in order to reform Zimbabwe's electoral systems to give fulfillment to the liberation promise and constitutional imperatives.

The Pre-Election Pact on Electoral Reforms (PREPARE) blueprint proffers the solution to this political quagmire of disputed elections. PREPARE is a clarion call for all citizenry, election stakeholders, ZEC, Parliament, the Executive and other relevant institutions to urgently dialogue on the envisaged electoral laws.

The seven minimum electoral reform pillars sufficiently PREPARE Zimbabwe for a levelled electoral playing field and the future political democracy of the country.

This blueprint is a product of wide Citizens consultation with many stakeholders and is motivated by the desire to give effect to the requirements of the electoral standards prescribed in the Constitution and including the regional and global best practices.

It is therefore after extensive consultations with Citizens, and with profound modesty that I present the seven minimum electoral reform pillars which should urgently inform Zimbabwe's electoral reforms dialogue to avoid a contested 2023 election outcome.

God bless Zimbabwe

Adv Nelson Chamisa
Citizens Coalition for Change
Change Champion

INTRODUCTION

The Citizen' Movement proposes a Pre-Election Pact on Electoral Reforms (PREPARE) that consists of seven (7) minimum electoral reform pillars which should urgently be implemented to ensure that the 2023 harmonized elections and future elections in Zimbabwe pass the credibility and integrity tests.

Over the years, Zimbabwe has been plagued by a series of contested electoral outcomes primarily because of the uneven political terrain. The electoral environment has continuously deteriorated due to weak and biased electoral laws that regulate the electoral system and players. Election malpractices that include partisan state institutions, vote buying, abuse of state resources, intimidation and violence including extra-judicial killings are continuously on the rise. The general practice and conduct of the country's Election Management Body (EMB) in implementing election processes has not fully observed election provisions in the Zimbabwe Constitution. The failure to effectively implement the Electoral Systems and Processes as espoused in the Constitution (Chapter 7 (Part 1) (Sections 155-157) continue to threaten the five basic election ethos of *'simplicity, accuracy, verifiability, security and transparency.'*

Zimbabwe is only a few months away from the 2023 harmonized elections and there appears to be little or no political will on the part of the State and the EMB to align electoral laws to the Constitution, nor to implement the recommended political, administrative, and legislative reforms that guarantee election credibility and integrity. Instead, the Supremacy of the Constitution which should be the guiding philosophy in the promulgation of progressive electoral laws is threatened by the unprocedural and fast-tracked Constitutional Amendments with the willful intent of consolidating ZANU PF authoritarianism.

In crafting this PREPARE blueprint, the Citizens Movement has taken into account the following factors:

- 1) Learned experiences in the electoral environment
- 2) Observations of the conduct and practice of ZEC measured against its Constitutional obligations and responsibilities
- 3) The 2018 Election Observer Missions (EOMs) recommendations
- 4) Election systems and process best practices
- 5) Regional and international election protocols
- 6) Mothlante Commission Report

The Citizens Movement in turn considered these factors in proffering seven (7) minimum electoral reform pillars to address the deteriorating electoral environment and ensure that the 2023 Harmonized elections are conducted in a peaceful, free, fair, and transparent manner. These critical seven reform areas constitute the basis for the Pre-Election Pact on Electoral Reforms (PREPARE) dialogue with ZEC, Parliament, the State and other political stakeholders, while also recognizing the other democratic platforms of ensuring these critical reforms are instituted.

The seven (7) PREPARE minimum electoral reform areas for dialogue are:

1. The right to vote
2. Credibility of the Voters Roll
3. Realtime and credible Results Management and Transmission System.
4. Integrity of Election Processes
5. Political freedoms and Media access
6. Security of the vote
7. Security of the Voter

1.0 THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The principle of equal and universal suffrage should apply in all instances. Section 67 of the Zimbabwe Constitution prescribes that every adult Zimbabwean citizen above eighteen (18) years of age has the right to vote in all elections and referendums. Section 155 of the Constitution provides that the State must adopt “all appropriate measures, including legislative measures” to ensure that every eligible citizen exercises his or her right to vote.

Furthermore, the right to vote is closely tied to the need for comprehensive voter education and voter registration that satisfies the basic principles of trust, inclusivity, accuracy, and transparency.

