COMMENTS ON THE 2027 NATIONAL BUDGET

HEAD 05 – ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA

BY

JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)
Plot 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park
P.O. Box 37774, Lusaka 10101, Zambia
Tel: +260 211 290410
Fax: +260 211 290759
admin@jctr.org.zm

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1. PREAMBLE

On Friday, 6th November 2026, the Minister of Finance and National Planning, Hon. Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane, MP, presented the proposed 2027 National Budget to Parliament under the theme "Grow Zambia: From Stabilisation to Unlocking Opportunities, Creating Jobs and Improving Livelihoods for All". The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2027 total K284.8 billion and include Head 05, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ).

By letter reference NAS/11/19/13 Conf of 7th November 2026, the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly invited the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) to comment on the 2027 allocation to Head 05. This memorandum covers (i) an overview of the allocation, (ii) its adequacy and ramifications for meeting set targets, (iii) its alignment with national and international commitments, and (iv) recommended variations. It draws on the 2027 Estimates (Yellow Book), the 2027-2029 Green Paper, JCTR's submissions on the Electoral Process (Amendment) Bill 2026, and the findings of JCTR's accredited monitors in the 13th August 2026 General Elections.

2. SUMMARY

Head 05 receives K538.4 million in 2027, 58.3 percent less than in the 2026 election year and 17.0 percent more than in 2025. A fall after an election is expected. The question for the Committee is what the first post-election year should buy. JCTR's answer is that 2027 is the year in which the lessons of a difficult election must be turned into reform, and in which the voters lost between 2021 and 2026 must be brought back.

The Estimates do not reflect that. The Electoral Planning and Process Management sub-programme, which funds registration, voter education and delimitation, falls to K175.9 million, about half its 2025 level. Voter sensitisation programmes are cut from 56,456 to 3,180, the continuous registration target is 65,000 voters, with a shortfall of 1.79 million in the 2026 mobile registration drive, and no output commits the Commission to publishing polling-station results. Meanwhile, Human Resource Management and Administration rises 63 percent. JCTR proposes a reallocation of K20.0 million within the Head, together with legislative steps that fall within this Committee's remit.

3. CONTEXT

The 2026 General Elections were the first held under the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 and the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act of 2026, which introduced mixed-member proportional representation, expanded the National Assembly to 226 constituency seats plus reserved seats for women, youth and persons with disabilities, and established 13,529 polling stations. JCTR made written and oral submissions on these reforms, including to the Parliamentary Select Committee on 26th April 2026.

The election was administered under severe strain. On 14th August 2026, ECZ suspended the counting and announcement of results nationwide, invoking section 67(3) of the Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016. The Law Association of Zambia and a coalition of civil society organisations, including JCTR, questioned whether that provision permits a national suspension of the announcement of results, as distinct from counting at affected stations. The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) verified that the presidential winner cleared the 50 percent threshold, but found official turnout in 30 constituencies more than ten points above the upper limit of its estimate, led by Solwezi North (93.0 per cent officially against an estimate of 46 per cent), Mufumbwe and Solwezi Central in North-Western Province, Lufwanyama West on the Copperbelt and Mongu Central in Western Province, and called on ECZ to publish all 226 constituency totals and the results forms for all 13,529 polling stations. Turnout fell to an estimated 53.5 percent, from 70.6 percent in 2021.

These events do not call the institution's existence into question. They do mean that public confidence in the Commission must now be rebuilt deliberately, and that this takes resources in the year after an election, not only in the year of one.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE 2027 ALLOCATION

Table 1: Head 05 by economic classification, 2025-2027 (K million)

Classification	2025	2026	2027	Change 2026-27	Change 2025-27
Personal emoluments	100.5	109.7	117.4	+7.0%	+16.7%
Goods and services	331.7	1,173.4	351.3	−70.1%	+5.9%
Assets	28.0	7.4	69.8	+839%	+149.6%
Head total	**460.2**	**1,290.5**	**538.4**	**−58.3%**	**+17.0%**

Source: Yellow Book 2027, Head 05. The 2027 allocation equals the Green Paper ceiling. It is 0.19 percent of the K284.8 billion Budget.

