

ZIMBABWE

Dates of Elections: 14 February 1980 \
27-29 February 1980 /MHouse of Assembly)
19 March 1980 (Senate)

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for the first Parliament of Zimbabwe, enabling effect to be given to the proposals for a new Constitution, and the proposals for the implementation of that Constitution, which were tabled at the 1979 Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House, London.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Zimbabwe is bicameral, consisting of a 40-member Senate and a 100-member House of Assembly. The maximum term of both Houses is 5 years as from the date on which Parliament first meets after a general election. This period may be extended if Zimbabwe is at war or if a state of public emergency exists.

Electoral System

The electoral system — such as defined in the Constitution and Electoral Act of 1979 but which was simplified for this first poll (see the transitory provisions below) — is the following:

Any citizen who is at least 18 years of age, resident in an electoral constituency, not disqualified due to absence from that constituency for a period of 12 months and registered on the Common Roll or the White Roll, is entitled to vote. Disqualified are the insane and mentally deficient; persons incapable of managing their own affairs; those convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment (or the subject of preventive detention) for at least six months, during the imprisonment and for five years after discharge therefrom; and persons convicted of an electoral offence, for the period during which they are declared to be disqualified.

There are 80 Common Roll constituencies and 20 White Roll constituencies. A Black person may not be registered as a voter on the White Roll. A White person may be registered on the White Roll and the Common Roll.

Persons having good reason to believe that they will not be in their constituency on polling day or that they will be prevented from attending a polling station on account of ill-health, infirmity or duty as a member of a disciplined force, may vote by post.

All qualified electors who have attained the age of 40 and have been ordinarily resident in Zimbabwe for not less than 10 years during the immediately preceding 20 years are eligible for election as Senators if enrolled as voters on the Common Roll (in relation to Black Senators) or on the White Roll (in relation to White Senators). The office of Senator is deemed incompatible with the holding of public office, except in the case of Ministers or Deputy Ministers; members of the Defence Forces or reserve forces of the Police Force whose services are not wholly in the employ of the State; and persons holding any office for which no remuneration is provided other than payment of travelling or subsistence allowances. A Senate candidature must be supported by not less than 30 and not more than 50 persons enrolled, as the case may be, on the Common Roll or White Roll. If the candidate contests a seat of a Senator Chief (see below), he must himself be a Chief and nominated and seconded by Chiefs, both of whom are members of the appropriate electoral college.

All qualified electors who have attained the age of 21 years and have been ordinarily resident in Zimbabwe for not less than five years during the immediately preceding 20 years are eligible for election to the House of Assembly. Black persons enrolled as voters on the Common Roll may be elected as Common Roll constituency members, while White persons enrolled as voters on the White Roll may be elected as White Roll constituency members. Incompatibilities are the same as for Senators. House of Assembly candidates must be supported by not less than 10 and not more than 20 persons registered in the same constituency.

Of the 40 Senators, 14 are elected by an electoral college consisting of the House of Assembly members chosen by the 80 Common Roll constituencies; 10 by an electoral college consisting of the House of Assembly members chosen by the 20 White Roll constituencies; 5 (Chiefs) by an electoral college consisting of those Chiefs in Matabeleland who are members of the Council of Chiefs; 5 (Chiefs) by an electoral college consisting of those Chiefs in Mashonaland who are members of the Council of Chiefs; and 6 are appointed by the President of the Republic on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Election of House of Assembly members is carried out in the course of one ballot. Each Assembly or Senate candidate must make a deposit of Z\$ 100 or Z\$ 200, respectively. This sum is reimbursed if the candidate is elected or obtains at least one-fifth of the number of votes cast for the successful candidate (Assembly) or the candidate elected with the lowest number of votes (Senate). In Common Roll constituencies, Assembly members are elected by simple majority. In White Roll constituencies, electors express their preferences among the candidates on the ballot paper. When there are two candidates, the one obtaining the most first preference votes is elected, provided he thus wins the absolute majority of votes. If this majority is not attained, the least-favoured candidate is eliminated and his votes are allotted to the candidates who received second preferences on the ballots of the eliminated candidate; this process is continued until an absolute majority is reached.

Senate or House of Assembly vacancies are filled through by-elections held 14 to 28 days after the vacancy was officially recorded.

