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## Many Zimbabwean voters are centenarians and some are in prams

No fair referendum or election can be held in Zimbabwe on the basis of the current voters' roll, according to a report published by the South African Institute of Race Relations (the Institute).

The report, written by Professor R W Johnson, breaks new ground by providing a detailed analysis of the Zimbabwe voters' roll, as it stood in October 2010.

The Zimbabwe Government has long been at pains to keep the content of the voters' roll under wraps, but Johnson has nevertheless succeeded in getting and studying it. His evaluation shows why Zanu-PF prefers to keep the roll confidential.

Notes Johnson: "Though life expectancy in Zimbabwe has dropped to 45 years, the voters' roll, as it stood in October 2010, contains the names of:

- roughly 1 490 'new' voters (never previously registered) aged over 100;
- some 41 100 voters (some new and some earlier listed) aged 100 or more, which is four times the number of centenarians in Britain;
- about 4 370 new voters over 90 years old; and
- a total of some 132 500 such nonagenarians."

The voters roll also has roughly 16 800 voters who not only share the same date of birth — recorded as 1st January 1901 — but were also toddlers at the time that Cecil John Rhodes died in March 1902. All of them are now more than 110 years old.

The roll also lists about 230 new voters under the voting age of 18. In October 2010, many of them were under ten years old while one was a baby and quite a number were aged two.

To make matters far worse, the current roll is also based on the 2008 voters' roll, which contains about 2.5m names too many, given Zimbabwe's probable population size. "This phantom vote is more than enough to settle the outcome of any election," Johnson notes.

# Press Release



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Instead of removing these 2.5m fictitious entries, the Registrar-General, Mr Tobaiwa Mudede, an outspoken Zanu-PF supporter, has added more than 360 500 new voters to the current roll. Yet many are far too old or too young to merit inclusion.

“If experience is any guide, phantom ‘voters’ are likely to vote early and often in the next Zimbabwean poll,” Johnson cautions.

The state of the Zimbabwean voters’ roll is also a vital issue at this time. For President Robert Mugabe seems intent on ignoring the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2008, which requires a new constitution approved by referendum before any general election can take place.

Says Johnson: “Instead, Mr Mugabe seems intent on cheating his way back to untrammelled power by pushing for quick elections later this year, based on the current constitution and a voters’ roll so defective as to boggle the mind.

“Mr Mugabe is no doubt hoping for South African and SADC support for his proposal. But President Jacob Zuma has done well to date in keeping Mr Mugabe to the terms of the GPA. Between them, he and the SADC have the power to put an end to Mr Mugabe’s plan.

“The SADC needs to remember this when it meets again in South Africa on 11th June 2011 to help lay down a road map to democracy in Zimbabwe.”

Johnson’s report, entitled *Preventing Electoral Fraud in Zimbabwe*, has been published by the Institute and is available on its website at [www.sairr.org.za](http://www.sairr.org.za).

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