

Zambia Elections- the aftermath



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Kwachaaa, kwachaaa! Kwacha na ngweeee! This was a motivating slogan for matches and rallies during the making of the modern Zambia nation acclaiming a new dawn. We expect another dawn after election and the declaration of the winners in the elections. There are wild jubiliations and anger and agony in some corners of the nation. An election is a political game whose referee is the Electoral Commission instituted to foresee the entire process. So, we have winners and losers on Zambia political scene. The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) chairperson Justice Esau Chulu, in the afternoon of Monday August 15, 2016 announced the results.

The political atmosphere is charged by joy or anger. During campaigns and shortly before elections one would suspect some violence after elections. During elections and after elections I travelled a cross-section of almost 700km. It has been peaceful however cases of violence have been reported. Whichever violence and consequential arrests by the law-enforcing institutions like the police and military, would be a matter of lack of personal discipline due to human nature which one would personally be held responsible and face the law. In some quarters especially some compounds in urban areas violence was reported, but again this would be indiscipline in whichever mode it took.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Candidate Name	Photo	Party	Votes
LUNGU, Edgar C		PF	1,860,877
HICHILEMA, Hakainde		UPND	1,760,347
NAWAKWI, Edith Z		FDD	24,149
BANDA, Andyford M		PAC	15,791
KABIMBA, Wynter M		RAINBOW	9,504
CHISHIMBA, Saviour		UPP	9,221
KAUNDA, Tilyenji C		UNIP	8,928
SINKAMBA, Peter C		GREENS	4,515
MWAMBA, Maxwell		DA	2,378

POLL STATISTICS

Table	Chart	Announced
Total Registered Voters		6,698,372
Total Votes Cast		3,781,505
Total Votes Rejected		85,795
Turnout		56.45%
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During the campaigns various candidates traversed this land in search of support for their success. Each candidate tried to do as much political mileage as possible to sell his/her manifesto. The nine presidential candidates did their best and indeed the electorate rewarded them accordingly. Not all could emerge the winner. Patriotic Front (PF) headed by Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu took the lead of 1,860,877 votes (50.4%) against the main opposition party of Mr. Hakainde Hachilema of United Party for National Development (UPND) with 1,760,347 votes (47.6%). There was one female contender for presidency, Edith Zewelani Nawakwi of Forum Democratic Development (FDD). I opine that she had the best campaign record in manners of debate, political discipline and party manifesto.

During campaigns the electorate kept asking themselves who the best candidate is or who will take it, at whatever level it was. So we have the reality in front of us. The declaration of the winner in presidential race has not gone without dispute. The UPND leader on Friday lodged in a petition in the Constitutional Court of Zambia demanding the nullification of the declaration that President Edgar Lungu and Vice-President Inonge Wina were not validly elected as President and as vice-president-elect of Zambia in last week's polls. UPND in their petition urge that the president and his vice-elect "did not receive more than fifty percent of the valid votes cast". Farther that "a declaration of voters' register was not credible and its non-availability before the election compromised the transparency of the electoral

process". So, Mr. Hakainde Hachilema demand-grain of petition is "a recount, verification and scrutiny of the votes cast in the general election to ascertain the winner of the election and also in order that the same should be done with the rejected votes".

On Friday, August 19, 2016, the Constitutional Court postponed the scheduled inauguration of the president-elect. The petition and postponement are measures of democracy and good governance.

Many state governments and diplomats have sent in their congratulatory messages to Edgar Lungu as a president-elect of Zambia. The Church Council of Zambia (CCZ) and the Conference of the Catholic Bishops in Zambia (CCBZ) has endorsed the results and appreciated the peaceful atmosphere during elections.

It is a bold record of the Zambian political landscape that politicians and the electorate are excellent at "shifting cultivation" or "nomadic pastoralism". This means one quickly shifts to where there is likelihood to harvest better or to graze where there are green pastures. The political scenery is marked by political nomads; there has been a lot of moving from one party to another in Zambian party politics. The "Musela pakaba" (those who escape when it is too hot), as the Bemba say, are many in this land. These people have given-in to the "chameleon challenge" as one author recently termed it.

Since Zambia's growth as a nation, there has been some traces of tribalism or regionalism that affected party loyalty and the pattern of voting for candidates. The political history of Zambia records varying political parties in 1960s. For President Kenneth Kaunda the solution was to enact the one-party-political system. Which is he did and ruled the country for 27 years until 1991 when he lost to Fredrick Chiluba in elections. The ever emphasis on unity in Zambia, as evidenced in its motto: "One Zambia, one nation", alludes to the fact that there is a struggle to unite the citizen. Thus the motto is the urge to that effect. Recently ZNBC, the national broadcaster, adopted the motto as the opening phrase before casting the news. A good reminder to all viewers; unity is essential for national identity and development. The recent ended elections fell into the trap of "regional and tribal voting". President-elect Edgar Chagwa Lungu during his thanksgiving speech at Woodlands stadium last Tuesday, silenced the "Dununa Reverse" PF propaganda song

and stopped mocking the losers in any form, at any time and in any place. This is a sign of a statesman whose agenda is to build a peaceful country, and to unite all citizens irrespective of their political affiliation and party loyalty. However, it remains a political challenge for the PF as a Ruling Party how it will bring on board the people like those of Dundumwezi in Monze district which honoured Lungu with 252 votes compared to Hakainde Hachilema who got 30,810 votes. Lungu's message is loud and clear, "No single vote is too small and two wrongs do not make a right. We have to go back there and give them the reasons why they should vote for us in 2021"

Many citizens and well-wishers of Zambia are concerned as to how the "regional and tribal voting" will be curbed, a recipe for good democracy and national development. An informed concerned citizen, Job Lusanso (Zambia Daily mail 20/08/16), counsels thus:

- 1. By both our political and traditional leaders to change the mind-set of both their political followers and subjects especially in peri-urban and rural areas that every Zambian has a right to be voted to for presidency despite regions or tribes where they come from.*
- 2. Both our political and traditional leaders to embrace every one and educate their followers and subjects that Zambia is one and everyone has equal rights and freedoms of association and assembly in all parts of Zambia.*
- 3. Our citizenry to accept every person to be freely voted for without looking at the tribe or region where one hails from, just like the case was in 1964 to 2001.*
- 4. Our political party leaders to take similar measures as above.*
- 5. All peace loving Zambians, the Church and Civil groups to preach similar message as above.*

It is an essential political barometer that elected leaders at any level must be seen to serve their people and know what affects their lives. Politicians only show interest in the citizenry especially those in the rural areas, during campaigns. They must be servant-leaders; people who listen to the needs of the people and respond with development programmes to alleviate their plight. The citizens have to develop an attitude to own their country. They are the country; it is not the counsellors, parliamentarians or the president who is the country!

For a better Zambia, politicians and everybody concerned about this country has to re-read ingeniously Zambia political history so that we can build a more admired democracy in Zambia. The economy of our country is another challenge. The incoming government has to have equal development plans for all the regions of Zambia and its tribes and language irrespective of their recent voting pattern and party loyalty. Politicians have to stop using violent

language, segregating attitudes and hurling insults to opponents in public. The completion of the mega projects littered across the country will be a litmus-paper for PF government to “walk the talk”. The citizenry is anxious to see regular supply of cheap mealie-meal.

We thank God for peace that reigns in this land, and we continue to campaign for peace in work and prayer.