

Elections already rigged: CSOs

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File picture: Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition spokesperson Obert Masaraure

CIVIL Society Organisations (CSOs) and opposition political parties have claimed that the recently released preliminary delimitation report exposed a rigging plot by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC).

Speaking during an election resource centre hosted delimitation meeting in Harare on Saturday, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition spokesperson Obert Masaraure alleged that ZEC has already rigged the impending general election.

“Are we going to sheepishly submit ourselves to an election when we know that these are flawed processes? People are going to say no let’s rationalise and allow this process to go. Allow an election that has already been rigged? We all know that everything is pointing towards rigging the elections. We have a State media which remains biased and a military factor as well.

“Why are we participating? Are we doing it in the sense that we want development and democracy in Zimbabwe? If we want democracy we have to say enough is enough and get to a point where citizens say away with this delimitation process. We will go to an election when the voters roll and the State media is accessible to all players and when the military is no longer part of our politics,” Masaraure said.

“These reforms are serious and must be done. We, therefore, submit that Zimbabwe isn’t ready for elections and we urge those who want to participate in the process to call for credible electoral processes,” he added.

The Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) also alleged, in its January 13, 2022 review paper titled: *“ZEC Delimitation Report: Electoral Rigmarole and Elite Discohesion”* that errors observed in the delimitation report were deliberately meant to benefit the ruling Zanu PF party.

“The report shows evidence of ZEC’s gerrymandering done to benefit Zanu PF. This is clearer when one looks at the constituencies affected by the delimitation. Many constituencies delimited by ZEC fall outside the permissible limits.

“Gerrymandering strategies identified so far include the use of a wrong formula to calculate the minimum and a maximum number of registered voters to determine the size of each constituency and inconsistent application of criteria used to determine the number of constituencies per province,” ZDI said.

Citizens Coalition for Change deputy secretary for elections Ellen Shiryedenga told fellow participants at the Saturday meeting that ZEC did not do proper consultations.

“We wouldn’t be in this mess if there were proper consultations. The consultations were prescriptive. ZEC used to say if you have anything to say, put it in writing,” Shiryedenga said.

Norton Independent legislator Themba Mliswa said he was challenging the whole delimitation process and was contemplating approaching the courts.

National Constitutional Assembly secretary for Legal Affairs Jacob Matumbe said the report was procedurally and constitutionally flawed.

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