



Transforming Youth, Transforming Zimbabwe

NAYO STATEMENT ON ZEC CALL FOR PROOF OF RESIDENCE

The National Association of Youth Organizations (NAYO) an umbrella association of youth organizations in Zimbabwe and the NANGO Youth Sector Chair received with shock and reservation the decision by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to re-introduce proof of residence as a requirement for voter registration for 2018 elections.

NAYO notes with concern how ZEC arrived at such an inconsiderate decision that seriously militates against youth rights, in particular their right to vote and their general rights as enshrined in Section 20 among other provisions of the National Constitution. It is general knowledge that young people are at the receiving end of the economic challenges; as evidenced by the rising unemployment rate. In that regard, the majority of the youth who constitute 67 percent (%) of the total population are not owners of properties, not employed, they do not have bank accounts and most of the youth don't have a place where they call their own home. With that background, of a very troubled generation of young people in Zimbabwe, who are being patriotic and determined to participate in national processes, ZEC wakes up in the morning to re-introduce the idea of a proof of residence to be able to attain the right to vote.

We therefore call for the following action points:

- An immediate reversal of the idea to re-introduce the proof of residence by ZEC- as this brings more questions to their independence.
- To adopt the mechanism were people in need of registration to only affirm to a registration officer their physical address without providing proof of residence.
- We call for ZEC to Leave No Youth Behind in electoral processes by violating youth rights to vote through the introduction of segregatory measures on voter registration.
- We call for the Electoral Act to be harmonized to the national constitution and for ZEC to consider stakeholder consultations before making key decisions that affect the people, especially the vulnerable groups such as youth.
- We call all young people not to be deterred by such a pronouncement, attempt and a potential discriminatory practice by ZEC and we call for ZEC to re-look at the proof of residence requirement.

NAYO through the Leave No Youth Behind Campaign National Coordinating Committee will do all what it can to approach ZEC, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) if need be the Courts as a way to protect the rights of young people to vote and participate freely in national processes.

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