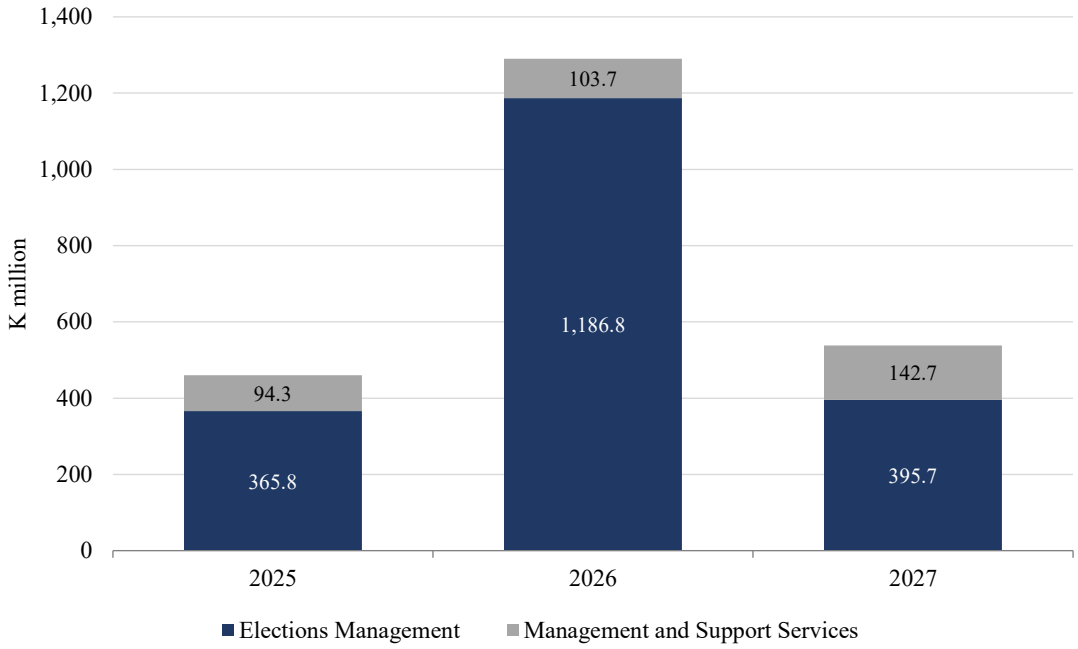


Figure 1: Head 05 by programme, 2025-2027 (K million)

Source: Yellow Book 2027, Head 05, Table 2.

Because 2026 was an election year, the fairer comparison for 2027 is with 2025, the year before the election. Table 2 and Figure 2 make that comparison. The Elections Management programme is 8.2 percent higher in nominal terms than in 2025, which is roughly 5 percent lower in real terms after about two years of inflation. Management and Support Services, by contrast, is 51.2 percent higher.

Table 2: Head 05 by programme and sub-programme, 2025-2027 (K million)

Programme / sub-programme	2025	2026	2027	Change 2025-27
3431 Elections Management	**365.8**	**1,186.8**	**395.7**	**+8.2%**
Electoral Planning and Process Management	328.0	61.5	175.9	−46.4%
Elections (by-elections, election materials warehouse)	37.9	1,125.3	219.8	+480%
3499 Management and Support Services	**94.3**	**103.7**	**142.7**	**+51.2%**
Human Resources Management and Administration	39.6	42.6	69.6	+75.7%
Information and Technology	13.9	13.2	15.5	+11.3%
Legal Services	4.3	4.6	4.9	+14.2%
Other support services	36.5	43.2	52.6	+44.4%
Head total	**460.2**	**1,290.5**	**538.4**	**+17.0%**

Source: Yellow Book 2027, Head 05, Table 3. The Elections Management programme also carries K14.2 million for outstanding bills in 2027, against K3.0 million in 2026.

