

More than 300 Marondera residents attend CCDZ Public Meeting on "Conditions for Peaceful Referendum & Elections"

Staff reporter

The Centre for Community Development in Zimbabwe (CCDZ) held a public meeting on the Minimum Conditions for Free and Fair Elections at Dombotombo Hall in Marondera on the 15th of November 2012. The meeting which attracted more than three hundred (300) participants from various sectors including political parties, women, youth, trade unions and faith based organisations provided residents of Marondera with critical civic education on the conditions necessary for ensuring a 'Peaceful, Free and Fair Referendum & Election.'

The panelists for the public meeting were drawn from CCDZ, Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI), a local think-tank and research group, Heal Zimbabwe Trust and the Media Centre. CCDZ Director, Phillip Pasirayi urged all stakeholders to play a positive role and ensure that the forthcoming Constitutional referendum and elections meet the required standards for free and fair elections.

"We have pronounced ourselves as Civil Society on the kind of legal and institutional framework under which the next elections should be conducted", said Pasirayi. "This framework must address the problems associated with compilation of the voter's register and the need to clean up the register to get rid of ghost voters; the independence of the electoral management body and issues of political violence", he added.

Pedzisayi Ruhanya from ZDI spoke on the role of the media in promoting free and fair elections. On the administration of elections he emphasised that the candidates for elections should have equal media access in both state and independent media. He lambasted the current situation whereby only one political party has airplay on the national broadcaster whilst other political parties are portrayed negatively. He stated that one main characteristic of an election is choice, contrary to the imposition of some candidates on the people.

The Media Centre Director, Earnest Mudzengi stated that soldiers should not dabble in politics. He urged the Marondera residents to resist being used as cannon fodder in perpetrating violence. He also said that Prime Minister Tsvangirai and President



Some of the participants at CCDZ Public Meeting on peaceful, free and fair elections in Marondera

Mugabe drink tea together and asked why this cannot happen at community level. He urged people to unite and work together as they will be together forever in their communities, unlike politicians who come and go. He urged the Marondera residents to expose all forms of violence. In his conclusion he emphasized that electoral statutes alone are not enough to ensure there is democracy in the country. Mudzengi noted: "The people have to fight for the implementation of these electoral laws".

CCDZ Senior Programs Officer, Tinashe Chatira explained the important task that women have in the upcoming Referendum and Elections. Chatira challenged women to not only register to vote, but to vie for

political office. Chatira told the women to take advantage of amendments that have been made in the Electoral Act which promote gender equality and attempt to address factors which hinder women's political participation such as violence. Women were also urged to be active participants, not spectators. They were told to take initiatives to create community based strategies to promote peace and to play their role in all conflict prevention and management initiatives.

Several critical issues were also raised by the participants at the public meeting. One female Councillor spoke against the barriers that women faced during the 2008 harmonized elections. She challenged political parties, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and civil society to intensify their advocacy for these barriers to be removed in the upcoming elections. Other participants sought clarification over what measures will be put in place to ensure that all political parties are given fair opportunities to campaign freely and fairly. Concern was also raised over the media which was said to be failing to create a level playing field for all political parties ahead of the Referendum and Elections. Participants also suggested that CCDZ should engage top level political leadership and the police to ensure that the law is not applied selectively.

CCDZ launches peace-building poster



CCDZ launched a peacebuilding poster in line with its efforts to build peace and clearing the ground for a peaceful, free and fair elections. "We will be going around the country in the districts to launch the poster. The poster is entitled "Shun Violence, Build Peace in your Community", said Pasirayi. The poster is distributed through our local level structures called community working groups and CCDZ partners such as churches. The poster emphasizes peace, political

tolerance and reminds perpetrators of violence and murder of the concept of Ngozi (the avenging spirit).

