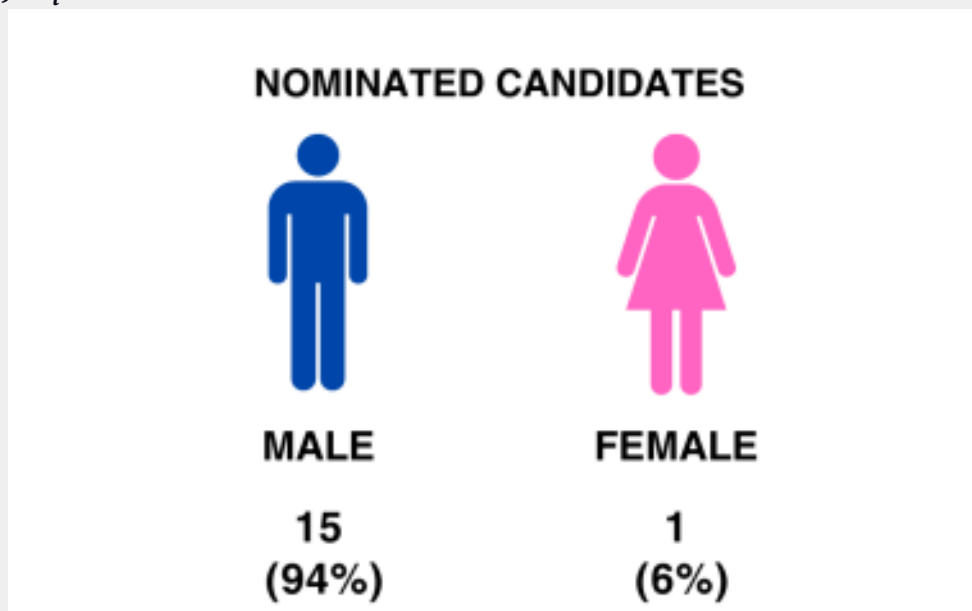


12 February - 18 February 2024

Leadership, Governance and Public Affairs

By- Elections Reveal Troubling Decline in Women's Political Participation in Zimbabwe.

Jacqueline Ndlovu



Only **one** out of **16** candidates that contested in the recent 3 February 2024 by-elections was a woman, sparking alarm over declining female political participation and voter apathy.

This stark outcome, with six male MPs elected across six constituencies namely Chegutu West (Mashonaland West), Goromonzi South (Mashonaland East), Mkoba North (Midlands), Pelandaba-Tshabalala (Bulawayo Metropolitan Province), Seke (Mashonaland East), and Zvimba East (Mashonaland West) constituencies, highlights a troubling trend. The seats became vacant due to the recalls of the MPs who represented the CCC on November 13, 2023.

This all-male outcome echoes observations by the Election Resource Centre (ERC) [Report](#), highlighting a continued decline in women's political participation.

“Of the 16 nominated candidates in the 3 February By-elections, only one was female representing 6% of total nominations. Down from the 12.9% from the 9 December 2023 by-elections and 11% from the 23/24 August 2024 Harmonised elections respectively.”

This trend raises critical questions about the repercussions for women's future electoral engagement. Aspiring female candidates like Nomalanga Ncube and Sinanzeni Gumede expressed discouragement, citing the perception reinforced by these results that politics remains a male-dominated arena.

“Seeing no women elected has discouraged me and other aspiring female candidates, fostering a perception that politics remains a male-dominated domain. This self-fulfilling prophecy can further entrench the underrepresentation of women in parliament. This makes us question the real reason for the Tshabangu recalls,” Nomalanga Ncube from Tshabalala.

The absence of women in parliament risks overlooking critical issues that disproportionately affect them, such as healthcare, education, and gender-based violence. This lack of representation can further marginalize women's voices and concerns. This has further overturned the strides made to have gender parity,” Sinanzeni Gumede said.

ERC reports that voter turnout across the by-elections averaged a low of 23.2%, with a significant urban-rural divide (13.6% vs. 36.3%). Noting a staggering 48.6% drop in turnout compared to the 2023 Harmonised elections. The ERC attributes this apathy to factors like perceived disregard for voter choice by political parties, candidate disqualifications, and a breakdown in trust between the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the electorate.