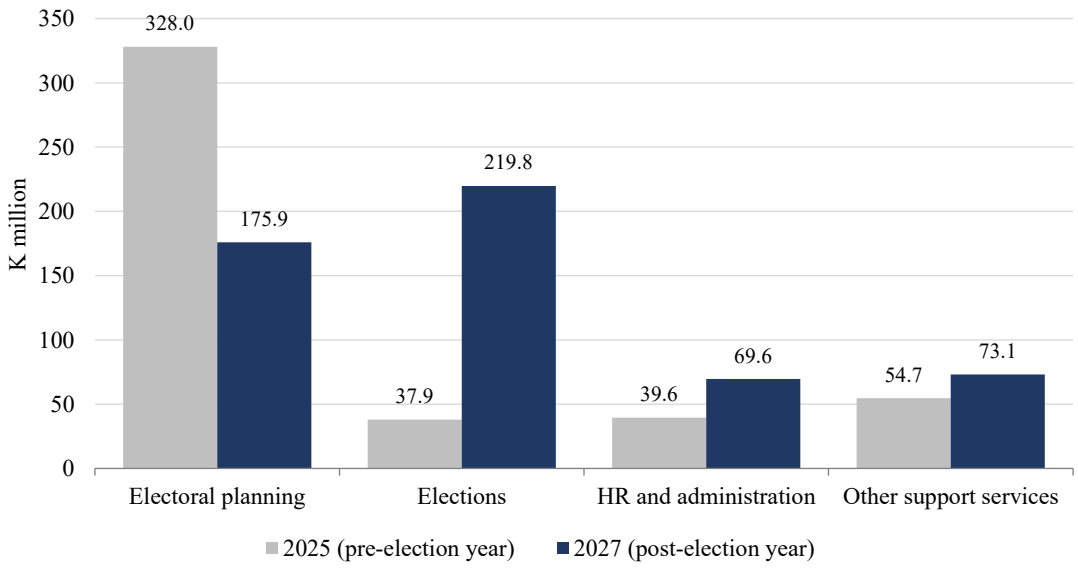


Figure 2: Head 05 sub-programmes outside the election year, 2025 and 2027 (K million)

Source: Yellow Book 2027, Head 05. "Electoral planning" is the Electoral Planning and Process Management sub-programme; "Elections" covers by-elections and the election materials warehouse. "Other support services" covers executive office, accounting, audit, procurement, corporate affairs, legal and ICT.

The Elections sub-programme of K219.8 million is explained in the Yellow Book as covering by-elections that may fall due and the completion of a warehouse for election materials. The K69.8

million in assets appears to relate to the warehouse. The Estimates do not separate the two, so the Committee cannot see how much is provided for by-elections, or on what assumptions. Some increase over the K37.9 million provided in 2025 is to be expected. The number of constituencies has risen from 156 to 226, and the year after a closely contested election usually brings election petitions, some of which may lead to by-elections. The elections that followed the general election have, however, already been held and fall in the 2026 budget: on 5th November 2026 the Commission conducted fresh parliamentary elections in Mandevu, where the totalling centre was attacked and the results documentation destroyed, and in Lumezi, together with the Mbala mayoral election and eleven ward elections, most of them arising from the deaths of candidates. Even so, a 45 percent increase in constituency seats does not by itself explain a provision nearly six times the 2025 level, which suggests that the warehouse accounts for much of it.

The 40 proportional representation seats in the National Assembly were allocated by the Commission on 18th September 2026, 32 to the UPND and 8 to the NRPUP; the Commission has explained that the NRPUP did not fill all the seats it was allocated. Under the Electoral Process (Amendment) Act, 2026, a vacancy in one of these seats is filled within ninety days with the next available candidate on the party's list, and the same applies to proportional representation seats in councils. Such vacancies should therefore not add to the by-election provision. The legal position nonetheless needs tidying. Act No. 13 of 2025 did not amend Article 57 or Article 72(8) of the Constitution, which still require a by-election to fill any vacancy in the office of a Member of Parliament or councillor, and it deleted the constitutional definition of "by-election" without replacing it. The Constitution and the Act therefore point in different directions. The EU Election Observation Mission has also noted that the Act gives parties an unrestricted power to recall members holding these seats, which may conflict with the constitutional grounds for a vacancy. These are matters on which the Committee, given its remit over legislation, is well placed to seek clarity.

5. ADEQUACY AND RAMIFICATIONS FOR SET TARGETS

Table 3: Selected Head 05 output targets and results, 2025-2027

Output	2025 target	2026 target	2026 actual	2027 target
Proportion of eligible voters registered (%)	85	100	80	–
New voters registered in mobile registration	–	3,500,000	1,712,787	–
Voters registered in continuous registration	45,000	–	–	65,000
Voter sensitisation programmes conducted	1,440	–	56,456	3,180
Voter turnout (%)	–	58	60	–
Rejected ballot papers (%)	–	–	3	2
Hours taken to announce results	–	72	74	72
Election petition appeals handled (%)	–	–	–	100
Facebook users reached	200,000	200,000	60,400,000	250,000

Source: Yellow Book 2027, Head 05, programme output tables. Results are as reported in the Yellow Book. A dash means no target or result was reported.

5.1 Registration: a gap of 1.79 million voters

The 2026 mobile registration drive registered 1,712,787 new voters against a target of 3.5 million, leaving a shortfall of about 1.79 million. The Commission reports that 80 per cent of eligible citizens were registered, against a 100 per cent target. The 2027 continuous registration target of 65,000 would close less than 4 percent of the 2026 shortfall, and it does not account for the young people who turn 18 each year. On UN projections, about 2.5 million Zambians are aged 15 to 19, so roughly half a million reach voting age each year, and about 2.6 million will turn 18 before the 2031 general election (Figure 3). The 2027 target of 65,000 is about an eighth of a single year’s new eligible voters. A low target in the first post-election year sets up another expensive mobile drive in 2030 rather than a steady, cheaper registration process.