1.1 The Right to Vote

- 1.1.1 The right to vote should apply to all Zimbabwean citizens aged 18 years and above without discrimination.
- 1.1.2 All appropriate and necessary measures should be put in place to ensure the fulfillment of the voting rights of the following currently disfranchised citizens:
 - a) The Diaspora
 - b) Prisoners
 - c) Persons hospitalized on election day
 - d) People With Disabilities (PWDs) and those with special needs
 - e) All civil servants, security personnel, and persons on official duty outside their designated polling stations on election day
 - f) Zimbabwean citizens previously categorized as ‘aliens.’ The bottlenecks for renouncing citizenship status of affected citizens must be removed to facilitate voter registration.

1.2 Voter Registration

- 1.2.1 Access to identity documentation for all eligible Zimbabwean Citizens

- 1.2.2 Automatic voter registration of all persons that turn 18 years of age. The registrants would then be required to physically present themselves at ZEC voter registration centers for validation.
- 1.2.3 There is need to strengthen voter registration and voters' roll inspection to enhance transparency and integrity by accrediting political parties to observe the processes free of charge.
- 1.2.4 A voter registration blitz should be mandatory before any General election.
- 1.2.5 An open appeals mechanism, with no fear of reprisals, should be instituted for persons aggrieved by the voter registration process.
- 1.2.6 Voter registration programming and the distribution of voter registration kits should be based on potential voter demographics and circumstances to promote equal and universal suffrage. This is important in redressing the problematic issue of voter suppression in some disfranchised demographics or communities.
- 1.2.7 A collaborative approach should be enforced between ZEC and the Registrar General for the issuance of Identity Card Documents to ensure that no eligible person is disfranchised from voting because of lack of Identity registration.

1.3 Voter Education

- 1.3.1 Voter Education should assure the electorate of the secrecy of their vote
- 1.3.2 ZEC must dispel misinformation and propaganda that some elements have a way of knowing how one would have voted
- 1.3.3 ZEC should dismiss misinformation and sanction political parties, candidates or stakeholders that peddle falsehoods dissuading voters from making political choices freely (a right guaranteed under section 67(b) of our Constitution).
- 1.3.4 ZEC should open voter education to more stakeholders and relax the requirements for accreditation.

2.0 CREDIBILITY OF THE VOTERS ROLL

The Voters roll must be timeously accessible and independently audited to enhance transparency, scrutiny, and effective planning on the part of political stakeholders.

- 2.1 The voters' roll to be used on election day must be authenticated and signed off by all contesting parties, candidates, or their designated agents. This is best practice in SADC.
- 2.2 Copies of the signed Voters roll (with pictures) must be given to party agents on election day to verify and authenticate voters.

- 2.3 Allow for external audit of the voters' roll by a reputable audit firm agreed upon by all parties.
- 2.4 The voters' roll must be availed to stakeholders not more than four (4) working days upon request and payment of prescribed fees.
- 2.5 Successfully nominated candidates should be given copies of the voters roll to be used on election day within four (4) days after the sitting of the Nomination Court
- 2.6 Persons with Disabilities and all voters that qualify for voting assistance must be inscribed on the voters' roll,
- 2.7 A separate list of persons requiring assisted voting must be availed to polling agents of contesting parties for verification purposes on election day
- 2.8 Transparent updating of the voters' roll should include stakeholder access to logs, the person making changes on the voters' roll, when such changes were made and evidence to support the changes.
- 2.9 Stakeholders should be accorded the opportunity to observe and monitor the voters roll de-duplication processes.
- 2.10 The voters' roll given to stakeholders must have pictures and be formatted in such a manner that allows for audit and planning.

3.0 A REAL-TIME AND CREDIBLE RESULTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

There is need for sufficient Electoral Law provisions to regulate the consistent conduct of all Results Management processes of counting, collation, transmission, and announcement.

- 3.1 The results must be collated and stored in a server agreed upon by all parties
- 3.2 All verified V11 forms must be posted onto a public portal accessible to all parties and the media.
- 3.3 ZEC results transmission system should be publicly tested for authentication and functionality ahead of the elections.
- 3.4 Clear procedures and transparency in the counting, recording, and sealing off of all election residue must be strengthened to enhance the integrity of the result.
- 3.5 The following sequence of votes counting must apply, firstly, the local authority votes, secondly, the Parliamentary votes and lastly the Presidential votes.
- 3.6 All results at polling stations, ward, constituency, provincial and national collation centers must be verified and signed off by all political party agents before they are declared.
- 3.7 The Presidential results must be signed off by all designated party agents before announcement. In the event of objections, an appeal process must be in place where the dispute is adjudicated and responses to the objections given. If the

