

Zimbabwe Election 2018

25 July 2018

Following an independent audit on our website (www.zimelection.com) in which we invited registered voters to check their details, we have produced a short report based on our findings for the perusal of any stakeholders who may be interested.

About Us

Zimbabwe Election 2018 was formed in February 2017 by a group of citizens who were concerned about the low turnout of voters in previous elections. Our initial goal was to encourage the citizens of Zimbabwe to register to vote using inspirational messages.

Our inspiration comes from the famous words by Nelson Mandela who said:

"It always seems impossible until it's done. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Our mission soon expanded to include voter education and information because we realized many people in Zimbabwe did not know how electoral processes were supposed to be conducted. We also noted that many citizens in Zimbabwe did not know the laws which govern the conduct of elections.

We initially started with a Facebook page, but our platforms soon grew to include a Twitter Account, WhatsApp Distribution list and eventually a website.

Our members chose to remain fully anonymous from the outset and our work is not affiliated with the Government of Zimbabwe, or any Opposition, or Political Party. Throughout our campaign we have encouraged the people of Zimbabwe to keep their vote a secret, as well as to vote for a candidate of their choice without fear or intimidation. We have never asked any of our followers who they intend to vote for and we have never told our followers who to vote for because we believe that the citizens of Zimbabwe should be free to make their own choices.

Our educational campaigns have mostly stayed away from current affairs and news coverage of political parties except where these were absolutely necessary for informational purposes.

Methodology

Our team obtained a copy of the voters roll in electronic format a few days after the official release by ZEC on the 15th of June, 2018. Following a consultation with lawyers we uploaded the voters roll into a secure database on our website and quickly developed and launched a system similar to the one on the official ZEC website, where registered voters could enter their ID number and verify their registration details.

As soon as someone entered their ID number and their details were found, our website automatically marked their details as “Checked”.

When a voter’s details were found, our website also attempted to check for duplicated ID numbers, as well as other people registered at the same physical address. If any of these existed, they would be displayed to the voter for checking also.

We went a step further by providing a two-part survey on our website. In the first part of the survey we asked voters whether their details were correct or wrong, as shown in the example image below.

Respondents who declined to answer the first survey continued to have their details marked as “Checked”. In most cases, people whose details were correct did not bother with the survey. Therefore it’s generally safe to assume that people whose details are “Checked” are correct because someone whose details were not correct would have more than likely taken the survey to bring the anomalies to our attention.

If the respondents selected the correct button, our website would automatically change “Checked” to “Correct” and the voter’s details would be permanently locked to prevent any further changes.

If a respondent selected “Wrong” they would be redirected to the second survey to specify the nature of the error as indicated in the example on the next page:

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Please tell us what's wrong with your details: Choose one that best described the problem.

- There is a spelling mistake on my name.
- My address is NOT correct.
- My date of birth is NOT correct.
- My gender is NOT correct.
- I am registered by I did not find my details. I have my BVR Slip
- I did NOT register, but my details are showing
- I have moved and need to transfer my registration
- I'm not assigned to the right constituency / ward / polling station.
- The system says my ID number is duplicated.
- There are others registered at my address who I don't know
- This person is deceased or the ID is fake.
- Other reason: (Please specify below)

Report

Please note that no changes will be made to the voters roll. We will only forward these issues to ZEC. It's up to them to make changes after receiving necessary documentation and proof.



If the respondent chose not to answer this survey, our website automatically marked their details with “Error”. If respondents selected an answer, our website recorded the answer beside their details and automatically locked their details to prevent further, possibly fraudulent changes to their answers.

It’s important to note that this checking of details and subsequent surveys were voluntary. We encouraged our followers to check their details and answer the questions in the survey, but no one was forced to do so.