Commendably the ERC reports that 50% of presiding officers and 57.1% of electoral officers were female. However, this statistic doesn't address the crucial lack of female candidates and elected officials. The by-election results highlight the need for urgent action to address the declining representation of women in Zimbabwean politics. This includes tackling structural barriers to female participation, fostering trust in electoral processes, and empowering women to run for office. Only then can Zimbabwe strive towards genuine inclusivity and responsiveness to the needs of all its citizens.

Councillor Qinisile Nyoni: My 150 days as an elected Councillor

Lorraine Phiri



Gwanda Rural District Council, Councillor Qinisile Nyoni has marked 150 days in office, facing a crucial challenge head-on: apprehending an alleged rapist terrorizing women and girls in Cophthal Block Village, Gwanda Rural District.

"One of the biggest challenges I'm facing is catching a "rapist" who's been targeting women and girls in our area," Nyoni revealed in a recent interview. "Children are walking long distances to school in fear, and in November, this man attacked a group on their way, kidnapping one girl. Thankfully, some children fled and reported to villagers who found her before he could harm her, but the fear remains."

Despite efforts from police and villagers, the perpetrator is still at large. The impact transcends individual attacks, disrupting daily life and livelihoods.

"We stay in a remote area and have to walk long distances to town. Women are now afraid to go to shops or run errands without an escort," Nyoni explained. "Their income and daily routines are affected. This attacker doesn't just assault women; he

steals food from homes and hides in the bushes."

However, Nyoni hasn't been deterred. She actively participated in GBV awareness campaigns, including the 16 Days of Activism, encouraging residents to report such incidents and break the silence.

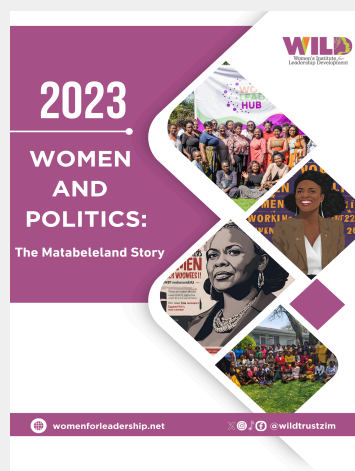
"Being a councillor requires determination, patience, and embracing diversity and inclusion," she shared. "One challenge is that women come forward with needs and visions, but implementing programs can be difficult without funding."

Nyoni has also found success in initiating a burial society. "This community-driven initiative sees residents uniting to provide financial and food assistance to bereaved families in our village, ensuring they can lay their loved ones to rest with dignity," she said proudly.

Councillor Nyoni's story reflects the dedication and challenges faced by local leaders in rural communities. While she has made strides in raising awareness and fostering community support, the persistent threat of the alleged rapist underscores the urgent need to ensure a safe environment for women and girls and resource allocation to empower local authorities like Nyoni to effectively serve and develop their constituents.


Women and Politics: The Matabeleland Story

Check out our recently published compendium called [Women and Politics: The Matabeleland Story](#). Read about the incredible women who defied barriers and shaped Zimbabwe's 2023 Elections.



Election Notice.

Notice of Nomination to fill Party-list Vacancies: City of Bulawayo and Epworth Local Board.



ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION
ELECTORAL ACT [CHAPTER 2:13]

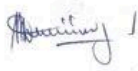
ELECTION NOTICE

**Notice of Nomination to fill Party-list Vacancies:
City of Bulawayo & Epworth Local Board**

THE public is hereby notified, in terms of 39(6) of the Electoral Act [*Chapter 2:13*], that the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) party has nominated registered voters in Column 2 to fill the vacancies in the specified local authorities that occurred following the recall of persons in Column 3 who were members of the said local authorities by virtue of section 277(4) of the Constitution.