- dispute continues after this process, then ZEC can announce the result but note that there were objections to the final tally.
- 3.8 Public broadcasts of real-time results announcement and tabulation are election best practices which should be adopted.
 - 3.9 There should be no deviation from the legally prescribed route of results transmission, and any such future deviation should be outlawed. (There are no results which should be taken to a “district” center). The Presidential results should be electronically transmitted directly from the Polling station to the National Command Center server. The hard copies of the results will then be systematically and transparently transmitted from the Constituency Centers to the National Command Center to allow for physical verification before announcement.
 - 3.10 Police officers have no role in communicating election results nor any polling data.
 - 3.11 Radio communication of results by the police or any other individual must be outlawed
 - 3.12 Allow accredited journalists to take photographs of declared results, tabulate, and publicize them.
 - 3.13 External results verification and audit (Parallel Voter Tabulation) by election stakeholders must be allowed
 - 3.14 There must be a provision for a recount of results at polling stations before they are declared to accommodate any disputes that may arise.
 - 3.15 It should be mandatory that all Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government results be displayed outside polling stations. These results should be endorsed and signed off by political party agents before display.
 - 3.16 Final announcement of Presidential results should be reduced to 96 hours after the close of polls. The expeditious transmission of results will reduce citizen apprehension and speculation as was recommended by the Motlanthe Commission.
 - 3.17 Copies of verified results should be made available to stakeholders that require them during the 6-month period during which election residue should be kept safe.

4.0 INTEGRITY OF ELECTION PROCESSES

4.1 ZEC personnel

The appointment of ZEC personnel, that is, Commissioners, staff and polling officers should be based purely on merit and competence. ZEC personnel should execute their duties objectively and impartially.

- 4.1.1 There must be integrity, independence, and professionalism on the part of ZEC commissioners and personnel as required by the Constitution.
- 4.1.2 All polling officials recruited or seconded by ZEC to support election processes should have their names publicly displayed at polling stations where they will be deployed to allow for public scrutiny ahead of the election.
- 4.1.3 Voters and political parties should be invited to object to any officials deemed unfit to administer the election based on credible evidence relating to their capacity to be professional, nonpartisan, or independent.
- 4.1.4 All objections to the appointed officials should be transparently adjudicated, with the verdict and the reasons for the verdict being publicly given.
- 4.1.5 ZEC staff and polling officers' Codes of Conduct should be publicly availed to stakeholders to enhance accountability.

4.2 ZEC Transparency and accountability

- 4.2.1 The conduct and practice of ZEC should always be guided by credibility, transparency, and accountability principles.
- 4.2.2 There should be genuine inclusion of all Stakeholders and consultations on critical election matters and processes that include but not limited to:
 - a) Electoral law reforms
 - b) Elections calendar
 - c) Election Logistics
 - d) Polling station distribution
 - e) Voters' registration
 - f) Voters' rolls
 - g) Delimitation
- 4.2.3 ZEC should have a calendar of periodic stakeholder engagements
- 4.2.4 Multi-party liaison committees should be instituted throughout the election cycle and not only during the election phase.

4.3 Polling Material Procurement, Design, Logistics and Security

- 4.3.1 Any committee on election logistics must be independent and agreed upon by all parties.
- 4.3.2 The credentials of the Logistics Committee members must be publicized to allow for stakeholder scrutiny and objections if the appointment of one or members of the Committee could potentially jeopardize the objectivity and integrity of the Committee.

- 4.3.3 The independent Logistics Committee must be regulated by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, and should be protected from undue influence or interference by certain Government departments or entities
- 4.3.4 There must be transparency and agreement by all contesting parties with regards to procurement or tendering processes for the production, printing, transportation, storage and security of all election material and equipment.
- 4.3.5 All necessary measures should be put in place to allow for political parties to monitor and observe the procurement, production, printing, transportation, storage and distribution processes of all election material and consumables.
- 4.3.6 All parties must agree and be able to verify the ballot paper quantities, quality, design, security features, and layout before any printing is done.
- 4.3.7 The ballot papers printed should not exceed the 10% threshold prescribed in the Electoral Act.

