



STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION IN ZIMBABWE

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The government of Zimbabwe has a democratic commitment to ensure the freedom of movement and association of domestic and international election observers during the upcoming second round of the country's presidential election. It is also obligated to ensure the overall transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process through commitments outlined in the Southern Africa Development Community Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2004) and the African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002).

Yet, since the first round of the presidential election in Zimbabwe on March 29, police have harassed the legitimate, peaceful activities of staff and observers of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a legally established and widely respected citizen rights group that conducted observation in compliance with the country's electoral laws, code of conduct, and international principles for election observation. ZESN members have been arbitrarily detained and interrogated by police and their offices have been searched. These actions are a violation of civil and political rights and run counter to the government's responsibility to ensure the freedom of movement and association of election observers throughout the country.

The Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, endorsed by our organizations at the United Nations in 2005, recognizes the right of citizens to monitor their elections through nonpartisan organizations like ZESN. The declaration underlines that international election observation organizations should advocate for the right of citizens to conduct nonpartisan election observation without undue interference or restrictions.

As it prepares for the next round in these crucially important presidential elections, the world looks to Zimbabwe to fulfill its commitment to the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights.

The Carter Center
Electoral Institute of Southern Africa