Any voter wishing to object to the nomination of each of the persons in Column 1 may lodge them in writing with the Chief Elections Officer, Mahachi Quantum Building, corner Kaguvi and Jason Moyo Avenue, Harare, or post them to P. Bag 7782 Causeway Harare, within a period of 14 days from the date of publication of this notice, setting forth the reasons for the objection.

Local Authority	Nominee	Recalled Person
City of Bulawayo	Furanayi Mercy	Cronje Sarah Cathrine
City of Bulawayo	Mpofu Daisy Velile	Mhizha Tabeth
City of Bulawayo	Moyo Irene	Sibanda Dorcas
City of Bulawayo	Moyo Siboniso	Tshongwe Zibusiso
Epworth Local Board	Manondo Melody	Anna Sande


U. Silaigwana
Chief Elections Officer
ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Zimbabwe's Silent Crisis of Statelessness

Jabulile Siwela



Imagine your life without a birth certificate, ID card, or passport. No voting, no bank accounts, no healthcare, no formal education. This isn't fiction; it's the harsh reality for countless Zimbabweans, especially women and children.

WILD recently held a Community awareness outreach on Access to Documentation in Makokoba, revealing heart-breaking stories and Shedding light on the struggles faced by individuals without proper documentation.

One such individual, Gogo Nyoni, expressed her deep concern for her grandchild who was sent to her without documents, making it difficult for the child to participate in school activities and exams.

“My grand grandchild was sent to me by my grandchild. Omalayitsha said kuthwa

sizokutshiyela umntwana. She has no documents and struggles to participate in a lot of activities at school without a birth certificate. She managed to write grade 7 exams after a struggle and I fear that she may not manage to write form 4 if she does not have a birth certificate,” said Gogo Nyoni.

Another poignant story was that of Sithokozile Ncube, who at 41 years old has never had a birth certificate, leading to barriers in education and employment and now cascading to affect her children.

“I am 41 years old and I have no birth certificate or ID. I have since accepted the pain of being undocumented, I am crying for my children who are now bearing the same brunt. My eldest child, Shantel was forced to also drop out of school as she couldn’t sit for public examinations without documents, I am also failing to get her to vocational training centers as they also demand identity cards,” said an emotional mother who has since accepted her fate but seeming concerned about the future of her four children who are being forced by the circumstances beyond their control to bear the brunt of being undocumented.

Mr. Kenneth Ncube shared the challenges he faces after losing his national identity card, hindering his access to basic social services and financial support from relatives.

“I have been struggling to replace my lost ID, it’s been years now failing to get assistance from the Registrar’s office, and due to my fragile health, I was forced to give up. When I heard WILD would be conducting an awareness outreach I showed up to get assistance.

“Ever since I lost my national identity card, I have been failing to receive funds from my relatives across the country who will be eager to remit funds to me. This has been a struggle for me as I have to rely on other people, opening a bank account is now a dream to me,” lamented Ncube who was close to tears as he narrated.

These are just a few faces in a vast sea of the undocumented in Zimbabwe. Each story is a heart-wrenching testament to the powerlessness and vulnerability that statelessness brings. These narratives underscore the profound impact of being undocumented, from limitations in education to difficulties in accessing services and support. The outreach by WILD serves as a crucial initiative in raising awareness and providing assistance to individuals facing documentation challenges in Makokoba, emphasizing the urgency of addressing these issues to uphold the rights

and dignity of all residents.

Join us as we campaign against the recently Gazetted SI instrument 7 on birth and ID registration fees

WILD firmly believes that lack of money should not be a barrier to access to documentation. Make Birth and ID registration FREE and ACCESSIBLE for ALL! [#EndTheFeeBarrierToATD](#) [#EndStatelessness](#) [#accessdocumentation](#)



**Lack of money should not DENY anyone
identity. Make Birth and ID registration
free and accessible for ALL**

[#EndtheFeeBarrierToATD](#) [#EndStatelessness](#) [#AccessToDocumentation](#)

Women's debt-vulnerability due to Zim's socio-economic state

Yollander Millin

February 2024 brought a grim reality for Claudia, a single mother of three and grandmother to two. Facing backdated debts to the city council and Electricity Company, she was crumbling under the weight of mounting debt. Driven by impossible choices, Claudia had been skipping monthly payments, her maid's job unable to stretch far enough to cover basic needs. Loans from neighbors and relatives, her usual lifeline, had dried up, leaving her trapped in a suffocating debt cycle. Claudia's story is not an anomaly. In Zimbabwe's current socio-economic climate, many women like her find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt. Their meager earnings, often from informal jobs, are simply not enough to cover basic necessities, let alone unforeseen expenses.