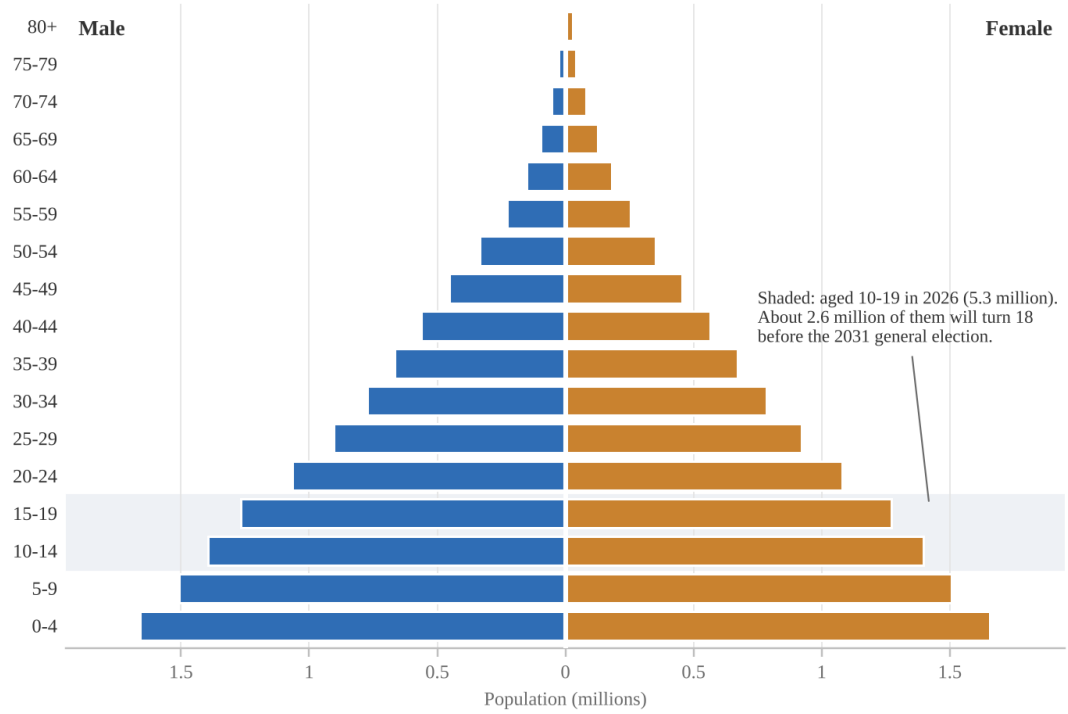


Figure 3: Zambia's population by age and sex, 2026 (millions)

Source: UN World Population Prospects 2024, medium-variant projection for 1st July 2026, via PopulationPyramids.org. The 2.6 million estimate assumes ages are evenly spread within each five-year group.

5.2 Turnout and voter education

Turnout fell sharply. CCMG's nationally representative sample of 1,500 polling stations estimated turnout at 53.5 per cent, plus or minus 0.6 per cent, down from 70.6 per cent in 2021, with falls in every province and the lowest turnout in Lusaka (46.1 per cent) and Central (48.8 per cent). The Yellow Book records 2026 turnout at 60 percent; the Commission should explain the basis of that figure. Whatever the precise number, fewer citizens voted, and the 2027 plan cuts voter sensitisation programmes by 94 percent compared with 2026. Voter education outside election years is where trust is rebuilt, especially among young voters.

Rejected ballots point the same way. The Commission's results recorded 126,556 rejected ballots in the presidential election, about 2.5 per cent of votes cast. Not all of these were voter error: the CCMG notes that rejected ballots include votes cast for the Liberal Democratic Party candidate, who withdrew after the deadline for withdrawals but remained on the ballot paper. That itself is a voter information failure. The rest reflect voters who did not know how to mark a valid ballot, a problem that falls hardest on first-time, older and less literate voters, and misinformation made it

worse: in Kasama North, voters brought their own pens after a rumour that the Commission's pens would fade and spoil their ballots. The Commission's own 2027 target is to reduce rejected ballots from 3 per cent to 2 per cent, yet it plans 94 per cent fewer voter sensitisation programmes. The target and the budget point in opposite directions.