Headlines:

Kwekwe residents complain about strict voter registration procedures

More than 2000 Chinhoyi residents attend CCDZ Road Show at GwayaGwaya Business Centre

Electoral Reforms Report by Youth Forum

Political Violence Rears its Ugly Head Again in Mutoko

Kwekwe residents complain about strict voter registration procedures

Residents of Kwekwe have complained about the strict voter registration procedures saying that most people are being turned away because they do not have the required documents such as proof of residence. They said that most people are lodgers (without lodgers' cards) and the requirement of proof of residence was prohibitive and would lead to many people failing to vote.

Some residents suggested that people should be allowed to vote if they have national identity documents. Councillor Masiye of Ward 3 in Mbizo stated that this was the case in the 1980 elections which brought President Mugabe to power. The issue of the voter's roll audit was unanimously advocated, arguing that ghost voters should be removed from the roll. The people hailed the allocation of more duties to do the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) and leave the Registrar General's duties to do with issuing of registration documents.

People also expressed worry over the electoral management bodies such as ZEC which they said failed to pass the test of impartiality and professionalism in the previous elections. "There are some commissioners who played an active role in the discredited June 27, 2008 elections who are still part of the commission. What guarantee do we have that there won't be a repeat of what prevailed in 2008", questioned a youth from Amaveni township.

The CCDZ Advocacy Officer, Mr Vellim Nyama assured the participants that CCDZ will lobby for a level playing field. He also urged participants to go and encourage their friends and relatives to register as voters. The same sentiments were echoed by Tinashe Chatira, the CCDZ Senior Programmes Officer, who told participants that CCDZ is ready to assist citizens who have challenges in registering to vote. Chatira urged people in attendance to organize themselves and

effectively participate in voters clubs that were established in Kwekwe by CCDZ.

The CCDZ programme officers encouraged participations to register as voters and approach CCDZ or seek assistance from Voters Clubs if they encounter any problems. CCDZ also took this opportunity to launch their poster on non violent engagement and political tolerance in the next election.



CCDZ director, Philip Pasirayi, encouraging citizens to register as voters in Chinhoyi

More than 2000 Chinhoyi residents attend CCDZ Road Show at GwayaGwaya Business Centre

Scores of residents in Chinhoyi converged at Gwaya Gwaya Business Centre for the road show held by the Centre for Community Development In Zimbabwe (CCDZ). The participants comprised of men, women, youths, business people, political leaders and ordinary people. The road show was addressed by CCDZ Director Phillip Pasirayi, the CCDZ Chairperson Earnest Mudzengi and Programme officers George Makoni and Vellim Nyama. The roadshow focused on the Constitutional referendum and elections.

The CCDZ Director Phillip Pasirayi urged Chinhoyi residents to participate during the referendum and elections that are expected to be held in 2013.



Zimbabwe Democracy Institute Director, Pedzisai Ruhanya presenting on the role of media in peaceful, free and fair elections in Chinhoyi

Pasirayi underscored the need for peace during the referendum and elections and challenged youths to play a leading role in the referendum and elections and not to be used by what he called 'self serving politicians' to perpetrate violence against opponents.

Pasirayi said: " Let's shun violence, let's embrace each other as brothers and sisters, we're all Zimbabweans. We've seen brother turning against brother, father turning against son and vice versa all for political expediency. To all the youths gathered here my message is that you should refuse to be used to instigate violence by self-serving politicians".

Residents of Chinhoyi also urged the coalition government to implement democratic reforms such as the removal of ghost voters from the voters' register and creation of a truly independent, impartial and professional Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Participants at the roadshow also told CCDZ to assist with lobbying government because they were facing challenges in registering as voters as some of them are not able to produce proof of residence that is required to register as voters.

The CCDZ chairperson, Earnest Mudzengi encouraged citizens to register as voters in preparation for the forthcoming harmonized elections. Mudzengi explained to residents the voting procedures and the requirements of voter registration. He also encouraged women to take leadership positions in the next elections and said that their participation in decision making enhances democracy.

CCDZ also told Chinhoyi residents that voting gives them a voice in the governance of the country and that the voters have a right to reject politicians who are selfish, corrupt and unresponsive to their needs. 'Voter apathy gives room to those who might have evil intentions to manipulate the elections', Mudzengi said in his conclusion.

