



W/O 3/93

Campaigners for Human Rights

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MAKE ZEC MORE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL!

ZimRights Statement on the recent appointment of ZEC Commissioners

14 July 2022

ZimRights registers its displeasure over the recent appointment of Commissioners to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). The President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Emmerson Mnangagwa, recently appointed six Commissioners in terms of section 238(1)(b) of the Constitution – the President appoints from a list of nominees submitted by Parliament’s Committee on Standing Rules and Orders [CSRO]. The recently appointed commissioners are Mrs Catherine Mpofu, Mrs Abigail Millicent Mohadi Ambrose, Mrs Janet Mbetu Nzvenga, Mrs Rosewita Marutare, Mr Kudzai Shava and Mr Shepherd Manhivi who replaced the previous Commissioners whose terms of office expired on 6 July 2022.

ZimRights believes that independence is the cornerstone of ZEC as an entity that performs the role of a referee in democratic elections. However, the recent appointments, go against the principles of The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (Article 17.1), as well as the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. (Section 4.1.9) which all speak to the need for member states to uphold the impartiality and independence of the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). Further, the Zimbabwean Constitution, under Chapter 12 (235 and 236) speaks to the need for ZEC and its commissioners to be independent from partisanship and influence from political parties among other factors.

ZimRights generally doubts the impartiality of the six Commissioners. For example, the appointment of Mrs Abigail Millicent Mohadi Ambrose, who is the biological daughter of Mr Kembo Mohadi - the Vice President and Second Secretary of the ruling ZANU PF Party, raises eyebrows. While ZimRights believes in the principle of equal opportunities for everyone including children of high-ranking officials, it sees the appointment of Mrs Abigail Millicent Mohadi Ambrose as a direct attack on the independence and integrity of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. Just a few months from now, in 2023, Mrs Abigail Mohadi Ambrose will act as a referee in an election her father, Mr Mohadi, and the party that he leads will be contending in. It is highly unlikely that she will be a neutral referee. Apart from her relationship to the ZANU PF deputy leader, a record¹ of Mrs Mohadi Ambrose’s performance during the interviews, shows that she was not among the best suitable candidates to be appointed as Commissioner to ZEC. This only supports the notion that nepotism was a factor in her appointment.



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*Celebrating 30 years of
Grassroots organising*

Registered as a Welfare Organization in Zimbabwe. W/O 3/93

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This appointment of the commissioners comes after ZimRights' own findings from the recently launched State of Peace Report 2021ⁱⁱ, wherein 50% of community activists indicated that they were living in fragile peace. One of the reasons for this fragility was the lack of confidence in Zimbabwe's electoral systems' capacity to deliver democracy. Many are convinced that the election outcome is predetermined because the institutions are captured. The appointment of questionable individuals as Commissioners points to ZEC's lack of independence and impartiality, and it is therefore an attack on peace in Zimbabwe.

In light of this, ZimRights makes the following demands;

- That the Government of Zimbabwe (the Executive and the Legislature) respect the independence of ZEC and ensure that ZEC as an institution must be independent and also be seen to be independent. As a result, it should revoke the appointment of Mrs Abigail Mohadi Ambrose, including any other compromised Commissioner and replace them with neutral individuals.
- That Mrs Abigail Mohadi Ambrose and admit that, given her relationship to a top political contender, her position in the Commission is not free from undue influence and or capture from the ruling ZANU PF party and, therefore, resign from her post as a ZEC Commissioner

Issued by the ZimRights Information Department

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ⁱ <https://thenewshawks.com/mohadis-daughter-struggled-with-job-interview-questions/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.zimrights.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/State-of-Peace-Report-2021.pdf>



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