

MEDIA STATEMENT

FROM THE DESK OF THE ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

GENERAL SECRETARY: REV. WILFRED DIMINGU

20 DECEMBER 2024

ZCC SOLIDARITY AND PASTORAL VISIT TO THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is deeply concerned about the ongoing challenges facing our brothers and sisters in Mozambique in the wake of the ongoing post-election violence. In response to these difficult times, the ZCC sent a delegation on a Solidarity and Pastoral Mission visit to the Council of Churches in Mozambique (CCM) to offer spiritual, moral, and practical support.

The ZCC delegation, led by the General Secretary, Rev Wilfred Dimingu and the President, Bishop Ignatius Makumbe who was also a part of the 9 October Election Observation Mission under the All Africa Council of Churches, held meetings with Leaders and the Senate of the CCM and the Ministry of Justice and Religious affairs. Part of the delegation also had a chance to meet with the Chairperson of the National Election Commission in Mozambique. Our visit, which took place from 16-18 December 2024 was focused on offering pastoral support, listening to the stories of those impacted, and exploring ways in which the churches in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique can collaborate in efforts of peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation.

Throughout these meetings the message that became clear to us was that the Church in Mozambique is deeply concerned by the Post 9 October General Election Violent protests that has resulted in the unfortunate loss of lives of both members of the public and the Police as well as the destruction of property and disruption of social services. These Protests started after the announcement of the Preliminary General Election results by the National Electoral Commission on 24 October 2024 which declared the Ruling Party Presidential Candidate as the winner amid claims of irregularities during

counting of the election results by the Opposition Presidential candidate who claims to have won the elections. The delegation heard that the Post-Election demonstrations which are comprised of mainly the youth and women also points to issues beyond the current electoral process but underlying issues of high levels of cost of living and unemployment, lack of opportunities for young people and many other issues that are affecting the ordinary citizens.

As part of their Theological and Historical mandate to promote peace, the Church in Mozambique has reached out to both the ruling Party and the opposition as well as the State President in an effort to bring an end to the ongoing political instability in the country. The CCM is calling for dialogue among the political parties and for them to put the interest of the country ahead of individuals interests. The Church leaders are continuing with their efforts to meet with other political parties and Civil Society Organizations they have not yet met in order to bring the current crises to an end. The Church in Mozambique expressed hope in the dialogue process which they are pursuing since all the political parties and leaders they have engaged are also in agreement with the Church's call for Peace. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches echoes this hope because dialogue has proven to be the only conflict resolution method that can bring a lasting solution to any conflict.

Besides engagements with the political players, CCM has continued to mobilize the Christian community to pray for peace in the country through prayer meetings and the Church leaders have requested the Church and people in Zimbabwe to join the people in Mozambique in prayer every day at 1900hrs from the 17th to 23rd of December when the Constitutional council is expected to make a final announcement of the Election Results. As ZCC we call upon the People of Zimbabwe to join the people of Mozambique in Prayer during this critical moment.

The ZCC note and appreciate the efforts by other Ecumenical bodies in Mozambique and the Region such as the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference (SACBC) who in their Solidarity visit to Mozambique from 12-13 November called upon the SADC to leverage its influence to motivate the government of Mozambique to work hard to reach a peaceful resolution to the current political climate.

ZCC echoes this call and appeal to SADC to do all that is within its power to assist the government and people of Mozambique in bringing an end to the current political impasse in the country. We call upon the Government of Zimbabwe as the Chair of SADC to use its influence in encouraging the Government of Mozambique and all the political parties in Mozambique to come together and put the interests of the Southern African region ahead, in which Mozambique is a key player hence the continued political disturbances will have ripple effects to the neighbouring countries including Zimbabwe. We also urge the international community to support these efforts, offering both diplomatic and humanitarian assistance as necessary.

The ZCC remains committed to the peace and stability of the Southern African region. We believe that through shared faith, cooperation, and mutual respect, we can overcome the challenges that face us, and contribute to a more just and peaceful future for all. As we return to Zimbabwe, we reaffirm our prayers for Mozambique, and for all nations in our region facing political turmoil. May God's peace reign, and may our collective efforts toward reconciliation bear fruit. As the Church in Zimbabwe, we remain committed to standing in solidarity with the people of Mozambique during this challenging period. We will continue to work closely with the CCM and other regional partners to promote peace, unity, and justice.

We ask all our members and partners to join us in prayer for peace and healing in Mozambique, and for wisdom for the country's leaders as they navigate this difficult moment.

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