



**RELEASE OF PRELIMINARY STATEMENT  
SUMMARY FOR PRESENTATION BY ECF-SADC HEAD OF  
MISSION**

15<sup>th</sup> August 2026

Lusaka, Zambia

Your Excellencies, Heads of International Observer Missions to the  
Republic of Zambia,  
Distinguished members and other invited guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocols observed.

1. The Electoral Commissions Forum of the Southern African Development Community (ECF-SADC) is an independent regional association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) established in July 1998 to promote professional, credible, and democratic electoral governance within the region. The Forum provides a platform through which EMBs cooperate, share experiences and best practices, and contribute to the strengthening of electoral democracy

across the region. In this regard, the Forum deploys election observation missions that have a mandate to assess electoral processes and to provide peer-to-peer support to its Member Commissions during elections in the region.

2. At the invitation of the ECZ, the ECF-SADC deployed a Mission for these elections, led by Hon. Justice Annabel Mtalimanja, Chairperson of the Malawi Electoral Commission and deputised by Dr. Elsie Nghikembua, Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN). The Mission has 40 observers drawn from eleven<sup>1</sup> (11) member Commissions.
3. The Mission deployed teams to five of the ten Provinces of Zambia (Lusaka, Southern, Central, Eastern and Copperbelt) that observed the process up until this point.
4. This is an initial statement of the ECF-SADC on the emerging electoral environment as the results tallying process is on-going. The Mission will issue a more detailed preliminary statement of its findings and assessment at a later stage.
5. The Mission notes that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2026, issued a Press Release to suspend the counting and tallying of election results throughout the country for 24 hours, due to security situation, continued threats of violence targeted at poll staff and in some instances which resulted in the theft of marked

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<sup>1</sup> Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe

ballot papers. Section 67 (3) of the Electoral Process Act No 35 of 2016 was the basis of the ECZ's decision to suspend. This suspension was later lifted in a follow-up press briefing on the same day.

6. Whilst the Mission continues to observe the immediate post-election environment in liaison with other International Observation Missions in the country; the Mission resolved as follows:

- 6.1. Election day procedures generally proceeded well, with no reports of widespread intimidation, or significant disruptions to polling. The Mission, however, observed some operational and logistical challenges including delay in delivery and inadequacy of materials which will be elaborated in its preliminary statement. The preliminary statement will also cover the Mission's assessment of the pre-election environment.

- 6.2. The ECF-SADC as a Peer-to-Peer Mission to ECZ plays a crucial role in supporting its Member Commissions at critical moments in the delivery of their mandate. The ECZ is at such a critical moment, and this informs a change of approach to the Mission's deployment in Zambia.

- 6.3. While the Mission was originally scheduled to close on 16 August 2026, given the current circumstances, the Leadership of the Mission will remain in the country until 19 August 2026. During this period, the Mission will observe the results tallying

process, provide peer support to the ECZ, and work with other International Observer missions that have the mandate to undertake preventive diplomacy.

- 6.4. The mission will scale down to eight members including the Mission Leader whose departure date will be 19 August 2026. Other Mission delegates will depart on their initial date of 16 August 2026.
- 6.5. The Mission will continue to assess the immediate post-election environment and determine its readiness to release a more detailed preliminary statement.
7. The Mission calls on all electoral stakeholders to exercise restraint and address all grievances through the legally established mechanisms as the ECZ continues to announce the election results. The Mission calls on the ECZ to provide regular and detailed updates to the public during this period. The Mission is reassured by the presence of regional actors in the country, to contribute to confidence building.

Signed and released on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 2026, Lusaka, Zambia.

**Justice Annabel MTALIMANJA**  
**Head of the Mission**  
**Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries**  
**Zambia General Election**