

Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI)
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News release

Zimbabwe's presidential race tightens one month ahead of July 30 voting, new survey finds

Zimbabwe's presidential race tightened between early May and early July as incumbent Emmerson Mnangagwa's lead over challenger Nelson Chamisa dropped from 11 to just 3 percentage points among registered likely voters, a new survey shows.



Findings of the nationally representative survey, which the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) conducted in all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe between 25 June and 6 July 2018, suggest that the MDC-T Chamisa/Alliance has benefited from a small increase in party identification and perceptions of Chamisa as the more capable candidate to address voters' top priority: job creation.

Compared to a pre-election baseline survey in April/May, the new findings point toward a close election outcome denying the winner a broad electoral mandate, and confirm majority support for a Government of National Unity (GNU).

Key findings

- The survey confirmed high levels of self-reported voter registration (88%, up from 85% in early May) and of likely voters (88% of eligible voters said they will “definitely” or “probably” vote, unchanged from early May).
- While the proportion of Zimbabweans who said they feel close to a political party grew slightly between May and July, from 65% to 68%, the ZANU-PF's advantage in terms of party identification declined by half, to 5 percentage points: 34% of respondents said they feel close to the ruling party, while 29% identified with the MDC-T party and Alliance.
- Chamisa outranked Mnangagwa, 42% to 32%, in popular perceptions of which candidate would “do a better job in creating jobs for the people” – by far Zimbabweans' most important campaign issue (Figure 1).
- As for who was ahead in the presidential race, Mnangagwa's 11-percentage-point lead in early May (42% vs. 31% for Chamisa) dropped to just 3 points as of early July: **40% of registered likely voters said they would vote for the incumbent vs. 37% for the challenger** (Figure 2). It is important to remember that an uncertainty factor of +/-2 percentage points surrounds these figures and that the voting intentions of 20% of registered likely voters remained unknown.
- When asked which candidate they think will win the election, 43% of all respondents picked Mnangagwa, while 34% said Chamisa.

- Six in 10 Zimbabweans said that if no presidential candidate achieves a clear victory, they would favour the creation of a Government of National Unity (GNU). The proportion who thought that a GNU was likely increased from 33% in early May to 41% in early July.
- For more detailed analysis, including findings by province and analysis of parliamentary elections, see Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 223 at www.afrobarometer.org.

Pre-election surveys

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Afrobarometer's core partner for Southern Africa, commissioned two pre-election surveys in Zimbabwe. Fieldwork was conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), Afrobarometer's national partner in Zimbabwe.

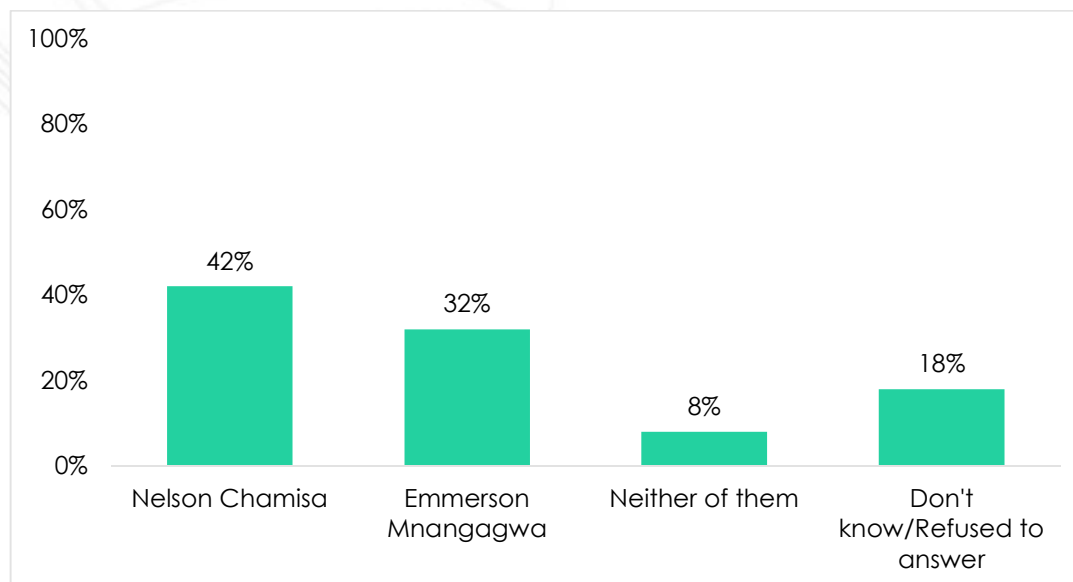
Technical support was provided by Afrobarometer, a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

Findings from the first survey, conducted 28 April-13 May 2018, are available at www.afrobarometer.org.

