



## **PRESS STATEMENT**

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is pleased to advise stakeholders that the printing of the voters' roll that will be used on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 in the Harmonised Elections is now complete. The roll contains demographic details of the voter such as the first name, surname, date of birth and ID number together with the photograph of the voter. The election will be polling station specific which means that a voter's name will only appear at a single polling station. The new voters' roll was compiled between September 2017 and June 2018 using biometric technology. This technology allows the capturing of a voter's unique biometric data using fingerprints and photographs. In order to safeguard the integrity of the data that was collected during the biometric voter registration period, the Commission used automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS). AFIS checks the fingerprints of all registrants in the database in order to identify and eliminate multiple registrations. The Commission also used MOD23, a system which verifies the authenticity of a voter's ID number. In addition to using these reliable methods, the Commission invited registrants to inspect their personal details during the voters' roll inspection period from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. Inspection centres were set up throughout the country to allow physical inspection of the voters' roll. In addition, SMS and USSD platforms were created together with a dedicated website for voters' roll inspection. The Commission sent out over 3.2 million bulk SMSs with registration details to those who had supplied their mobile numbers during registration. During the inspection period, registrants were given an opportunity to correct their details or to change their polling station if they had relocated to a different polling area. New registrations were also allowed up to the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2018. During the voters' roll cleaning process using AFIS, MOD23, and textual analysis, the Commission compiled an Exclusion List. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of the June 2018 the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission was instructed by the court to release the voters' roll 'as is'. However, additional work continued on the voters' roll as was mentioned by the Chairperson during one of her press briefs. Some of the work that was looked at include the following:

### **Data corrections**

During the inspection period, **114 691** requests for voter registration data corrections were received and effected.

### **Double registrations**

Section 32 of the Electoral Act 2:13 mandates the Commission to ensure that no one person appears more than once in the voters' roll. The same law allows the Commission to remove any duplicates that are found in the roll. In compiling the 2018 voters' roll, **31 248** duplicates were identified and removed while **39 892** transfers were effected.

### **Dead voters**

In order to identify dead voters on the 2018 voters' roll, the Commission engaged the office of the Registrar General who is responsible for the registration of births and deaths. **8 146** persons who had successfully registered as voters but are now deceased were identified and removed from the voters' roll. The names of people in this category were included in the Exclusion List compiled by the Commission.

### **Duplicate ID numbers**

During the compilation of the 2018 voters' roll, the Commission noticed that several people shared identical ID numbers. Such cases were referred to the office of the Registrar General for verification. Some cases were resolved while a number are still under investigation. In order for the Commission to finalise the voters' roll in time for the elections, **1 667** cases of duplicate ID numbers that are still under investigation were excluded from the voters' roll and compiled in the Exclusion List. **510** of these shared the same ID numbers but with different details while **1 157** shared the same ID numbers and details but are different individuals based on the biometric data.

### **Invalid ID numbers**

Using MOD23, the Commission was able to identify **11 767** invalid ID numbers. These were referred to the office of the Registrar General for investigation. For purposes of elections, all persons with invalid ID numbers were excluded from the voters' roll and included in the Exclusion List.

### **Alleged ghost voters**

It has come to the attention of the Commission that there are media reports alleging the existence of ghost voters on the new voters' roll based on a technical review by anonymous analysts. The Commission has carefully studied these allegations and notes that the anonymous analysts used statistical probability based on the following:

- a. Comparison of the 2013 and 2018 voters' rolls
- b. Comparison of population age structures from the 2012 Zimbabwe census and the 2018 voters' roll
- c. Comparison of population spatial distribution from the 2012 Zimbabwe census and the 2018 voters' roll
- d. Voters with similar names/birthdays/middle ID numbers

The Commission notes that the analysis on which these press reports are based was hastily prepared without due regard to the basic tenets of scholarly writing. The analysis cannot be relied upon and should be viewed as intended to discredit a good voters' roll and in the process cause unnecessary panic and despondency. The Commission has analysed the data and notes that the alleged ghost voters are indeed voters who presented themselves at registration centres and therefore appear in the 2018 voters' roll. These are neither ghosts nor duplicates as alleged.