4.4 Delimitation

- 4.4.1 Delimitation of constituencies should be free of bias, gerrymandering and malapportionment.
- 4.4.2 ZEC must avail to interested parties the final voters roll to be used for delimitation before delineating the constituencies.
- 4.4.3 Stakeholder engagement during delimitation and before gazetting the final report must be mandatory
- 4.4.4 It should be mandatory for ZEC to exercise more transparency and consult stakeholders on the delimitation roadmap, process methodology and to publicize the list of individuals contracted to conduct the exercise.
- 4.4.5 As stipulated in the Constitution (Section 161 (3)), ZEC must ensure that all constituencies and wards in a district have equal number of voters, if it departs from this, then the difference between the constituency with the highest and the lowest must not be more than the 20% threshold prescribed by law.
- 4.4.6 ZEC must provide electoral boundary maps in common formats used in GIS like shape or geojson using the 4326 spatial reference identifiers (SRID)
- 4.4.7 ZEC must release all polling station coordinates to interested parties and including those of movable locations like tents.

5.0 POLITICAL FREEDOMS AND MEDIA ACCESS

5.1 Political Freedoms

- 5.1.1 Citizens should always be guaranteed of their political rights and freedoms.
- 5.1.2 The state and other players in the electoral environment should respect and not infringe on the following Citizens' freedoms:
 - a) Freedom of Assembly and Association (Section 58 of the Constitution)
 - b) Freedom to demonstrate and Petition (Section 59 of the Constitution)
 - c) Freedom of expression and freedom of the media (Section 61 of the Constitution)
 - d) Access to information (Section 62 of the Constitution)
 - e) Freedom of Movement (Section 66 of the Constitution)
- 5.1.3 No Subsidiary laws should replace Constitutionally enshrined political freedoms. The Covid-19 Regulations, for instance, were weaponized and politicized to suspend Constitutional electoral activities including by-elections, and Freedoms of Expression, Movement and Association.
- 5.1.4 The selective application of the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA) by the police equally inhibits some of citizens' political freedoms and rights, particularly with respect to public gatherings, demonstrations, and other campaign programmes.
- 5.1.5 Certain provisions of MOPA should be suspended during election campaign to ensure citizens exercise their political freedoms.
- 5.1.6 The Constitutional mandates of Institutions mandated with the protection of Citizens' Political Freedoms and rights must be strengthened. These institutions include:
 - a) The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC)
 - b) The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC)
 - c) The Gender Commission
 - d) The Media Commission
 - e) The Zimbabwe Police Services
 - f) The Judiciary
- 5.1.7 An effective reporting, investigative and grievance handling mechanism between ZEC and relevant Constitutionally mandated state institutions should be simplified and instituted to ensure the protection of the rights and political freedoms of citizens

5.2 Access to Media

Public Media coverage for election activities should ensure equality, diversity, and plurality.

- 5.2.1 There must be equal coverage by national broadcasters and newspapers of all political parties as required by the Constitution
- 5.2.2 The airwaves must be freed to promote media diversity and plurality through increased and unprejudiced awarding of media broadcasting licenses.

- 5.2.3 There must be factual and unbiased media reporting, and the correction of untrue, erroneous and misleading information as required in Section 62 (3) of the Constitution.
- 5.2.4 There must be an enforceable Election Code of Conduct for Media houses and journalists. ZEC, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), and the Media Commission should collaborate and have powers to sanction media houses or journalists that breach the Code.
- 5.2.5 Media monitoring should be instituted throughout all stages of the electoral cycle that is, the pre-election, election, and post-election phases. This will be a shift from the current practice where media monitoring is only conducted during the election phase after election proclamation.
- 5.2.6 Political hate speech and gender stereotyping peddled by the Media should be criminalized and punitive measures must be instituted

6.0 SECURITY OF THE VOTE

The Constitution, the Electoral Act and the relevant state institutions should ensure the protection and security of the vote. Election disputes handling, power transition mechanisms, election supervision and monitoring impact on the security of the vote and the protection of the will of citizens, hence it is imperative that the practices and conduct of all relevant state institutions should be bound by the Constitution.

6.1 Election Dispute Handling Mechanisms

- 6.1.1 There must be fair, impartial, and expeditious adjudication of election petitions.
- 6.1.2 Election disputes must be adjudicated expeditiously within the shorted reasonable time
- 6.1.3 There is need to broaden the grounds for election petitions to include the electoral environmental malpractices by all stakeholders, partisan role of state institutions and unfair electoral practices by the EMB.
- 6.1.4 The right to petition should be extended to any registered voter and not limited only to the losing candidate or party only.
- 6.1.5 The Electoral Act should strengthen the aggrieved parties' right to be heard and give credence to the substantive matters of the petitions over technicalities.
- 6.1.6 The Electoral Court must be assigned as a specialized division of the High Court and decentralized to all provinces.