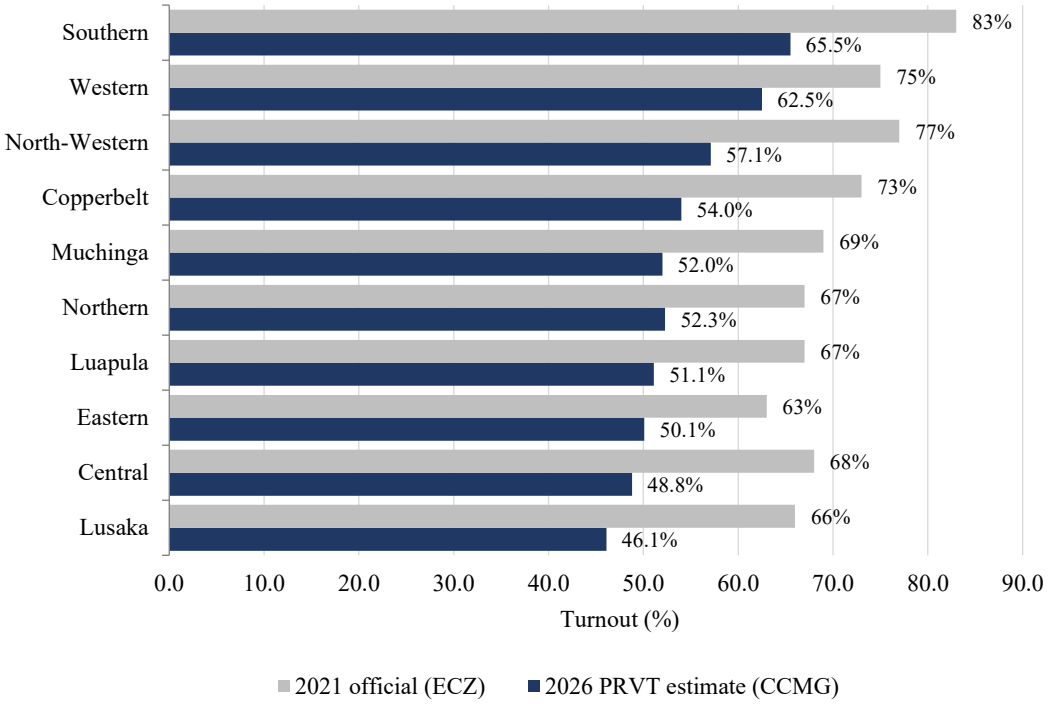


Figure 4: Voter turnout by province, 2021 official results and 2026 PRVT estimates

Source: CCMG, Independent Assessment of the Accuracy of the Official Results for the 2026 Presidential Election, 20th August 2026, Table 2.

5.3 Results transparency

No 2027 output commits the Commission to publishing results at polling-station level, although this is the single measure most likely to settle the questions raised about the 2026 count. CCMG compared results recorded by its monitors at 24 sampled polling stations with the totalling records for four constituencies (Kalomo Central, Lufwanyama East, Lufwanyama West and Mongu Central), and found that votes for one party were on average 178 higher at the tally centre than at the polling station in 10 of the 24 stations. In Kalomo Central, for example, the figures matched for every candidate except one: at Nameto Basic School-01 that candidate's votes rose by 113 between polling station and tally centre, and at Siachitema Secondary School-02 by 170. Publishing the 226 constituency totalling records and images of the results forms for 13,529 polling

stations is inexpensive. It needs a modest ICT and data-management allocation, and a decision. The same principle applies to the allocation of the 40 proportional representation seats. The EU Election Observation Mission questioned the distribution announced on 18th September because no allocation data were published. The Commission has since explained that the NRPUP did not fill all the seats it was allocated. Publishing the calculation, including how unfilled seats were reallocated, at the time of the announcement would have avoided that confusion.

5.4 Administration and data quality

Human Resources Management and Administration rises from K42.6 million to K69.6 million. Parliament should ask what this funds in a non-election year, and whether it includes election-period allowances or arrears. Outstanding bills of K14.2 million suggest that some 2026 costs have rolled into 2027. The output tables also contain figures that cannot be right: 60.4 million Facebook users reached in 2026 is about three times Zambia's population. Output-based budgeting only works if the outputs are measured honestly, and the Committee may wish to ask the Commission to correct the record.

5.5 Independence

The Constitution already gives the Commission strong protection on paper. Article 216 makes every commission subject only to the Constitution and the law, and not subject to the control of any person or authority. Article 238 makes a commission self-accounting, dealing directly with the Ministry responsible for finance, and requires it to be adequately funded in each financial year. Article 239 makes the expenses of a commission, including emoluments, a charge on the Consolidated Fund. Practice falls short of this design. The Yellow Book lists the Republican Vice President as the Executive Authority for Head 05, under Gazette Notice No. 1123 of 2021, which sits uneasily with Article 238: an electoral body whose budget answers to an office held by a candidate on a party ticket faces a perception problem, whatever the administrative reasons. The Estimates also present Head 05 as ordinary voted expenditure, set within Treasury ceilings and released at the Treasury's discretion, and the swing between election and non-election years leaves registration and voter education underfunded in the years that matter most for public confidence.

