



Politics

16

AUG

13:15 UTC

Zambia Alert: Election Commission declares Hakainde Hichilema as new President on August 16; maintain heightened vigilance

Please be advised

- According to the results published by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) on August 16, the United Party for National Development (UPND) candidate Hakainde Hichilema has won the August 12 presidential elections with more than 2.8 million votes versus the outgoing President and Patriotic Front (PF) leader Edgar Lungu, who received a little over 1.8 million votes.
- Lungu in a televised address conceded his defeat on August 16. The ruling PF also released a statement on social media congratulating Hichilema on the election victory.
- According to statements released by the PF on social media, alleged UPND cadres attacked PF cadres and property across the country.
- Hichilema also released a statement condemning acts of vandalism during the transition period, issuing a warning against potential criminal activity.
- Reports from August 15 indicate that a prominent PF Central Committee and former Southern Province Minister has resigned from the PF.

Assessments & Forecast

1. The election result is particularly noteworthy given the large victory margin between Lungu and Hichilema amid the tense pre-electoral period which was marred by repeated instances of political violence and allegations against the PF for facilitating electoral manipulation and fraud. Lungu's announcement conceding defeat is also significant given that it departs from his initial stance on August 13 accusing the UPND of not allowing "free and fair" elections in their respective strongholds in North-Western, Western and Southern provinces.
2. The result is also illustrative of the heightened public frustration against Lungu and the ruling PF government, whose second term since 2016 has recorded considerable economic deterioration, increasing government debt, and spiraling inflation. This is particularly noticeable given the UPND's performance in former PF strongholds and 'swing state' provinces of Copperbelt and Lusaka, which are two of the most densely populated provinces. The situation was further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the global commodity market crash, leading to a reduction in export revenues of the country's most significant industry, copper extraction, and processing. **FORECAST:** Going forward, the economic situation is unlikely to improve over the short term and will continue to represent a major challenge for Hichilema's government.
3. **FORECAST:** In the near term, given that the law dictates that the inauguration takes place at least seven days after the ECZ announces the results, Hichilema's inauguration is likely to take place sometime on or after August 23. The announcement of results is likely to trigger official and spontaneous celebration events over the coming days until Hichilema's inauguration. Such events are likely to take place outside respective party headquarters as well as other prominent public

places in Lusaka as well as other parts of the country. Considering Lungu's concession and the PF's consolidatory position, the political transition period is likely to transpire relatively peacefully.

4. – : However, as political tensions remain exceptionally high, isolated violent incidents may take place, particularly in politically sensitive provinces of Lusaka and Copperbelt, as well as other PF strongholds in eastern and northern provinces where they have retained the vote. Security forces are likely to maintain their deployments over potential unrest. Additionally, traffic disruptions can be anticipated around political celebrations over the coming week which could affect both traffic in urban locations as well as major highways.

Recommendations

Those operating or residing in Zambia on August 16 and over the coming days are advised to maintain heightened vigilance and avoid the vicinity of large gatherings including demonstrations and electoral celebrations due to election results announcements and the associated potential for unrest.