For the second survey, MPOI interviewed 2,400 adult citizens between 25 June and 6 July 2018. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

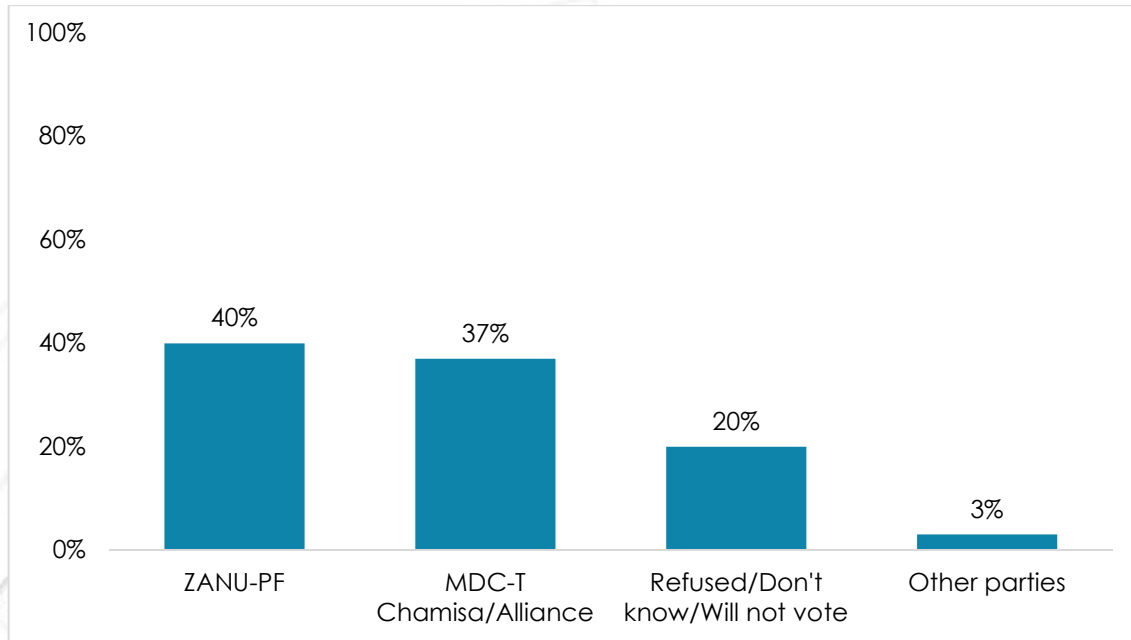
Charts

Figure 1: Which candidate would be better at job creation? | Zimbabwe | July 2018



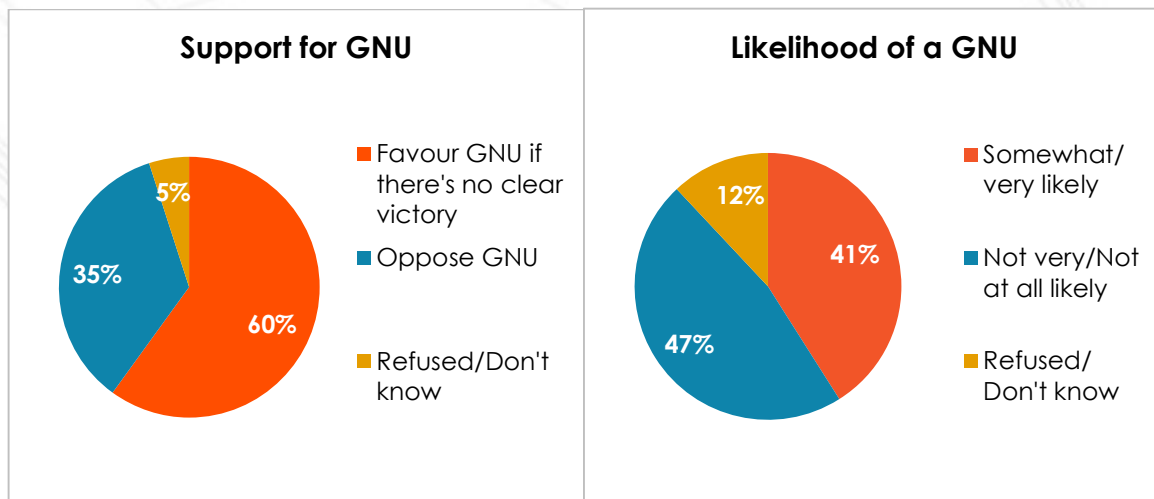
Respondents were asked: Most people in Zimbabwe think that the present election campaign is mainly about job creation. Of the following presidential candidates, who do you think will do a better job in creating jobs for the people?

Figure 2: Voting intentions in the presidential election | Zimbabwe | May-July 2018



Respondents were asked: *If presidential elections were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you vote for? (Note: Analysis includes only registered likely voters.)*

Figure 3: Prospects for a GNU | Zimbabwe | July 2018



Respondents were asked: *If no presidential candidate achieves a clear victory, would you want Zimbabwe to have a Government of National Unity (GNU)?*

Respondents were asked: *In your view, how likely is it that the main political parties will agree to share power in a second GNU?*



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