6.2 Role of State Institutions in Election processes

State institutions involved in elections should conduct themselves in accordance with the Constitution in a fair, non-partisan, and professional manner not prejudicial to the political rights

of citizens nor any political actor. The relevant state institutions include ZEC, Security Services Sector, traditional leadership system and the Judiciary.

The mandate and functions of ZEC

- 6.2.1 ZEC like any other Chapter 12 Institution should be independent and not subject to the direction nor control of anyone. ZEC should be accountable to Parliament and not any party, individual nor any arm of the State.
- 6.2.2 ZEC must assume and maintain its status as an independent commission set up to uphold democracy, and perform its functions and responsibilities as prescribed in Chapter 12 of the Zimbabwe Constitution.
- 6.2.3 The appointment of ZEC Commissioners should be transparent, non-partisan, and purely based on Merit and Competence.
- 6.2.4 ZEC should report to Parliament at least once a year and may be requested to make submissions or reports when necessary.
- 6.2.5 ZEC should have administrative independence to execute its operational mandate outside the interference or endorsement of the Minister of Justice. The Minister, a member of the Executive branch of the state and a political figure currently has administrative decision powers over ZEC finances, termination of the Chief Elections Officer employment contract and fixing the terms and conditions of ZEC staff (Chapter 9, Electoral Act)
- 6.2.6 ZEC should have financial independence and must receive funding directly from the consolidated Revenue Fund and not through the Ministry of Justice.
- 6.2.7 The financial autonomy of ZEC should be extended to receiving funds from non-governmental actors without the Minister's express approval
- 6.2.8 ZEC should have the autonomy to promulgate election regulations and operationalize electoral laws, policies, and procedures outside the express approval of the Minister of Justice or any other authority unsanctioned by the Constitution.

The Role of the Security Sector in elections

- 6.2.9 The Defense Forces, the Police Service and the Intelligence Service should not support nor further interests of any political party or violate the fundamental rights or freedoms of any person (Section 208 of the Constitution).

The Defense forces

- 6.2.10 The military should be non-partisan and its conduct, practice, or utterances

should not influence the electorate voting behaviors nor prejudice other political players

The Police Services

- 6.2.11 The police should conduct itself in a professional manner and desist from selective application of the law, brutalizing certain opposition parties and arbitrary banning their rallies.
- 6.2.12 Enforcement of Section 55 of the Electoral Act that the police have no role in the voting process or communication of election results, serve to maintain law and order inside and outside the polling station.
- 6.2.13 The Police should be stationed outside and within the immediate vicinity of the polling station and can only enter the polling station when called upon by the Presiding Officer to maintain law and order.
- 6.2.14 The police should not be allowed to witness voting of Assisted Voters.

Traditional Leadership System

- 6.2.15 Establishment of the Integrity and Ethics Committee through an Act of Parliament to deal with complaints against Traditional Leaders as espoused in Section 287 of the Constitution.
- 6.2.16 Traditional leaders must be non-partisan. Section 281(2) of the Constitution explicitly prohibits Traditional leaders from engaging in partisan politics or furthering partisan political interests.
- 6.2.17 An enforceable Code of Conduct for Traditional leaders should be put in place against the following malpractices:
 - a) Threats and intimidation against villagers that hold divergent political views
 - b) Selective distribution of aid, particularly food assistance, farming inputs and other Handouts
 - c) Cohesion and Marshalling voters to polling stations
 - d) Command assisted voting by traditional leaders
- 6.2.18 There is need to enforce the High Court judgement prohibiting traditional leaders from interfering in political matters or furthering interests of other political parties.

The Judiciary

- 6.2.19 The Courts must be independent, and subjected to the dictates of the Constitution in protecting the rule of law and safeguarding human rights and freedoms
- 6.2.20 Restore public confidence in an independent and competent Judiciary. The courts must not be subjected to the direction nor control of anyone.