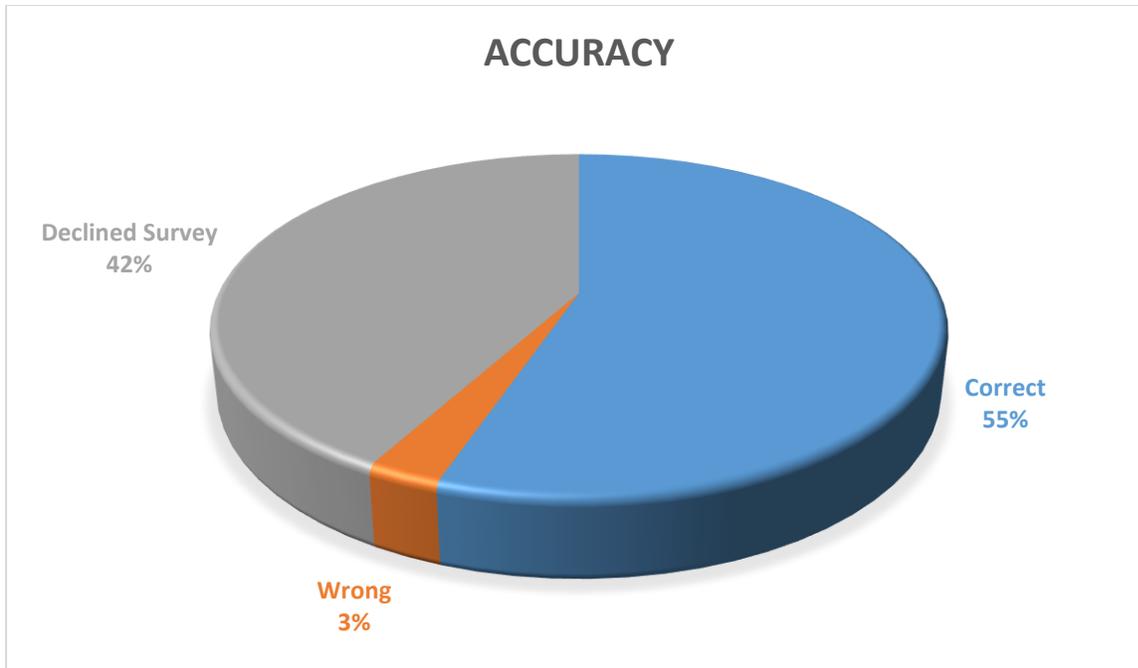
Challenges

Due to the way ZEC entered physical address information, it was difficult for our website to display other people registered at an address with accuracy. Two (2) people reported that there were other people registered at their address who were not supposed to be, but the number may be considerably higher.

Results

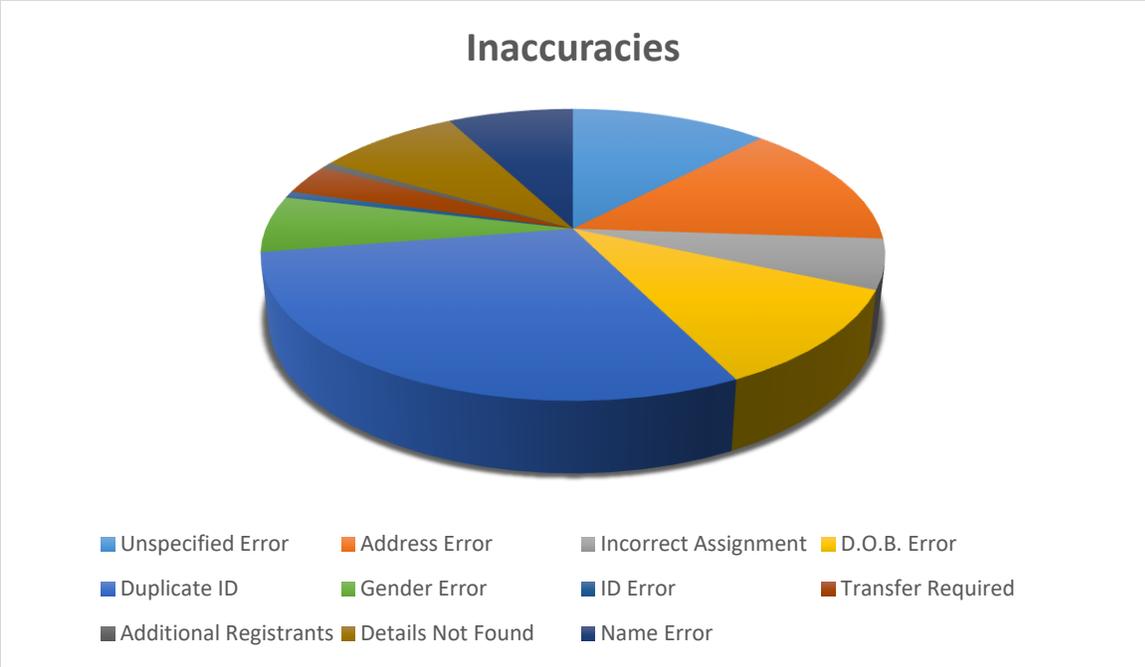
A total of 9,707 people used our website to check their registration details against the voters’ roll which ZEC released to the public. Out of these, our website recorded the following results:

- 4,070 people checked their details, but declined to answer the first survey specifying whether the details were correct or not. In most cases it is safe to assume that the details were correct.
- 5,365 people specified that their details were correct.
- 272 people specified that there was an inaccuracy in their registration details.



The 272 people who reported errors can further be broken down as follows:

- 33 people reported an inaccuracy with their registration details, but declined to answer the second survey specifying the exact nature of the error.
- 38 people reported that their physical address was not correct.
- 15 people reported that they were assigned to the wrong polling station, ward or constituency.
- 30 people reported that their date of birth was not correct.
- 81 duplicate ID numbers were detected by our website, caused by 40 ID numbers.
- 17 people reported that their gender was incorrect, 1 of who advised that they had corrected this issue during inspection period and the error was still appearing on the Final Voters Roll.
- 2 people reported a problem with their ID number.
- 9 people reported that they had moved and needed to transfer their registration.
- 2 people reported that there were other people registered at their address who should not be.
- 24 people reported that they were registered and have a BVR slip, but their details were not on the voters roll. 3 of these people sent us a copy of their BVR slips as proof.
- 21 people reported a spelling mistake on their name.



Zimbabwe Election 2018 did not subject the voters roll to a computer test.

Areas of Concern

Our members would like to express particular concern regarding surname errors as well as people who registered but do not appear on the voters’ roll.

One of our followers gave us permission to use their details as an example.

The owner of ID Number 63-1468280-P43 had his surname entered as Mashavatu. The correct spelling is Mushavatu. This case is cause for concern, because an electoral officer who is checking the voters roll which contains surnames in alphabetical order, will look under “MU” (according to the correct spelling on the ID) but may not find the name because it has been put under “MA”. Errors of this nature may cause many voters to be turned away.

We are also concerned about the high number of people who registered and claim to have a BVR slip, but whose name and details are not appearing on the voters’ roll. 3 out of the 24 people who reported this issue, sent us a copy of their BVR slip as proof of registration. (These are available on request.)