

Observe Law, President Urges Zambia On Polls Eve
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LUSAKA, Sept 19 (BERNAMA-NNN-ZANIS) -- As Zambia head to the polls on Tuesday to elect their president, members of Parliament and local government representatives, President Rupiah Banda has again called on them to strictly observe the laws to ensure peaceful polls.

In a weekend radio and television address to the nation on the tripartite elections, Banda, who is seeking re-election, said those who break the law would be dealt with accordingly. He said all political candidates and their supporters must abide by the law concerning the close of the campaign period at 6 a.m. on Sunday.

"Anybody caught campaigning will face prosecution. Even worse, candidates can be struck off the electoral process and their nominations cancelled. The risks are too high, so I urge all to observe the 48-hour ban on campaigning," he warned.

He said he was aware that in this period, people become impatient and are influenced by rumours and stories. He therefore urged Zambia to be patient with any premature celebrations or commiserations until after the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) officially announces the final results.

"To those who may be contemplating any illegal acts or intimidation or, even worse, physical violence, I have this message for you: I have ordered the police to arrest and prosecute all those who offend. Expect no mercy, expect no favour, expect only the full force of the law to come down on you," he said.

Banda noted that during the past eight weeks since the campaign period was declared, candidates have made their case to convince voters to vote for them, and it is now up to Zambia to weigh all the candidates and cast their votes accordingly.

He said Zambia are now able to ask themselves which candidates are suitable for their wards, constituencies and State House and which party has the best policies for Zambia.

Banda said he decided to make Tuesday a national holiday in order to increase the participation of people in the process. "Once you have cast your vote, enjoy the rest of the day off peacefully. Those who do not vote do not have the right to complain," he said, adding that this election would see the most ever votes in Zambia's history.

Out of the 13 million Zambia, slightly more than five million are eligible to vote in this year's elections, which have attracted 10 political parties to field presidential candidates, the highest number in Zambia's history.

Those battling it out at presidential level include the incumbent, standing on the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) ticket, Michael Sata of the opposition Patriotic Front (PF), Hakainde Hichilema of the United Party for National Development (UPND) and Godfrey Miyanda of the Heritage Party (HP).

Others are Elias Chipimo Junior of the National Restoration Party (NAREP), Fredrick Mutesa of the Zambia for Empowerment and Development (ZED), Ng'andu Magande of the

National Movement for Progress (NMP) and Charles Milupi of the Alliance for Democracy and Development (ADD).

The rest are Edith Nawakwi, the only woman in the presidential contest, who is standing on the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) ticket, while the oldest political party in the country, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), has fielded Tilyenji Kaunda, a son of Zambia's first president, Kenneth Kaunda.

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