Comparable constitutions show how the principle is given effect. Kenya requires Parliament to allocate adequate funds to each commission, with the budget of each a separate vote (Article 249(3)); commissioners serve a single six-year term (Article 250(6)), and their remuneration is

charged on the Consolidated Fund. Ghana's Electoral Commission is not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority (Article 46), and its administrative expenses are charged on the Consolidated Fund (Article 54); in 2023 Ghana's Supreme Court unanimously held that a presidential directive sending the Auditor-General on leave was unconstitutional. In New National Party v Government of the Republic of South Africa (1999), South Africa's Constitutional Court held that the Electoral Commission's financial independence implies access to the funds reasonably required, and that no member of the executive should have the power to stop transfers to it without appropriate safeguards. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (Article 17) and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections likewise call for independent, adequately resourced electoral bodies. Kenya's experience also shows that text alone is not enough: its Parliament has itself been criticised for not giving full effect to Article 249(3).

5.6 The Political Parties Bill

Article 60(4) of the Constitution requires the law to provide for a Political Parties' Fund for parties with seats in the National Assembly, the audited accounts of funded parties, the sources of party funds and a ceiling on campaign spending. Ten years after the 2016 amendments, that law has not been enacted. On 2nd April 2026, the Constitutional Court directed Government to enact legislation on political party funding and a party code of conduct within twelve months, a deadline that falls in April 2027, within the year covered by these Estimates. The 2026 elections were therefore held without it, a gap noted by both international and citizen observers.

The 2027 Estimates make no provision for implementing such a law. There is no Political Parties' Fund and no allocation for a body to register and regulate parties. Parties remain registered as ordinary societies under the Societies Act, through the Registrar of Societies in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, whose programme receives K9.1 million under Head 15. Under the mixed-member system this matters more than before, because proportional representation seats are distributed only to political parties: a registration decision now determines whether a party's votes count towards seats in the National Assembly and in councils. The rules on party financing also complete the reforms on candidate disclosure that JCTR has pursued with the Commission and other agencies (Case study 3). Whether the Bill places party regulation with

the Commission or with a new independent office, it will need money in 2027, and the Budget as presented assumes it will not be passed.

5.7 Delimitation of wards and new polling stations

The 2027 Estimates make no provision for the boundary and polling-station work on which the next election depends. Article 58(5) of the Constitution requires the Commission to review the names and boundaries of constituencies and wards at intervals of not more than ten years. No review was carried out after 2016 until the 2025 reforms forced one, and the 70 new constituencies were announced only at the end of April 2026, less than four months before polling and barely four weeks before the campaign began. The CCMG noted that the Commission had not released the composition of the new constituencies, including the wards they contain, so citizens and candidates could not assess the outcome. The EU Election Observation Mission found that the inequality of the vote remains large: several constituencies in North-Western Province have fewer than 15,000 registered voters, while some in Lusaka have as many as 125,000. Wards face the same constraint, and they now also determine the election of proportional representation councillors. The Commission targeted 100 wards for delineation in 2024 with no result reported, and the 2027 output table contains no target for wards or polling districts.

Polling stations were also under strain. The Commission raised the maximum number of voters per polling station to 1,000. The EU mission observed long queues at opening, overcrowding at 9 per cent of the polling stations it visited and too few voting booths in most, and concluded that more polling stations, each with fewer voters, would have reduced waiting times significantly. JCTR's monitors saw the same pressure: a single voting booth slowed voting all day at Chakunkula Primary School in Munali Constituency, a shortage of booths caused delays at Jacaranda Primary School in Lusaka Central, overcrowding delayed opening at Matero Hall in Matero Constituency, and congestion kept Lubuto Secondary School in Kabushi Constituency open late. Long queues deter voters, especially older people, persons with disabilities and women with caring responsibilities, and they add to the fall in turnout described in Section 5.2. Yet the Yellow Book sets no 2027 target for new polling stations; the Commission plans only to rename and relocate existing ones.

The cheapest time to do this work is early in the electoral cycle. Ward delimitation and the creation of new polling stations, particularly in high-density urban areas, should be completed and gazetted

well before the 2031 elections, after published consultation and with the underlying data released, as both the CCMG and the EU mission recommend. That would avoid a repeat of 2026, when boundary changes arrived months before polling.

