



In brief: Zimbabwe – 2013 elections

Standard Note: SN06695

Last updated: 5 August 2013

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Section International Affairs and Defence Section

Zimbabwe held presidential and parliamentary elections on 31 July 2013. They resulted in overwhelming [victory](#) for President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and shattering [defeat](#) for Prime Minister [Morgan Tsvangirai](#) and his Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T). The elections bring to an end over four years of 'power-sharing' under the February 2009 Global Political Agreement (GPA) that followed the violence-ridden elections of 2008, which were stolen by ZANU-PF.

The 2013 elections were certainly extremely flawed – it had been obvious for some time that they would be – but there is no escaping the fact that President Mugabe and ZANU-PF have comprehensively outmanoeuvred their rivals since the GPA was agreed, in the process rebuilding a domestic political constituency on promises of 'indigenising the economy', combined with an often ruthless reassertion of a self-proclaimed 'right to rule'. As one analyst, James Muzondidya, put it in an excellent [book](#) published earlier this year:

The ZANU-PF strategy, consistent with its hegemonic political culture, has been to engage in cosmetic political and economic reforms that will not result in further democracy or result in a loss of its historic monopoly on power [...] Indeed, over the last four years, ZANU-PF has kept the strategic doors to its power, such as the security sector and the mining and agricultural industries, firmly closed.

While acknowledging the major constraints that the opposition faced under the GPA, Muzondidya is highly critical of its performance, viewing its top leadership as often having been naive and noting that a significant number of MDC-T councillors at the municipal level became embroiled in corruption scandals, damaging the party's claim to represent change.

With the African Union and the Southern African Development Community observer missions both provisionally endorsing the elections, albeit with minor reservations, Western countries – who were prevented from sending observer missions – now face a dilemma about how to respond beyond saying, as they already have, that the elections were flawed and lacked credibility. In particular, the European Union and the US have to decide whether to reverse the relaxation of 'sanctions' that has occurred over the last year or so. There will be a temptation to re-engage with ZANU-PF. African leaders, not least President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, who appears to want to put Zimbabwe's protracted crisis behind him, will be encouraging them to do so. Equally, civil society groups both within Zimbabwe and internationally will be putting pressure on them to resist this temptation.

What happens next? Morgan Tsvangirai, whose leadership is now being questioned, has said that there will be a court challenge of the result. One MDC-T figure, Roy Bennett, has talked about launching a campaign of [non-violent resistance](#), arguing it is 'now or never' for the party. While the situation is extremely fluid and unpredictable, it is difficult to see how the

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MDC-T can successfully overturn the election results, whether in the courts or on the streets. Escalating violence cannot be ruled out. There have already been [reports](#) of attacks by ZANU-PF cadres against MDC-T supporters. The security forces are on a high state of alert.

Collected together below are links to: official statements on the elections, selected recent media coverage and analysis.

Official statements

[The MDC Statement On the election process](#), 2 August 2013

[Southern African Development Community \(SADC\) Observer Mission Preliminary Statement](#)
2 August 2013

[African Union Election Observation Mission to the Harmonised Elections of 31 July 2013 in the Republic of Zimbabwe Preliminary Statement](#), 2 August 2013

[Joint CSOs Statement on Zimbabwe's July 31st, 2013 Harmonised Elections](#), 2 August 2013

[Foreign Secretary statement on Zimbabwe election results](#), 3 August 2013

[Declaration by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the EU on the elections in Zimbabwe](#), 3 August 2013

[Zimbabwe's Presidential Election](#), Statement by US Secretary of State John Kerry, 3 August 2013

[President Tsvangirai's statement to the press after the MDC national council meeting](#), Harare, MDC-T website, 3 August 2013

Media and analysis

[Review](#) by T. Scarnecchia on the 'African Arguments' website of B. Raftopoulos (ed), *The hard road to reform: the politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement* (Harare, 2013)

International Crisis Group, ["Zimbabwe's Elections: Mugabe's Last Stand"](#), Africa Briefing No. 95, 29 July 2013

["Zimbabwe: fury follows calm elections"](#), *Africa Confidential*, 1 August 2013 (available free on 5 August 2013)

["Zimbabwe: Complacency Cost MDC-T—Analysts"](#), *Standard*, 4 August 2013

["Mugabe wins again in Zimbabwe, leaving rival greatly weakened"](#)
["Zimbabwe: SADC Civil Society Observer Mission says elections not credible"](#), Action for Southern Africa, 2 August 2013

["Mugabe win could force West to lift sanctions"](#), *Guardian*, 2 August 2013

["Massive vote fraud unearthed"](#), *Daily News*, 1 August 2013

[For further background, see also Library Note SN06044, [Zimbabwe: recent political developments](#), September 2012]