



European Union Election Observation Mission

Tanzania – General Elections 2015

Press release

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EU Election Observation Mission presents its final report on the 25 October elections including recommendations for future elections in Tanzania

Dar es Salaam, 02 June 2016

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) for Tanzania's 2015 General Elections today submitted to Tanzanian partners its final report containing proposals for reforms to improve the electoral process and enhance voter confidence in future elections.

The 25 October 2015 general elections, held in the United Republic of Tanzania, showed the will of the Tanzanian people to adhere to the constitutional framework and to respect democratic principles. Both the Union and Zanzibar elections of 25 October were vigorously contested and largely well managed. The electoral management bodies showed sufficient levels of preparedness and competence in conducting key steps in organising the elections, in the run-up to and during election day.

There were, however, certain shortcomings that should be addressed concerning both the electoral framework and the administration of the electoral process by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC). Furthermore, the electoral management bodies did not provide for full transparency regarding their decision-making processes.

The positive assessment of the credibility of the conduct of elections on election day applied also to Zanzibar. Following the ZEC decision to annul the Zanzibar election results, the EU EOM and other international observer missions in a joint statement expressed their great concern and requested the ZEC provide evidence to justify this unprecedented decision. Such evidence has never been presented. The EU EOM did not observe the 20 March 2016 re-run in Zanzibar as it considered the conditions were not conducive to inclusive, genuine and credible elections.

The Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission, Ms Judith Sargentini, a Member of the European Parliament, returned to Dar es Salaam this week to present the final report to the NEC, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, political parties and national observer groups.

The recommendations in the report, some of which were also made in 2010, include the right of independent candidates to stand for any Union or Zanzibar election; the introduction in law of the right to challenge presidential election results; the right of political parties to register electoral coalitions; the revision of the Cybercrimes Act 2015; the development of a permanent independent structure of the NEC at regional level, and the reform of the appointment procedure for election commissioners of NEC and ZEC; and a review of the voter registration process in Zanzibar to ensure greater inclusivity and voter confidence.

"I am very pleased to present our final report today as it brings together the findings of all our observations over the three-month period the mission was in Tanzania, as well as comprehensive recommendations for future elections. The European Union remains committed to work with Tanzanian partners on strengthening the democratic process of the country, and will continue to take a keen interest in electoral reform here in the coming months and years," said Ms Sargentini at a press conference in Dar es Salaam.

The report makes key recommendations for consideration by authorities, the election management bodies and other election stakeholders. They include the following:

Legal Framework:

- The introduction of the right to stand as an independent candidate for any election in the Union or Zanzibar;
- The establishment in law of the right to petition presidential election results;
- The Cybercrimes Act 2015 should be applied proportionately so as to protect freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial;

Election Administration:

- A review of constituency boundaries to ensure greater equality of the vote;
- A permanent independent structure of the NEC at regional level;
- Changes to the appointment procedure for commissioners of NEC and ZEC so as to increase confidence in their independence;

Voter Registration:

- A longer period for the display of Union and Zanzibar voters' lists;
- A review of the Zanzibar voter registration process to ensure greater confidence and inclusivity;

Voter Education:

- Well-planned and timely executed voter education initiatives from the election commissions;

Media:

- The transformation of the Tanzania and Zanzibar Broadcast Corporations into public service broadcasters;
- The amendment of the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) Act 2003 to ensure the independence of the TCRA;

Voting, counting and the tabulation of results:

- Improved training for electoral officers and polling station staff on procedures;

Complaints and Appeals:

- Decisions of the NEC and the ZEC should be able to be challenged in court throughout the entire process. Aggrieved parties should not have to wait until the announcement of results to seek recourse to justice.

The EU EOM was present in Tanzania between 11 September and 8 December 2015, following invitations from the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the National Electoral Commission and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission.

In total, the mission deployed 141 observers across the country from all 28 EU Member States, as well as Norway, Switzerland and Canada, making it the largest international observation mission for the elections. The mission assessed the extent to which the electoral process complied with international and regional commitments for elections, as well as with Tanzanian law.

The final report is available at: www.eueom.eu/tanzania2015