The socio-economic state in Zimbabwe has been characterized by a combination of complex factors that contribute to the increased contraction of debt among women. The country has faced a history of economic challenges, including hyperinflation, currency instability, and limited access to formal financial services. These conditions have disproportionately impacted women, resulting in their heightened vulnerability to indebtedness.

"I never imagined I would find myself in this situation. It feels like a constant struggle to keep up with payments and make ends meet. The stress is overwhelming." Claudia said.

Her sentiment resonates with many women who find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt, striving to provide for their families while facing financial insecurity.

Some reasons why women are living in debt

Limited access to formal employment opportunities has been a significant contributing factor to the financial struggles faced by women in Zimbabwe. The unemployment rate in the country has been high, particularly in urban areas, leading many women to pursue informal and unstable sources of income. This unpredictable economic environment leaves women susceptible to financial insecurity and increases their reliance on borrowing to meet basic needs.

Furthermore, traditional gender roles and societal expectations often place the responsibility of caregiving and household management on women. They are subscribed to unpaid care-work and wage inequalities where they are paid less than their male counterparts. This, combined with limited access to education and economic resources, has led to a scenario where women are often the primary

providers for their families, with inadequate support or financial safety nets.

In rural areas, women often engage in agricultural activities as a source of livelihood. However, the impact of climate change, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to modern farming techniques has hampered their agricultural productivity, leading to reduced incomes and an increased reliance on borrowing to sustain their households.

According to Anna, a young woman Gwanda, the social context has forced her to drop out of school as her mother, a widow, is failing to raise enough money for the household upkeep and loans that the family took to cover medical expenses incurred before her father passed away. Anna said debt has really had an impact on her life:

"Debt has limited my options and opportunities. I want to pursue further education, but the financial strain makes it seem impossible. It's like being stuck in a maze with no clear way out."

For young women and girls like Anna, the consequences of debt extend beyond financial constraints, as they affect their aspirations and ambitions as well.

The lack of comprehensive financial literacy programs and resources tailored to women further exacerbates their susceptibility to debt. Without the necessary knowledge and tools to make informed financial decisions, women may find themselves ensnared in high-interest loans and exploitative lending practices, further deepening their debt burden.

Additionally, the broader socio-economic instability in Zimbabwe, marked by fluctuations in the value of the local currency and persistent inflation, has eroded the purchasing power of households, making it increasingly challenging for women to make ends meet without resorting to borrowing. Some women are paid in the local currency while their bills are pegged in foreign currency. This makes it especially difficult for them to thrive as their mental, emotional and financial health is compromised.

These interwoven factors create a challenging environment for women in Zimbabwe, leaving them particularly vulnerable to debt. Addressing these structural issues, like limited employment opportunities, gender inequality, and inadequate resources, is crucial to creating a more equitable and inclusive economic landscape for all. This can be made possible by the collective effort of Government, CSOs, Corporates and the community who can:

- Promote formal employment opportunities for women.
- Combat gender inequalities and ensure fair wages.
- Invest in infrastructure and climate-smart agriculture for rural women.
- Provide financial literacy programs and resources tailored to women.
- Stabilize the economy to protect household purchasing power.

Health

Why National Condom Day Matters in Zimbabwe

Thabiso Sibanda

Every February 13th, Zimbabwe joins the global community in observing the International Condom Day (IDC). This seemingly simple day carries immense significance for the nation, serving as a crucial reminder of the vital role condoms play in safeguarding public health and individual well-being. The day serves as a reminder of the importance of safe sex practices and highlights the crucial role that condoms play in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unplanned/ unwanted pregnancies and HIV transmissions.