6. EVIDENCE FROM JCTR'S WORK

Case study 1: What JCTR's monitors saw on 13th and 14th August 2026

JCTR deployed 23 accredited monitors in seven provinces and at the National Results Centre. The most serious findings concern the sealing and custody of ballots in Lusaka. At the NRDC College Hall complex in Munali Constituency, ballot boxes at Stream 5 were sealed at 04:00 on 14th August without calling monitors and observers, and at Stream 6 the presiding officer denied monitors access to the results and the Ballot Paper Account (Form GEN 18), contrary to Regulations 43(1)(a) and 32(3)(f) of Statutory Instrument No. 63 of 2016. At Chelstone Secondary School (Stream 3), the presiding officer proposed to transport unsealed ballot papers to the district until monitors objected. At Chelstone Community Centre in Munali, not all accredited parties could affix their seals, ballots were not sealed with Commission seals after counting resumed, and rejected ballots were not stamped as section 68(3) of the Electoral Process Act requires; the stamp was also missing at Chelstone Secondary School and NRDC. At Chakunkula Primary School in Munali, boxes were sealed only after agents insisted. At Olympia Secondary School in Lusaka Central, a JCTR monitor was excluded from the count and left citing safety concerns. Ballot serial numbers were visible during counting at Buseko in Lukashya Constituency and at Kamwala Secondary School in Kabwata Constituency, where counting at stream 4 also began with the councillor ballots rather than the presidential. At the Evelyn Hone College Silwizya stream, 950 ballot papers were supplied for 910 registered voters and no reconciliation of used and unused papers was recorded.

Tension and violence marked parts of Matero Constituency. The Inspector General of Police reported the death of a polling agent at Kasamba polling station on 13th August and the arrest of nine suspects, and at Kasamba Secondary School the Ballot Paper Account was withheld and the declaration halted over disputed figures. At the Lundazi Council Hall totalling centre, counting stopped from 00:50 to 08:00 after a dispute over police presence in the counting room. A report that a polling station at the University of Zambia reopened after the 18:00 close to admit about 100 late voters rests on a single unconfirmed account, and JCTR does not rely on it.

In Kwacha Constituency, Kitwe, polling opened late at Bulangililo Community Centre (07:10) and other stations because staff could not be transported from the Civic Centre in time, and totalling at the Riverain Totalling Centre did not conclude until the fourth day, 17th August. None of the three Kwacha stations monitored (Bulangililo Community Centre, Bulangililo Secondary School and the Catholic Church station) was accessible, and voters with disabilities had to be carried in; at Jacaranda Primary School in Lusaka Central they voted at an open desk, without a secret ballot. At Mutende polling station in Mansa East and Olympia Park North-1 in Roma, voters were turned away because of register errors that

biometric verification could have resolved. Each of these failures is a training, logistics or accessibility problem that can be fixed between elections, if the budget for doing so exists.

Case study 2: Voting rights in correctional facilities

At JCTR's policy engagement on voter education in correctional facilities on 18th June 2026, the Zambia Correctional Service Commission confirmed that in 2021, 13,540 inmates registered and 90.5 percent voted. Access for registration officers and voter educators, however, still depends on discretionary letters. The Commission was invited but did not attend. A non-election year is the right time to put inmate registration on a statutory footing and to include correctional facilities in continuous registration.

Case study 3: Candidate asset and beneficial ownership disclosure

On 29th July 2026, JCTR convened ECZ, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Financial Intelligence Centre and the corporate registry to map gaps in the disclosure of candidates' assets and beneficial ownership, drawing on the Commission's duty under Article 52 of the Constitution to publish nomination information. The 2027 Estimates contain no output on publishing or verifying candidate declarations. Building a searchable public register before the next election is a low-cost reform that belongs in the Commission's 2027 plan.

7. ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

As the Committee responsible for international agreements, the Committee is well placed to test the 2027 allocation against the instruments Zambia has accepted. Table 4 sets out JCTR's assessment.

Table 4: Alignment of the 2027 allocation with national and international commitments

Commitment	What it requires	What the 2027 Budget does	Assessment
Constitution, Articles 45, 46 and 229; Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016 as amended in 2026	Free and fair elections; universal adult suffrage; an independent ECZ	Funds by-elections and administration, but cuts voter education and sets a low registration target	Partly aligned
African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance	Independent, impartial electoral bodies; transparent results; voter education	No output on publishing polling-station results or on post-election review	Not aligned
SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (revised 2021)	Transparent counting and results; access for observers; post-election review of the electoral cycle	No funded post-election review; no significant commitment to follow-up on observer recommendations	Not aligned
ICCPR Article 25; UN Human Rights Committee General Comment 25	Effective measures to ensure all eligible persons can register and vote	Continuous registration target of 65,000 against a 1.79 million shortfall	Not aligned
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 29	Accessible voting procedures, facilities and materials	No indicator or allocation for polling-station accessibility	Partly aligned
National Development Plan: Strengthen democratic and political governance	Credible elections and public confidence	Strategic plan review funded; trust-building outputs absent	Partly aligned

Source: JCTR analysis of Yellow Book 2027, Head 05.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VARIATIONS

8.1 Budget variations within Head 05

JCTR proposes a reallocation of K20.0 million within the Head, with no change to its total. Holding Human Resources Management and Administration to its 2026 level adjusted for inflation (about K45.3 million) would release about K24.3 million. The amounts below are indicative and should be costed with the Commission. These variations proceed on the basis on which the Estimates present Head 05, as voted expenditure. Should the Committee consider that Article 239 places the Commission's expenses beyond its power to vary, JCTR asks it instead to recommend the same reallocation to the Executive.

