



European Union Election Observation Mission

Tanzania – General Elections 2015

Press release

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For immediate release

Highly competitive, generally well organised elections, but with insufficient efforts at transparency from the election administrations

Dar es Salaam, 27 October 2015

The 25 October general elections were highly contested, largely well administered, although insufficient efforts at transparency meant that both the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) did not enjoy the full confidence of all parties.

Presenting the mission's preliminary statement in Dar es Salaam, EU EOM Chief Observer, Judith Sargentini MEP, said that although the NEC and ZEC were adequately prepared in their organisation of the elections, a lack of transparency and an absence of timely information on the voters' register, the delimitation of constituencies and the system for the transmission of results had a negative impact on parties' trust in the electoral process.

Election day was assessed positively. EU observers followed voting procedures at 625 polling stations in all regions of the country. The conduct of voting was assessed positively in 96 per cent of the polling stations observed by the EU EOM, on both the mainland and in Zanzibar. Political party representatives were present in almost all of the polling stations observed, contributing to transparency and confidence in the voting process. The overall assessment of the closing and counting process was also good or very good in most of the polling stations observed.

"The EU deployed 141 observers to all the regions of Tanzania on election day," said Ms Sargentini. "Although there were a few problems in a small number of polling stations, the overall picture was one of millions of people exercising their voting rights in a peaceful environment and demonstrating their commitment to the democratic process."

Ms Sargentini said that EU observers attended over 139 campaign events across the country. Despite a number of disputes between supporters of rival parties, some of which unfortunately resulted in violence, she noted that, overall, the campaign was positive and vibrant.

On the legal frameworks, the EU EOM said that, although the frameworks governing elections in the Union and in Zanzibar provide a reasonable basis for the conduct of democratic elections, a number of issues remain unaddressed from the last elections. These include the constitutional ban on independent candidates to stand for elections and the inability to challenge presidential election results, which are not in accordance with international principles for democratic elections.

The EU EOM monitored 16 media outlets during the campaign. It concluded that the state media did not provide equitable and fair coverage of the campaigns, with more coverage given to CCM. Positively, however, Ms Sargentini said that some private media demonstrated relatively balanced coverage.

EU observers will remain in Tanzania to follow the tabulation process and the declaration of results, and any potential election-related complaints and appeals.

“The EU EOM will stay in Tanzania until 15 November, meeting with parties, electoral officials and civil society,” said Ms Sargentini. “For all the voters who queued patiently at polling stations on Sunday, I hope that all those involved will continue to work for peaceful, inclusive and transparent elections. ”

“A peaceful outcome of the elections and a commitment to further strengthening multi-party democracy would confirm Tanzania’s proud history of regional and continental leadership,” said Ines Ayala Sender, Head of the European Parliament’s Delegation, which joined the EU Election Observation Mission shortly before election day. “As such, I urge all Tanzanians to focus upon inclusive political life, building confidence and trust, and to further strengthening the institutions that underpin democracy.”

The EU EOM is the largest international observation mission in the country and is in Tanzania for the longest duration. It assessed the extent to which the electoral process complied with international and regional commitments for elections, as well as with Tanzanian law.

The EU EOM will present a detailed final report including recommendations for future elections within two months of the completion of the electoral process.

For further information, please contact:

Sarah Fradgley, EU EOM Press Officer Mobile: +255 786 440768 Email: sarah.fradgley@eueomtanzania.eu
Website: www.eueom.eu/tanzania2015 Facebook: www.facebook.com/eueomtanzania2015 Twitter: @EUEOMTanzania