**a. Comparing the 2013 and the 2018 voters' rolls**

In 2017 the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission made a bold decision to compile a new voters' roll for the 2018 Harmonised Elections because of the shortcomings of the 2013 voters' roll which stakeholders had brought to the attention of the Commission. The Commission and stakeholders were in agreement that the 2013 voters' roll had become defunct because it was not constantly updated to cater for changes in the demography of voters. The Commission therefore finds it very strange for anyone to compare the 2013 and the 2018 voters' rolls when it is well documented that stakeholders had unanimously agreed that the 2013 roll had become difficult to use for any credible election. What is even more shocking is the allegation that the Commission copied dead voters from the 2013 voters' roll. It is difficult to imagine how a dead person from the 2013 roll could have resurrected and showed up at a registration centre between September 2017 and June 2018 to have their photo and fingerprints recorded for the new voters' roll. The Commission would be pleased to receive a list of these dead voters for further investigation. In the absence of receiving such a list we can only conclude that this is a false allegation.

**b. Comparison of age structures**

The Commission appreciates the use of basic demographic techniques such as comparison of population age structures between the 2012 Zimbabwe census and the 2018 voters' roll. However, this type of analysis must be done in the context of the varying methodologies of data collection between censuses and voters' roll compilation. When collecting data for a census, it is not a legal requirement for respondents to produce any civil registration documents such as IDs, birth certificates or certificates of marriage. The basic assumption of using this approach is that a number of people do not have these documents and most importantly because of documented variations between official documents and the actual date of a demographic event (birth or death) especially in less developed countries where civil registration systems face challenges. However, when compiling a voters' roll the law requires that a person must produce valid documents. This then means that

comparing age structures from the census and the voters’ roll is methodologically flawed.

**c. Comparison of population spatial distribution**

Again the Commission would like to advise stakeholders that comparing population spatial distributions from the census and the voter registration exercise shows negligence and a lack of appreciation of the demographics of the country and the methods used in these exercises. Censuses in Zimbabwe are done using the de facto method which records a person at the point they were on the census night as opposed to their usual place of residence. In coming up with the 2018 voters’ roll, the Commission requested voters to provide proof of residence. This means that a person was recorded at a point of their usual residence. It is also important to note that at times voters select where they want to register based on their political interests, for example, a person may register to vote in their town of origin or in their rural area because perhaps they intend to stand as candidates or wish to support their specific local candidate. Moreover, the population distribution of the country has changed a lot in the last 5 years due to migration so much that making comparisons may not give a good picture.

**d. Voters with similar names/birthdays/middle ID numbers**

It is alleged in the said analysis that the Commission ‘stuffed’ the voters’ roll with ghost voters based on the argument that the coincidence of having people with the same name, surname and date of birth is “statistically unlikely”. The Commission has taken note of this and wishes to advise stakeholders that an analysis of the number of voters in the roll with similar surnames shows that 115,446 voters have a Moyo surname. Other examples are shown in the table below.

<b>SURNAME</b>	<b>NUMBER OF VOTERS</b>
MOYO	115446
NCUBE	98744
SIBANDA	92581
NDLOVU	76409
DUBE	67351
MPOFU	38223
NGWENYA	29631
SITHOLE	27651
TSHUMA	22860
NYONI	22619
PHIRI	22591

NKOMO	18761
NYATHI	17938
NDHLOVU	16387
MHLANGA	16160
ZHOU	14258
SHUMBA	12826
SHOKO	12292
BANDA	11870
HOVE	10801
MAPFUMO	10428
MULEYA	10324
GUMBO	10285

The Commission checked all the alleged ghosts and is satisfied that the voters who have the same names and date of births are unique individuals with unique photographs and fingerprints. The Commission would be grateful to show the records of these individuals to stakeholders. The Commission therefore cannot disenfranchise them. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission welcomes factual information that will strengthen electoral processes. However, the spreading of falsehoods and exaggerations solely for the purpose of sensationalism does not benefit the country and is strongly discouraged.

Justice P M Chigumba  
Chairperson  
**Zimbabwe Electoral Commission**