

Zambia National Women's Lobby

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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ZNWL CONDEMNS THREATS, ASSAULTS AND OBSTRUCTION OF ELECTION MONITORS

The Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) is deeply concerned by reports of threats, intimidation, physical assaults and the obstruction of accredited election monitors deployed across various districts during the ongoing electoral process.

Our monitors have reported being threatened and, in some instances, physically assaulted while carrying out their legitimate observation duties. Others have been chased away from polling stations and prevented from observing the counting and posting of results, despite their mandate to independently observe the electoral process.

ZNWL strongly condemns these incidents. Election observation is a legitimate and essential component of a credible, transparent and accountable electoral process. Monitors must be allowed to carry out their duties without intimidation, violence or interference.

We are particularly concerned about incidents occurring during the counting and results-posting process, which is a critical stage of the election. The presence of accredited observers and monitors at this stage is important for public confidence and transparency. No individual or group should use threats, violence or intimidation to prevent duly accredited monitors from observing proceedings within the parameters of the law.

ZNWL calls on the Zambia Police Service and all relevant electoral authorities to urgently investigate reported incidents of violence, threats and obstruction and to ensure the safety of election monitors, electoral officials, voters and all other persons participating in the electoral process.

We further call on political parties, candidates, their supporters and all stakeholders to exercise restraint and to respect the rights of accredited election observers and monitors. Political affiliation must not be used as a basis for intimidating or obstructing independent election observation.

ZNWL is documenting the incidents reported by its monitors through established reporting channels and will continue to verify and consolidate information from the field. We urge members of the public and all stakeholders to refrain from spreading unverified information and to allow incidents to be reported through appropriate channels for verification and follow-up.

Our monitors have been reminded to prioritise their personal safety and to immediately report threats or incidents of violence through the established ZNWL coordination and security mechanisms. No monitoring assignment should place a monitor's life or physical safety at unnecessary risk.

ZNWL remains committed to promoting peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible elections and calls on all stakeholders to uphold the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights throughout the conclusion of the electoral process.

The right to observe an election must not become a risk to one's safety.

Issued by: Golden Nachibinga
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