



# ZCC PASTORAL STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

**'on the 2018 Harmonized Elections'**

<sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. <sup>17</sup> And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. <sup>18</sup> Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him." <sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. (Genesis 21 verse 15 -19)

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***Friday, 03 August 2018***

1. The announcement of official results by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) yesterday, marked the end of a critical stage in what has been a highly contested and emotive electoral process. Throughout this process the church mobilized millions of its members to participate in a prayerful, informed and peaceful manner. The Church will continue in like manner as Zimbabwe charts its way forward towards unity, peace, justice and prosperity.
2. Several factors brought about the sense that the electoral results would inevitably be contested. These factors include:
  - a. The enduring perception that Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) was not fully independent,
  - b. The sense that the electoral playing field remains uneven whilst favoring incumbents,
  - c. The existing deep national polarization across political, tribal, gender, class and other distinctions,
  - d. The growing tensions over unresolved and lingering past hurts and pains,
  - e. The reality of economic hardship, joblessness and declining standards of living for most Zimbabweans,

3. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches echoes the technical conclusions by the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network that “ZEC announced official results are consistent with the Sample Based Observation projections”. The ZCC further echoes ZESN’s calls:
  - For ZEC to urgently release on its website the polling level results for all elections including the Presidential election, for transparency and accountability.
  - For all Zimbabweans to be peaceful and for aggrieved parties to seek peaceful and legal redress and exercise restraint.
4. As we speak, we understand that the MDC Alliance has raised objections to the official results especially the presidential election results. As the churches we may not have the means to accept or reject the objections raised by the MDC Alliance.
  - We pray that these objections will be expressed in a peaceful and legal manner.
  - We also pray that they will receive a fair and just hearing in accordance with the nation’s laws and constitution.
5. From the announced results we note with deep concern that our nation is deeply divided. The deepening polarization between urban and rural voters, younger and older voters, as well as richer and poorer voters requires urgent redress through a holistic process of nation building and envisioning. The cry of different sectors of our population requires both a pastoral and prophetic response.

**6. To the Leaders of ZANU PF:**

- We ask you to create avenues for inclusive dialogue and engagement as well as to heed the complaints raised by the MDC Alliance. The nation needs you to commit to a nation building dialogue process aimed at uniting the nation and creating an inclusive way forward.
- We ask you to consider and prioritise a formal constitutional recognition for the leader of the main opposition consistent with practices in other developed democracies.
- There will be need for a major revisiting of the electoral laws so as to restore the integrity of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.
- Going forward, we ask that the newly appointed Parliamentarians and Councilors seek to promote justice and allow the freedoms to continue flourishing.

**7. To the Leaders of the MDC Alliance:**

- We acknowledge your frustrations and dissatisfactions regarding the electoral environment in Zimbabwe
- We pray that you may address your dissatisfactions through the courts of law with the aim of seeking just redress.
- In case the MDC Alliance does not trust to get a fair hearing in the courts, the church leadership makes itself available to facilitate other platforms of engagement as to bring mutually satisfactory closure to the current situation.

- We also plead with the MDC Alliance leadership to bear in mind the pressing need to maintain peace and not take actions that may easily deteriorate to chaos. Volatile situations tend to deteriorate and attain a life of their own beyond anyone's control.
- National peace is a mutually responsible endeavor that requires you to play your part towards its full attainment.

#### **8. To the International Community**

- The international community has taken interest at the invitation of being observers in this election. We are grateful of your opinions based on your brief experiences.
- We plead with the international community not continue the isolation of Zimbabwe on the basis of shortcomings of this election. You are fully aware that the punitive measures on the new government will not affect those in leadership but the ordinary Zimbabweans. We believe that it is in the opportunities for Zimbabweans' access to health care, education and basic social services that the nation will flourish and grow a robust democracy.
- We plead with the international community to continue accompanying our new government and civil society and churches with the aim of strengthening these mutually enriching institutions for the maturation of our democracy.

#### **9. To the security sector:**

- We recognize the contribution of the security sector in November 2017.
- We are worried that since November 2017, there remains deep suspicion within and among the different security forces. The church and citizens feel anxious and unsettled fearing the prospect of instability. We plead with the President to urgently constitute a broad-based security services reforms that will guarantee the professionalism of the security forces.

#### **10. To the people of Zimbabwe:**

- The story we just read when we started is a story of a concubine who was chased out of her home because her mistress was no longer comfortable with her. She was expelled so that there could be peace in the home. But on her journey of desperation, she cried and God heard her. God told her to look close by because not very far away there was a fountain of water.
- Two lessons are presented to us by this powerful story. Peace is not going to be achieved in the absence of justice. As long as there are Zimbabweans crying, as long as there are Zimbabweans who feel excluded and marginalized, as long as there are Zimbabweans who are thirsty, as long as there are Zimbabweans who are wondering in the diaspora longing to come home but are afraid of uncertainties, God looks and hears their cry from heaven.
- God is saying the solution is not far away, the fountain is just close by. Let us all open our eyes, we have the solution. The solution lies not in our separation but in our reconciliation on the basis of justice.

MAY GOD BLESS ZIMBABWE

THANK YOU

For further information or comment, please contact

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