Electoral Reforms Report

Compiled by:



The Electoral Reforms Report was compiled by the Youth Forum, a youth group seeking to enhance the participation of young people in the electoral and political processes. The Youth Forum is currently mobilizing youths particularly First Time Voters (FTVs) to register as voters so that they can participate in the forthcoming referendum and harmonized elections expected to be held in 2013.

Voter Registration

In this first edition of the Electoral reforms update, we look at the reforms instituted to allow for improved and hassle-free voter registration as it is the process that leads to a clean and up to date and accurate voters roll, which is the bedrock of elections. Zimbabwe is currently using a voter's roll that was compiled in 1985, and has been continuously updated since then, a Roll that has been a subject of a lot of criticism from different circles, with some even claim it is the inaccuracy of the roll that can lead to rigging of elections. The roll currently has over 5.5 Million voters registered.

Polling Station Based Registration

The new regulations provide for polling station specific voter registration, meaning voters will have to be registered at specific polling stations at which they will have to vote, and will not be allowed to vote at any other polling station. The polling station specific registration system is easier to administer as each polling station has known number of registered voters. It also provides safeguard against double voting as voters can only vote at the particular station where they are registered.

However, with the history of violence and victimisation that has characterised Zimbabwe's past elections, the system makes it easy for perpetrators of violence to target individuals as returns from each polling station will be made public. It is also easy for political opponents to intimidate voters pre-election using this polling station registration system.

The Youth Forum also understands that the political parties that are signatory to the Global Political Agreement agreed that the next election will remain ward based (you can register and vote at any polling station within your ward) and the polling station specificity regulations will only be effected after the next election.

Proof of Residence

The contentious issue of proof of residence is still there, but this time with a provision that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) can now further



CCDZ Chairperson, Earnest Mudzengi testing the knowledge of youths on the Constitution Making Process at a road show.

prescribe other documents that will be accepted as proof of residence. This has been implemented to assist those that fail to acquire the documents prescribed in the Zimbabwe Electoral Act, as many people, especially youths, have failed to register due to stringent measures in the requirement for proof of residence.

We only wait to see the type and nature of document that the Commission will prescribe as acceptable proof of residence. It is also important to note that absence from a constituency for more than 12 months will mean that person is no longer a resident of that area and can be removed from the voters roll.

Provision for a New Voters Roll

The amendment has a provision that will allow the President, on the advice of ZEC, to order a new registration of voters. The exercise must last for at least 6 months but ZEC can extend the period.

Voters on the old voters roll will be transferred to the new voters roll by simply presenting themselves to the constituency registrar & producing proof of identity. New voters will have to go through the normal registration process, which means, in addition to proof of identity; they will need proof of residence as well.

This process will ensure that no dead and ghost voters will appear on the new roll as, obviously, such people will not appear in person to confirm their registration. This exercise will depend on those on the old roll coming forward to confirm their registration.

Removal of Dead Voters from the Voters' Roll

Whilst in the past dead voters were only removed on the basis of a death certificate or burial order, the reforms now allow for a relative or traditional leader (Chief, Headman e.t.c) to make a sworn statement to the effect that a person on the voters roll is dead, a statement that will be used to remove the dead person after being presented to a magistrate.



Part of the crowd that attended the CCDZ Road show on the update of the constitution making process and elections, Chinhoyi.

Iva nhengo yeCCDZ! Usasarire muzvirongwa zvinoita
kuti izwi rako rinzwikwe pazvinangwa zvenyika yako.

Ikodzero yako kuti unzwikwe.

Land line: 04 - 776038

Email: centrefordevelopment@gmail.com/ info@ccdzt.co.zw

Website: <http://www.ccdzt.org.zw>

Political Violence Rears its Ugly Head Again in Mutoko



This is what remains of David Chamanga's house burnt in suspected politically motivated violence in Mutoko East.

