

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The people of Zanzibar turned out in large numbers to vote in their second multiparty democratic elections since independence, waiting in long queues for hours and generally remaining peaceful and orderly. We commend them for their extraordinary patience, maturity and dignity.
- Unfortunately, the conduct of the elections fell far short of minimum standards. The failure to deliver ballot papers, which prevented some stations from opening until very late and disrupted voting even at those which had opened, was so serious that it led to the cancellation of the elections in 16 constituencies, representing more than 40 per cent of the registered voters, and the suspension of election operations and removal of ballot boxes in the other 34 constituencies. The cause was either deliberate manipulation or gross incompetence. Since its announcement ZEC has itself indicated that there might have been other, possibly very serious shortcomings, which are being investigated by the police.
- The Group believes that only a properly conducted and fresh poll, throughout Zanzibar, undertaken by a Commission reformed in line with international good practice, with its independence guaranteed in both law and practice and a restructured and professional secretariat, can create confidence in and give credibility to Zanzibar's democracy.
- We also note that arrangements prior to polling day also fell short of the required standard. In particular:
 - there were serious doubts about the adequacy and credibility of the voters' register, which will only be dispelled once there has been a fresh registration exercise, conducted on the basis of a consensus with the political parties;
 - the presence of a government official (the sheha) at registration centres to, in effect, screen qualified persons, was felt to be inappropriate: it warrants review;
 - the residence qualifications for registration provoked considerable concern and should be reviewed;
 - voter education was inadequate and should be improved prior to the next elections;
 - the imbalance in reporting by the state-owned media must be addressed, because at present it confers an unfair advantage on the ruling party: the principles of independence, editorial freedom and equality of access need to be upheld;
 - the arrangements for the involvement of the political parties and civil society were inadequate and will need to be strengthened for the future;
 - while many police officers exercised their responsibilities discreetly on polling day, the behaviour of elements of the police force prior to the elections themselves often fell far short of international standards; we are particularly concerned with the use of live rounds against unarmed demonstrators and the use of beatings; we believe that the relevant authorities will want to review all aspects of police operations at all stages of the electoral process to ensure that in future they adhere only to the highest standards;

- there was concern at the use of state resources by the ruling party during the campaign: we urge the adoption of arrangements to prevent the abuse of the advantages of incumbency.
- In this context, the need to review relevant constitutional and legislative provisions, as well as electoral arrangements, should also be addressed.

Recommendations

Action concerning procedural shortcomings should be taken in parallel with the reform of the election management machinery. In particular:

- special attention should be paid to transparency in election organisation;
- the time-frame for key stages in the electoral process should be clearly set out and be provided for in the regulations, and a formal and well worked out timetable – addressing matters such as training and the distribution of materials – should be adopted;
- there needs to be proper management of logistics;
- the practice of writing the voter's Registration Certificate number on the ballot paper counterfoil, and the ballot paper itself, should be discontinued: it undermines confidence in the secrecy of the ballot;
- the procedures for applying indelible ink need to be revised, to ensure that there are no loopholes in the system;
- the obligation on Presiding Officers to issue copies of the authenticated Statement of Result to party agents should be provided for in the law;
- the training of election officials needs to be improved, especially given the inconsistencies in the implementation of voting procedures, and more adequate training provided to party agents;
- we would advise that there should be a Code of Conduct regarding the behaviour of political parties and regulation and enforcement mechanisms to deal with the abuse of the advantages of incumbency;
- arrangements for the public display of the provisional voters' list should be improved so that citizens can more easily check that their names are included;
- copies of the provisional and final voters' lists should be made available to the political parties, free of charge;
- while many polling facilities were adequate, the number of stations in a given centre should be kept to a manageable level and, because there were many stations which were too small, the selection of venues for voting could be reviewed;
- arrangements should be made for effective coverage by domestic observers.