HIV/AIDS: A Persistent Challenge

Zimbabwe continues to grapple with a significant HIV/ AID, making condom use critical for curbing transmission. According to the Zimbabwe Population-based HIV

Impact Assessment survey (ZIMPHIA 2020) the prevalence of HIV among adults was 12.9 percent, which corresponds to approximately 1.23 million adults in Zimbabwe living with HIV in 2020. Generally, the survey found that HIV prevalence was higher among women than men (15.3 percent vs. 10.2 percent). The 2023 UNFPA report further notes that although HIV prevalence has declined from 26.5 percent in 1997 to 14.3 percent to date, it retains the fifth highest HIV prevalence rate in the world. Cognisant of the mentioned statistics, this day emphasizes the responsibility individuals have in protecting themselves and their partners

Beyond HIV: Safeguarding Reproductive Health

Condoms are essential in preventing unintended and early pregnancies. The MICS Survey highlighted that 50 % of the adolescent pregnancies that occur in the country are unintended and that a quarter of them result in unsafe abortions, which in turn contribute to maternal mortality. Notable is the fact that in as much as various contraceptive commodities and services are key in pregnancy prevention, condoms remain the mainstay of dual protection. Therefore raising awareness and creating demand for the use of condoms asserts the promotion and recognition of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) as essential in empowering individuals to make informed choices about their sexual health and reproduction.

Empowering Choices, Promoting Equality:

Encouraging condom use amongst women promotes gender equality and bodily autonomy by empowering them to negotiate safer sex practices with their partners. It helps shift the responsibility of protection from just one partner to both parties, promoting mutual respect and communication in relationships. By advocating for condom use, women are empowered to prioritize their health and well-being. It encourages a proactive approach to sexual health and reinforces the importance of self-care and self-advocacy.

Beyond Awareness: A Call to Action

Importantly, we cannot overlook the important role played by the Ministry of Health and Child Care , National AIDS Council , the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council , UN Agencies (UNFPA , UNAIDS . UNICEF , UN WOMEN , UNESCO) and CBOs for their sterling work in generating demand for condom use, promoting condom distribution and supporting steering the national condomize campaign.

Cholera Outbreak Situational Analysis: 8 February 2024

As at 8 February 2024, Zimbabwe has recorded 23 409 suspected cholera cases, 2 447 confirmed cases, 22 695 recoveries, 71 Confirmed deaths and 444 suspected deaths, according to the Ministry of Health and Child Care.

The Oral Cholera vaccination is currently ongoing in Cholera hotspots. Since the launch of the Oral Cholera Vaccination campaign on 29 January 2024, vaccinated figures for Harare stand at 239 113.

MoHCC, Cholera incident Manager, Dr. Isaac Phiri said, “ Gutu which is another hotspot so far had vaccinated 51 305 and Mwenezi had 59 831 vaccinations. We are happy with the uptake in the districts that have been receiving the vaccines.”

“To this end, no side effects have been recorded and the vaccination is running smoothly.”

Province	Cumulative Suspected Cases (New)	Cumulative RDT+ for Screening (New)	Cumulative Culture Confirmed (New)	Cumulative Recovered Cases (New)	Cases (In-Care)	Cumulative Culture Deaths (New)	Cumulative Suspected Deaths (New)
Bulawayo	29(0)	15(0)	4(0)	26(1)	2	0(0)	1(0)
Chitungwiza	1 784(12)	290(0)	53(0)	1 746(18)	5	9(0)	24(0)
Harare	7 955(67)	8(0)	670(0)	7 872(66)	15	4(0)	64(0)
Manicaland	5 936(15)	40(0)	1127(6)	5 765(14)	19	35(0)	117(1)
Mash Cent	1 853(51)	282(0)	102(8)	1 710(73)	70	2(0)	71(2)
Mash East	860(19)	465(19)	143(0)	840(18)	11	2(0)	7(0)
Mash West	1 058(11)	610(11)	108(0)	990(11)	26	3(0)	39(0)
Masvingo	2 653(18)	105(0)	39(0)	2 523(20)	43	11(0)	76(4)
Mat North	261(0)	65(0)	30(0)	253(0)	2	0(0)	6(0)
Mat South	443(0)	85(0)	154(0)	435(0)	0	5(0)	3(0)
Midlands	577(8)	90(0)	17(0)	535(7)	6	0(0)	36(0)
Total	23 409(201)	2 055(30)	2 447(14)	22 695(228)	199	71(0)	444(7)

Five Basic Cholera Prevention Steps

To Prevent Cholera you should wash your hands often and take steps to ensure your food and water are safe for use. Following these simple steps greatly reduces your risk of getting cholera in areas where cholera is spreading.

