

Political Parties' Adherence to the Electoral Code of Conduct Vis À Vis Electoral Violence in Zambia

Kennedy Sialoombe

Dag Hammarskjöld Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, Copperbelt University, Kitwe

***Corresponding Author:** *Kennedy Sialoombe, Dag Hammarskjöld Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, Copperbelt University, Kitwe*

Abstract: *The study examines the extent to which political parties adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct to contribute to prevent electoral violence. The study employs a historical research design. Secondary data was collected through document review of political party constitutions, the electoral code of conduct, the commission of enquiry on voting patterns and electoral violence, local and international election reports and print/electronic media reports. Content analysis has been employed to analyse secondary data. The study argues that political parties rarely adhere to the electoral code of conduct, especially during elections. This is caused by a lack of strong political structures, poor leadership and the ineffective implementation of the Electoral Code of Conduct by the Electoral Commission of Zambia and Zambia Police. The study recommends that the political parties develop the party code of conduct and the Electoral Commission of Zambia and Zambia Police should execute their mandate independently and impartially.*

Keywords: *Electoral Violence, political violence, election, political party, electoral code of conduct*

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In Zambia, a comprehensive Electoral Code of Conduct Regulations of 2006 came into effect during the 2006 general elections. On paper, the electoral code of conduct strengthened the electoral process. It has 18 sections, each dealing with a specific electoral issue. The Electoral Code of Conduct stipulates duties and rights of candidates, political parties, the Electoral Commission of Zambia, the Zambia Police, the private and public media and observers during the electoral process. It also outlines a list of electoral offences related to the election campaign, such as tearing campaign posters and disrupting political rallies. Its incorporation has strengthened the Electoral Code of Conduct into the Electoral Process Act (EPA) following the recommendation made by the 2011 European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2016). The Electoral Code of Conduct 2006 intends to help the country achieve long-term democracy. This, however, will not be possible if stakeholders do not follow the rules. As a result, it is necessary to analyse how closely Political Parties adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct to prevent electoral violence in Zambia. Electoral violence is a barrier to Zambia's democratic consolidation. The article attempts to answer the question; To what extent do political parties adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct in Zambia?

For democracy to thrive, there must be, among other things, the presence of meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organised groups, especially political parties for political powers at regular intervals, without the use of force. Democratic consolidation requires a highly inclusive political participation level through regular free, fair, credible and peaceful elections. Critical democratic infrastructure must include registered political parties, electoral bodies, electoral rules, organised interest groups and law enforcement officers (Ogundiya and Baba, 2005; Jawondo, 2011).

Zambia had developed democratic structures and electoral laws to consolidate democracy since 1991, when the country reverted to multiparty politics. The country has democratic structures, such as the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) and several registered political parties. The Legal basis for the electoral system in Zambia is anchored on the Constitution of Zambia 1996, Constitution 1996 Articles 63(2) 77(1); Electoral Act no 12 of 2006; Electoral Commission Act 1996; Referendum Act Chapter 14; Local Government Act Chapter 282; and Electoral (Code of Conduct) Regulations 2006.

Despite democratic structures and laws, Zambia has been experiencing electoral violence during elections to the extent that the President, after the 2016 elections, appointed a commission of inquiry to inquire into the causes of the voting pattern and electoral violence. Mukunto (2019) states that Zambia's 2016 general elections witnessed electoral violence that threatened the democratic fabric as it undermined the free political participation of other stakeholders.

Electoral violence was high in the 2016 general election compared to previous elections. Between January and July 2016, there were more than 50 incidences of electoral violence in Zambia, according to media reports collected by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project. Many led to severe injuries or the deaths of followers of various political parties. According to Goldring and Wahman (2016), in 2016, an event in Namwala when a former United Party National Development (UPND) Member Parliament and her supporters assaulted a Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) Member Parliament candidate and an event in Lusaka where police shot and killed a UPND supporter were two significant examples of violence. The violence escalated to the point where the electoral commission decided to halt campaigning in Lusaka for ten days. On 25 July, President Lungu declared a national day of prayer for peaceful elections.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to the literature reviewed, electoral violence is pervasive across the African continent. As a result, all measures to prevent election violence should be evaluated to see how effective they are. The current study investigates how political parties in Zambia adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct to prevent electoral violence.

Political violence is a broad-based concept that covers electoral violence under its umbrella. It captures the other forms of aggression against the opposition or the ruling government regarding economic instability, class difference and rising fuel or food prices (Timmer, 2012). On the flip side, electoral violence centres on the electoral process regarding legitimacy, unfair treatment, or the unreasonable favour of some particular party. Ogundiya (2003, p.219) outlines what constitutes electoral violence as follows,

"...all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arsons, thuggery, kidnapping, spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after elections. It could be regarded as elections motivated crisis employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behaviour of voters or voting patterns or possibly reverse the electoral decision in favour of the particular individual, groups or political party."