Transitory Provisions

As earlier indicated, the electoral provisions described above were somewhat relaxed and simplified for the first general elections of February 1980. As a result, citizens fulfilling conditions for being registered on the electoral rolls could vote and were eligible for election even if not so registered. Constituencies delimited in a 1978 Act were used for election of White Assembly members. As regards Black members, there were eight electoral districts corresponding to the eight provinces into which the country was previously divided; electors voted exclusively for registered parties; in these constituencies, parties obtaining less than 10% of the vote were eliminated; each remaining party was allocated as many seats as it obtained the quota, arrived at through division of the seats set aside for the district into the total number of votes cast in the district. If there were still one or more seats to be allocated after this process, they were allotted to the parties with the greatest number of left-over votes, in decreasing order. In the event of a vacancy, the party holding the seat which became vacant could, by meeting certain conditions, designate the new member. Postal voting was not allowed. The transitory provisions were due to remain in force until such time as the electoral constituencies provided for in the Constitution had been delimited.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

In late 1979, the leaders of the major political parties met at Lancaster House, London, under the chairmanship of the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington. Their agreements paved the way towards elaboration of arrangements for a "cease-fire" and the preparation of conditions necessary for the holding of legislative elections after a brief transition period. The February 1980 elections enabled effect to be given to the proposals for a new Constitution and its entry into force, which were tabled at the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference; they were the subject of Orders -in- Council (S.I. 1979/1600, 1654) and Act No. 14 of 1979 relating to the qualifications of candidates and the conduct of elections.

The House of Assembly elections were held on 14 February and on 27, 28 and 29 February. On the 14th, 20 House of Assembly members were elected by voters registered on the White Rolls. The Rhodesian Front of Mr. Ian Smith won all these seats, 14 of them without being opposed. From the 27th to the 29th, 80 members were elected by voters registered on the Common Rolls. At this poll, voter turn-out was high, reaching 93.7%. The Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front), led by Mr. Robert Mugabe, won 57 seats — absolute majorities in both the Common Roll constituencies and the House of Assembly as a whole.

Mr. Joshua Nkomo, head of the Patriotic Front which he had previously led with Mr. Mugabe, won 20 seats. The party of Bishop Abel Muzorewa, former Prime

Minister, won only three. The electoral campaign had focused less on the largely similar platforms than on the personalities of the party leaders. Mr. Mugabe's victory was generally attributed to the fact that he appeared to be the most able to bring peace to the country after years of internal warfare.

The polling results were challenged by several parties, which believed they were the outcome of intimidation tactics. This feeling was not shared by the various international observers. In their interim report, the Commonwealth observers stated that the 27-29 February election "can be considered to have been free and fair to the extent that it provided an adequate and acceptable means of determining the wishes of the people in a democratic manner. This view is fortified by the high turn-out and the orderly and manifestly relaxed manner in which such a large percentage of voters went to the polls."

The British-appointed Governor immediately asked Mr. Mugabe to form a Government. It included Mr. Nkomo and several other members of the Patriotic Front and, as a result, assured itself the support, under normal circumstances, of at least 77 Assembly members. Zimbabwe became an independent State on 18 April 1980. The newly-elected Parliament met for the first time on 14 May 1980.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Assembly*

A. White Roll Election (14 February 1980)

Number of registered electors.	29,544
Voters.	16,498(55.84%)*
Blank or void ballot papers.	96
Valid votes.	16,402

* Only six seats were contested, the 14 others being filled without opposition.

B. Common Roll Election (27-29 February 1980)

Number of registered electors.	2,883,000
Voters.	2,702,275(93.73%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	52,746
Valid votes.	2,649,529

Zimbabwe

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
<i>White Election</i>				
Rhodesian Front	6	13,621	83.0	20*
Independents	X	2,781	17.0	
<i>Common Roll Election</i>				
Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)	80	1,668,992	63.0	57
Patriotic Front	80	638,879	24.1	20
United African National Council	80	219,307	8.3	3
Zimbabwe African National Union	SO	53,343	2.0	—
Zimbabwe Democratic Party	SO	28,181	1.1	—
National Front of Zimbabwe	SO	18,794	0.7	—
National Democratic Union	SO	15,056	0.6	—
Others	66	6,977	0.3	—
				100

* Including the 14 unopposed seats.

2. Distribution of Seats in the Senate

Political Group	Number of Seats
Zimbabwe African National Union	1?
Rhodesian Front	10
Patriotic Front	J
	<u>24**</u>

** In addition, 10 Senators are elected by Chiefs and 6 are appointed.

*3. Distribution of House of Assembly Members
according to Professional Category*

Teachers	22
Political party and trade union officials	17
Farmers.	12
Businessmen.	10
Doctors.	8
Lawyers.	3
Journalists.	2
Others.	20
No profession.	6
	100

*4. Distribution of House of Assembly Members
according to Sex*

Men	91
Women	9
	100

*5. Distribution of House of Assembly Members
according to Age Group*

20-30 years.	2
31-40.	21
41-50.	37
51-60.	28
Over 60.	10
	98*

* Dates of birth of two members not known.