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**Zimbabwe's elections**  
**Statement from COSATU**  
**8 April 2008**

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## **COSATU - ZCTU meeting**

The Congress of South African Trade Unions and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions held a meeting this morning, Tuesday 8 April 2008, to receive a report from the ZCTU on the current political crisis in Zimbabwe.

The ZCTU salutes the people of Zimbabwe, especially in the rural areas, for overcoming all the obstacles to prevent them exercising their vote. These included the chaotic state of the voters' roll, restrictions on the media, the cancellation of some political meetings, the denial of access to opposition parties into certain rural areas, village headmen calling people to the polling stations brandishing the voters' roll in order to intimidate them, statements by Generals that they would not salute any opposition party leader, and by President Mugabe that he would not accept defeat. The arrest of the South African pilot had nothing to do with the trumped up charges but was a blatant attempt to stop the MDC from campaigning in the rural areas.



All these factors combined to make many people not to participate in the elections - the turnout was low. It was not a free and fair election, yet despite that the people defied all the odds and have spoken. The urban areas voted overwhelmingly for opposition parties and the rural votes swung dramatically against the ZANU-PF.

The ZCTU had hoped that all the results would have been announced by now. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is not obliged to announce the council, parliamentary and senate elections as they are counted at polling stations, with results posted at each of the polling stations and announced at constituency command centres. The ZEC is however compelled by law to announce the Presidential results.

It appears that when ZANU (PF) saw the results of the presidential vote, they leaned on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to only release the parliamentary and senate results first, in order to give them time to find a way to prove that Morgan Tsvangirai received less than 50%, so that a run-off would be necessary. The independent NGO, the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network has calculated that his vote was between 47% and 49%, with Robert Mugabe receiving 41%-43%. The

MDC through the party agents that were observing at all polling stations put the poll at 50.3%.

The ZANU (PF) claim that no candidate has a majority and that they have been cheated of 4900 votes, through ZEC officials 'under-counting' their vote, though they have not revealed how they know that.

It should be noted that all political parties including the ZANU (PF) and the MDC had party agents in all polling stations. These party agents signed for the results before these were posted in the polling stations. In addition to this ZCTU and other NGOs had monitors who witnessed the counting and the signing in most polling stations.

In the face of the above fact it is very clear that the arrest of ZEC officials is an attempt to force some ZEC officials to change tune. The suspicion is that they will be tortured into "confessing" that they, and other agents, under-counted President Mugabe's votes as claimed by the ZANU (PF) Politburo, which has issued a statement that some of its party agents were bribed by the MDC. This is the reason behind the arrest of the ZEC officials. Yet no party agent and police officers who all signed the V11 and V23 forms which contained the results posted outside the stations were arrested.

The ZANU-PF is also challenging the results in 16 parliamentary wards, just enough, if they succeed, to reverse the results in their favour and give them a majority of seats. It is speculated that the reason why ZANU PF is so desperate to undermine the will of the majority is that Mugabe intended to resign in six months and make way for Emmerson Mnangagwa, which will be impossible if the ZANU-PF does not have a parliamentary majority.

ZANU - PF clearly knows it lost the vote, yet it is still illegal for anyone to say this in public. Even if Mugabe came second, for an incumbent president, that amounts to a defeat.

The ZCTU and many other civil society formations are coming under intense pressure from their constituencies to initiate protest action in the face of the refusal of ZEC to announce the Presidential elections results.

The leadership is aware that such protest may be what President Mugabe is praying for, in that it would give him the excuse to declare a state of emergency and rule by decree. With the history of violence including, the massacre of 20 000 people in Matebeland between 1983 and 1987, this fear is not far fetched.

For that reason the ZCTU is urging all its members to remain calm, as the situation is a cliff-hanger and the popular mood is explosive. The ZCTU is however extremely concerned that in the context of divisions in the uniformed forces and even amongst the war veterans a possibility looms that people may lose patience. No one predicted the Rwanda and Kenya scenarios until they happened.

The ZCTU and COSATU demand that the results be announced. If there is a clear winner that winner must form a government. If there is no winner the election must be rerun, with an increased number of international and local observers.

The federations are preparing themselves for three scenarios. First is that a winner is declared and he forms a new government and begin a process of national unity. The second scenario is that there will be a run-off election. The third, more negative one, is that President Mugabe will rule by decree and in effect stage a coup.

The ZCTU, speaking for all progressive Zimbabweans who want a change to their plight, thanks COSATU and South African civil society for their constant support for the struggle for democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe.

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