- 6.2.21 Full application of the doctrine of Separation of Powers to guarantee checks and balances regarding the protection of rights and freedoms of Zimbabweans from the authoritarian domination of the Executive and legislature.
- 6.2.22 The provisions of Constitutional Amendment No. 2 extending the Chief Justice's tenure beyond the prescribed age, and the removal of the public selection / interview processes of the Supreme Court, High Court and Administrative Court Judges and allotting that responsibility to the President is a direct attack to the principle of separation of powers. These amendments must be reversed.
- 6.2.23 Judges must be protected from undue interferences by their superiors and persons with political interests to guarantee predisposed judicial outcomes.
- 6.2.24 Members of the bench must be protected from institutionalized fear and intimidation
- 6.2.25 Fair implementation of the provisions of the Constitution, and the expeditious adjudication of electoral disputes.

6.3 Election Supervision and Monitoring

- 6.3.1 A Comprehensive Observation and Monitoring of all key electoral milestones by relevant stakeholders.
- 6.3.2 Mechanisms should be put in place to implement the 2018 Election Observer Mission recommendations to ensure the credibility and integrity of elections in Zimbabwe.
- 6.3.3 To allow for United Nations (UN) supervised elections.
- 6.3.4 Arrangements should be facilitated for long-term election observations of key pre-electoral processes and election environment by both internal and external Observer Missions, at least 9 months before the projected dates for the Harmonized elections.
- 6.3.5 The Observer accreditation process must be the preserve of ZEC with minimum influence from the State.
- 6.3.6 Political parties must be provided with the opportunity to observe other key election process activities free of charge and within reasonable conditions. These processes should include delimitation, voter registration and voter inspection

6.4 Power Transition mechanisms

- 6.4.1 The post-election power transition arrangement should be predictable and clearly articulated by law.

- 6.4.2 There should be clarity with regards the role of the Executive, relevant State institutions and all political players concerned.

7.0 SECURITY OF THE VOTER

- 7.1 The fundamental rights, freedoms and security of the voter must be guaranteed at all stages of the electoral cycle
- 7.2 Institute enforceable Codes of Conduct with punitive measures for election stakeholders that infringe on the security of the voter. The enforceable Code of Conduct should criminalize acts of election malpractices by the following key stakeholders:
- a) **Candidates**
 - i) Vote buying
 - ii) Violence, threats and intimation on political opponents or voters that hold divergent views
 - iii) Political parties that disrupt activities of rivalry parties
 - b) **Traditional leaders**
 - i) Command voting by forcing voters / villagers to vote or act in a particular manner
 - ii) Forcing villagers to declare illiteracy so that they qualify as assisted voters. This would ensure Traditional leaders, or other exploitative persons witness and influence the vote of villagers
 - iii) Weaponization of state aid and handouts meant for disadvantaged community beneficiaries to influence or change their political choices.
 - c) **Security services**
 - i) Selective application of the law and arbitrary arrests / detentions
 - ii) Denying citizens and voters their fundamental freedoms of movement, association, and expression
 - iii) Illegal and arbitrary interference in statutory political party gatherings and other activities
 - d) **Media**
 - i) Propagating hate speech
 - ii) Misinformation
 - iii) Biased media coverage
- 7.3 Any candidate in breach of the Code of conduct must be penalized or disqualified
- 7.4 Criminalize the act of forcing voters to disclose or take photographs of their marked

ballot papers

- 7.5 The victims of political violence must be given the right to be heard by the Electoral Court within a stipulated time, and the perpetrators sanctioned or disqualified if found guilty.

Assisted Voting

- 7.6 Stringent measures should be instituted against the abuse of assisted voting privileges by:
- a) Those deliberately making false declarations, and
 - b) Those forcing voters to request voting assistance as a way of influencing how they vote
- 7.7 Prior recording on the Voters rolls of persons requiring voting assisted. The list should be a public record and copies availed to political party representatives on election day for authentication and verification.
- 7.8 One person should assist no more than one voter at a time at any Polling station, Ward, or Constituency

8.0 CONCLUSION

It is evident that the 7-point PREPARE electoral reform issues proffered above are critical and fundamental to the 2023 Harmonized election integrity and credibility. Notably, these reforms are in our country's constitution, and most of them simply require administrative application by ZEC and legislation by Parliament. It is therefore on this basis that the Citizens movement endeavors to foster a Pre-election pact with all relevant stakeholders and utilize every available democratic space to ensure that there is sufficient political appetite to align these reforms to the Constitution ahead of the 2023 Harmonized Elections.