This month, the Centre for Community Development In Zimbabwe (CCDZ) and Heal Zimbabwe visited Mutoko to research about ongoing political violence in the area. The MDC-T Organizing Secretary for the area, David Chamanga lost his belongings after suspected ZANU PF activists torched his huts. CCDZ and HZT Programme Officers, George Makoni and Lovemore Chinoputsa give the details of the situation in Mutoko:

We managed to visit David Chamanga (48), the MDC-T Organizing Secretary for Mutoko East, ward 17. This followed reports from our Community Working Group members in the area who alerted us that his two huts were burnt by alleged ZANU PF supporters. In his narration he stated that, it was a well orchestrated move to eliminate him by ZANU PF thugs, given that he defected from the mentioned political party in 2008 and has been very active in mobilizing and recruiting people for MDC-T. He said that he crossed the floor with a number of other ZANU PF supporters to the chagrin of the party leadership in the area.

He highlighted that this incident occurred only two days after being released from cells on allegations of stock-theft. The allegations emanated from Operation "Dzorera Chamakadya", a campaign which he led which sought to re-take livestock from perpetrators of 2008 political violence who had grabbed livestock from perceived MDC-T supporters in the 2008 reign of terror. Chamanga said: "My crime is that I had demanded my two goats back that they forcibly took in 2008. I have made a report to the police but they told me to bring the culprits to the police station".

He also lambasted the police for coming after three days to his home, following this terrific incident. The police arrested Chamanga and two other activists to assist them with investigations on the alleged crime. ZANU PF supporters in the area celebrated including the ward 17 councillor. They were saying that I will not come back; however the magistrate dismissed this case on the basis that we only demanded and Kapitau, a ZANU PF youth lied that we had actually attempted to open the housing of their livestock. There was no evidence to this case.

Neighbors who ran after the assailants who are said to be three people, one woman and two men allege that one of the assailants is Kapitau, a well-known ZANU PF youth activist in the area. He stays in the neighboring Kazingizi Village. "I went to seek help from my neighbor, whilst there, I was scared by yet another eruption which set alight my bedroom. We later realized some bottles which were inside both houses. Given the gun like sound which I heard when the houses were alight, I have no doubt that, petrol bombs were used to accomplish this mission. These ZANU PF thugs wanted to kill me that is why they burnt houses which they knew to be our bedrooms, one for my kids and another for us the parents", he said

Chamanga also linked this incident to earlier threats he had received from the ZANU PF District Chairperson who told him in no uncertain terms that he was not going to survive the next day and that he was going to burn his garden.

The Member of Parliament for the area and the ward councilor never bothered to step their feet at his place. His neighbor, who had initially given him refuge, has since given him marching orders after receiving threats of unspecified action by ZANU PF youths in the area.

His wife took the opportunity to share the consequences of the inferno. She mentioned that, they lost \$300 dollars which they got from their daily sales of soya mince business which is the backbone of their livelihood. She also stated that, they are now leaving in fear since; their remaining hut can also be set alight anytime. The uniforms and books for their two kids were also burnt in the inferno. She also lamented over their isolation with neighbors in the constituency, who are now afraid of being associated with the "enemy."

The MDC-T district secretary, Taurai Matikiti suggested that the principals in the inclusive government should jointly condemn politically motivated violence. He said if these leaders remain silent, there will continue to be violence in all political hotspots and a scenario worse than 2008 violence will prevail. He however said that, this time around they are ready for what he called one on one with ZANU PF militia. He said that if they burn a hut, we will burn two. He said we have only two cheeks, and we have exposed them all, so this time around we will take them man for man, said the militant activist.

REGISTER TO VOTE!

It's YOUR RIGHT to participate in the referendum and elections

1. Are you above 18 years?

2. REGISTER NOW to vote in the Referendum and ELECTIONS.

3. Are you registered as a VOTER?

4. Your VOTE counts, use it!

5. Registration is an ongoing process, take your National I.D. Proof of residence and REGISTER NOW.