Table 5: Proposed reallocation within Head 05 (K million)

Line	Variation	Purpose
Human Resources Management and Administration	−20.0	Hold growth close to inflation; reduce from K69.6m to K49.6m
Continuous voter registration	+10.0	Raise the 2027 target from 65,000 to at least 300,000, including first-time voters and correctional facilities
Voter education in low-turnout areas	+3.0	Targeted programmes in Lusaka, Central and Eastern provinces and among youth
Results transparency	+2.5	Publish the 226 totalling records and the results forms for all 13,529 polling stations in an analysable format
Post-election review	+2.5	Independent review of the 2026 elections, with a report tabled in the National Assembly
Polling station accessibility	+2.0	Audit of all polling stations and a costed plan for ramps and assistive devices
Net change to Head 05	**0.0**	

Source: JCTR proposals.

8.2 Other recommendations to the Committee

1. Ask the Commission to break down the K219.8 million Elections sub-programme into the provision for by-elections, the warehouse and any 2026 arrears; to state how many by-elections it has budgeted for and on what basis, including the increase in constituencies and pending election petitions; and to confirm that vacancies in proportional representation seats, which are filled from party lists, are excluded from the by-election provision.
2. Add 2027 output indicators for the publication of polling-station results, the proportion of polling stations accessible to persons with disabilities, the number of correctional facilities reached by registration, and the implementation of election observer recommendations.
3. Ask the Commission to correct implausible figures in its output tables, including 60.4 million Facebook users reached, and to explain the basis of the 60 percent turnout figure.
4. Initiate or support an amendment to section 67 of the Electoral Process Act to make clear that any suspension of counting is limited to affected polling stations or areas, must be supported by published reasons, and does not extend to the announcement of results already verified elsewhere.

5. Support legislation requiring polling-station results to be published in an open, analysable format within a fixed period after polling, together with the calculation behind the allocation of proportional representation seats, consistent with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the SADC Principles and Guidelines.

6. Recommend a statutory instrument guaranteeing access to correctional facilities for voter registration and education, developed with the Zambia Correctional Service Commission and the Human Rights Commission.

7. Seek from the Executive a timetable for tabling the Political Parties Bill in time to meet the Constitutional Court's deadline of April 2027; recommend that the Bill place the registration and regulation of parties with an independent body rather than a ministry; and recommend that the cost of establishing that body and the Political Parties' Fund be provided for through supplementary estimates once the Bill is enacted, rather than deferred to the 2028 Budget.

8. Recommend that the Commission's funds be released on a predictable schedule in non-election years, so that continuous registration and voter education are not crowded out until the next election year.

9. Recommend reforms to give full effect to Articles 216, 238 and 239: revising Gazette Notice No. 1123 of 2021 so that the Commission sits under no ministerial portfolio and deals directly with the Ministry responsible for finance; presenting its core expenses as charged expenditure, with a statutory schedule for the release of funds and a budget planned across the five-year electoral cycle; allowing the Commission to present and defend its own estimates before Parliament; and providing for commissioners to be appointed through a transparent selection process with public interviews, for single non-renewable terms, with removal only through an independent tribunal.

10. Ask the Commission to publish 2027 to 2029 targets and a timetable for the review of ward boundaries under Article 58(5) and for new polling stations in high-density areas, with a lower maximum number of voters per polling station, completing both no later than 2029 after public consultation and with the underlying data published; and recommend that the Commission make regulations on delimitation under section 125 of the Electoral Process Act.

9. CONCLUSION

A post-election budget is usually read as a time to scale down. JCTR asks the Committee to read 2027 differently. The 2026 elections left a registration gap of 1.79 million, a sharp fall in turnout, and serious public questions about the suspension of results and the accuracy of some constituency totals. The cheapest time to answer those questions is now, through registration, voter education, open results and an honest post-election review, rather than in the run-up to 2031. The variations proposed here do not increase the Head. They move about K20 million from administration to the work that rebuilds confidence in the Commission. JCTR commends them to the Committee.