



U.S. EMBASSY IN ZIMBABWE

By U.S. EMBASSY IN ZIMBABWE

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## — U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE – PRESS STATEMENT

MATTHEW MILLER, DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON

The United States is committed to the people of Zimbabwe and their right to choose their leaders in free and fair elections conducted in a transparent manner. We commend those who sought to exercise their right to vote peacefully.

Although the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) has announced results of the country's recent presidential election, multiple observation missions have expressed deep concerns and stated that the country's electoral process did not meet regional and international standards for credibility. For example, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other international electoral observation missions cited problems with transparency, independence, fairness, and credibility at all stages of the electoral process. The United States notes in particular the systemic bias against political opposition during the pre-election period and reports from respected civil society groups that ZEC officials pressured election observers to sign altered polling station result forms. We call on the ZEC to make the disaggregated polling station results publicly available to increase confidence in the result tabulation process.

We also strongly condemn the intimidation and disruption of lawful election observers throughout the electoral period. On August 23 the government arrested staff from respected civil society organizations engaged in lawful election observation in accordance with the Electoral Act. These arrests prevented efforts to independently verify ZEC's announced results, a fundamental component of democratic processes in the region and around the world. Furthermore, threats directed against members of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission are dangerous, and we call upon the Government of Zimbabwe to cease these inflammatory and unacceptable attacks.

These actions belie President Mnangagwa's repeated pledges to respect rule of law, transparency, and accountability. The United States is engaging regional leaders to share our concerns, including what this means for the international community's nascent efforts to reengage the Zimbabwean government. There is much at stake for the people of Zimbabwe and the region. We urge all Zimbabweans to remain peaceful and pursue grievances through established legal channels.