



**JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park

P.O Box 37774, 10101 Lusaka, Zambia

**Email:** [jctr@jesuits.org.zm](mailto:jctr@jesuits.org.zm)

[www.jctr.org.zm](http://www.jctr.org.zm)

**Tel:** +260 211 290410 | **Fax:** +260 211 290759

## Press Release

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### **TURN OUT IN LARGE NUMBERS ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**

One important ingredient of democratic consolidation in Zambia is the holding of regular multi-party elections. However, it should be noted that holding of regular multi-party elections is one thing, while institutionalization and consolidation of democratic governance and ensuring political stability and a peaceful succession of national leadership is quite another. Every time we hold general elections, we have an opportunity as a country to demonstrate to the world that democracy in Zambia has come of age through a well-entrenched democratic practice and culture where the people freely, fairly and peacefully express their wish as to who should govern the country at any given time, and that the will of the people is respected by the contesting candidates.

At the heart of the effectiveness of elections and their value to democratic culture and practice lies the choice and use of preferred electoral systems. In Zambia, elections to the office of the President are conducted under a majoritarian electoral system, where the winning candidate must receive more than fifty percent of the valid votes cast. It is widely accepted that the correlation between the electoral system on the one hand and democratic governance and stability on the other is not straightforward. However, the extent that electoral systems serve to distribute power and representation in order to define the legitimacy and political mandate of rulers, do have a bearing (direct and indirect) on democratic governance and stability.

Since the onset of the multi-party democracy in Zambia in 1991, Zambia has made tremendous strides in nurturing democratic governance and stability. As we head to the polls on 12<sup>th</sup> August, JCTR would like to call upon all Zambians to jealously safeguard the gains we have achieved so far in consolidating democratic governance and political stability. All eligible voters must turn out in large numbers to exercise their right to vote. Every candidate participating in these elections must do so with high degree of dignity, decency and responsibility. JCTR is appealing to the two leading presidential contestants to uphold human dignity, protect sanctity of life, and safeguard peace, socio-political and economic stability of this country regardless of the outcome of the elections. Whoever will come out a loser must respect the will of the Zambian people with dignity and decency. Similarly, whoever will come out a winner must respect the outcome with humility, sense of duty and service.

Finally, JCTR would like to call upon the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to exercise a high degree of professionalism and competency in implementing the electoral process and in conducting the forth coming elections. Article 45(2) of the Republican Constitution provides that the electoral process and system of administering elections shall ensure: (a) that elections are free and fair; (b) that elections are free from violence, intimidation and corruption; (c) independence, accountability, efficiency and transparency of the electoral process; (d) a simple and practical system of voting and tabulating votes; and (e) timely resolution of electoral disputes. May God bless Mother Zambia.

Fr. Alex Muyebe, S.J., JCTR Executive Director. For further clarifications contact the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) on 0954755319. Email: [media.information@jctr.org.zm](mailto:media.information@jctr.org.zm). Martin Mwamba Road, Plot 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park – Lusaka. P. O. Box 37774 Lusaka