CHOLERA

Five Basic Prevention Steps

To prevent cholera, you should wash your hands often and take steps to ensure your food and water are safe for use. Following these simple steps greatly reduces your risk of getting cholera in areas where cholera is spreading:



1 Be sure you drink and use safe water.

- Use bottled water to brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, and make ice or beverages.
- If bottled water is not available, use water that has been properly boiled, chlorinated, or filtered using a filter that can remove bacteria.
- Use bottled water with unbroken seals.



How to Make Water Safe

Water from pipes, drinks sold in cups or bags, and ice may not be safe. If you think your water may not be safe—treat it with a chlorine product, boil it, treat with bleach, or filter it.

Treat with Chlorine Product

- Treat your water with one of the locally available chlorine treatment products and follow the label instructions.

Or Boil it

- If a chlorine treatment product is not available, boiling is an effective way to make water safe. Bring your water to a rolling boil for 1 minute. Note: Boiled water is at risk for re-contamination if not stored and used safely.

Or Treat with Bleach

- If you cannot boil water, treat water with household bleach. Add 8 drops of household bleach for every 1 gallon of water (or 2 drops of household bleach for every 1 liter of water) and wait 30 minutes before drinking.

Or Filter it

- If filtering, use a device with a pore size less than or equal to 0.3 microns and treat the water with a disinfectant such as chlorine, chlorine dioxide, or iodine.
- Always store your treated water in a clean, covered container.

2 Wash your hands often with soap and safe water.

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before and after eating food or feeding your children.
- After using the toilet.
- After cleaning your child's bottom.
- After taking care of someone who is sick with diarrhea.



If you don't have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.

CS 304946-A

3 Use toilets.

- Use toilets or safely managed sanitation facilities to get rid of feces (poop). This includes disposal of children's poop.
- Wash hands with soap and safe water after going to the bathroom.



If you don't have access to a toilet:

- Poop at least 30 meters (98 feet) away from any body of water (including wells) and then bury your poop.
- Dispose of plastic bags containing poop in latrines or at collection points if available, or bury it in the ground.
- Do not put plastic bags in chemical toilets.
- Dig new latrines or temporary pit toilets at least a half-meter (1.6 feet) deep and at least 30 meters (100 feet) away from any body of water.

4 Boil it, cook it, peel it, or leave it.

- Cook food well, keep it covered, eat it hot, and peel fruits and vegetables.
- Eat foods that have been thoroughly cooked and are still hot and steaming. Be sure to cook seafood, especially shellfish, until it is very hot all the way through.
- Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled.



5 Clean up safely.

- Clean food preparation areas and kitchenware with soap and treated water and let dry completely before reuse.
- Bathe and wash clothes or diapers 30 meters (100 feet) away from drinking water sources.
- Clean and disinfect toilets and surfaces contaminated with poop: clean the surface with a soap solution to remove solids; then disinfect using a solution of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water.
- When finished cleaning, safely dispose of soapy water and dirty rags. Wash hands again with soap and safe water after cleaning and disinfecting.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Opportunities

Are you ready to embark on an exciting journey towards new opportunities and personal growth? Listed below are interesting opportunities you could apply for. Do not hesitate - Seize the opportunities and apply today!

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1. [L'OREAL UNESCO for Women in Science](#)
2. [4th Pan African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development](#)
3. [Master of Leadership and Governance](#)
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5. [World Bank Junior Professional Associates Program](#)
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7. [Internet Society Early Career Fellowship](#)

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