According to Höglund (2009), electoral violence covers various actors, motivations, and behaviours. She divides the elements that permit and induce electoral violence into four categories. To begin with, there is the nature of politics, which is strongly reliant on patron-client relationships and involves violent individuals. Second, competitive democratic elections generate additional incentives and chances for violence. Third, electoral systems influence the incentives and disincentives for political players to engage in violent behaviour. Fischer (2002) asserts that unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt electoral process compromises its political legitimacy and stakeholders are motivated to disregard the established norms to attain their objectives. Thus, they resort to electoral conflict and violence as tactics in political competition.

The legal electoral framework lends legitimacy and credibility to the electoral process. Electoral laws govern how participants behave during elections. Some scholars have concentrated their efforts on determining how imperfect electoral rules contribute to electoral tension and violence. Matlosa et al. (2010), for example, argue that inappropriate or imperfect electoral rules contribute to electoral violence. Some political parties violate the rules by engaging in election rigging, vote-buying, and electoral fraud, inciting other political parties to engage in electoral violence. The current research examines the electoral code of conduct, which the European Union Election Observation Mission deemed comprehensive and could assist Zambian political parties in avoiding election violence.

Fjelde (2020) argues that strong political parties enhance the prospect of peaceful electoral dynamics. Firstly, strong parties enable more cost-efficient ways to mobilise voters. Secondly, they constrain political actors from engaging in electoral violence at leadership and grass-root levels. The study demonstrates that strong political parties can prevent electoral violence, coupled with electoral laws.

However, in the case of Zambia, not much has been written on the three major parties to examine how they constrain their supporters from breaking the electoral laws, especially the electoral code of conduct. The country has a Legal basis for the electoral system, which includes: the Constitution of Zambia 1996, Constitution 1996 Articles 63(2) 77(1); Electoral Act no 12 of 2006; Electoral Commission Act 1996; Referendum Act Chapter 14; Local Government Act Chapter 282; and Electoral (Code of Conduct) Regulations 2006. Despite all these laws, electoral violence has continued to be witnessed during elections.

Abdullahi (2013) argues that politicians, political institutions and the judiciary equally encourage political violence through their actions and inactions. The electoral commission, by implication, is crucial to the success of the democratic system since they are mandated to organise credible elections. The electoral body's failure to be transparent and impartial prevents the attainment of a free and fair election devoid of violence. In Zambia, Mwape's (2015) study highlights the inadequacies of the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) in enforcing the electoral code of conduct. She argues that the ECZ does not seem to have total control over the electoral process. Thus, the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) in 2011 recommended a legal framework review to give the ECZ adequate powers to enforce the electoral code of conduct. She further argues that the electoral code of conduct was not clear on handling intra-party conflicts. Thus, the High Court deals with many intra-party conflicts.

Kaluba and Kabubi (2018), in a study investigating the challenges of the electoral process in Zambia, observed an increase in the level of discontentment with the entire electoral process, particularly during presidential elections. They argue that the electoral process had many challenges ranging from the delay in announcing final results to the emerging and growing voter patterns of tribalism. Kaluba and Kabubi (2018) noted that the electoral code of conduct contains provisions for preventing electoral conflict, however, their research did not focus on examining the extent to which the three major political parties comply with the code.

Ihugba and Alfred (2019) found that the Electoral Act in Nigeria was silent in many instances of potential political party complicity in electoral offences. Some policy reforms and amendments to the Electoral Act of 2010 could improve political party accountability and reduce electoral offences. In the case of Zambia, the electoral code of conduct provides remedies to almost all the circumstances that can trigger electoral violence. However, what is not clear is the extent to which political parties adhere to the code of conduct provisions to prevent electoral violence.

Magasu (2016), in a study evaluating the effectiveness of the management of electoral conflicts in Zambia by the Conflict Management Committees (CMCs) in Lusaka, argues that the lack of a legal framework was a significant setback in managing electoral conflict and in the enforcement of the Electoral Act. The study established the following strategies for improving Conflict Management Committees; introducing electoral fast track courts, increasing educational awareness activities, increasing access to CMCs and strengthening the legal mandate.

Hoglund (1990) conceptualised electoral violence as a product of the nature of politics, the nature of elections, and electoral institutions' nature. She developed a theoretical understanding of strategies to manage and prevent electoral violence. The five strategies identified: monitoring, mediation, legal measures, law enforcement, and self-regulating practices, as shown in Table 1. The current study focuses on examining the extent to which political parties adhere to legal measures by self-regulating their conduct during elections.

Table1. *Strategies to Manage Electoral Violence: Functions and Mechanisms*

Strategy	Function How, by what means?	Mechanism What makes it work?
Monitoring	-Supervising -Information gathering -Using a watchdog organisation -Creating awareness	-Naming and shaming -Information-sharing
Mediation	-Compromise -Dispute resolution via dialogue	-Trust-building

Legal measures	-Legal framework regulating behaviour -Dispute resolution via adjudication and judicial remedies	-Clarifying rules of the game -Setting standards
Law enforcement	-Presence -Supervision -Investigations -Arrests -Demonstration of force	-Deterrence -Accountability
Self-regulating Measures	-Symbolic acts -Institutionalised peace structures -Local agreements	-Moral commitment to non-violence -Cultivation of political Tolerance

Source: (Hoglund, 1990)

According to Bloomfield and Reilly (1998, p. 18), "conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence." The theory of conflict management promotes methods of conflict resolution rather than removal. It tries to respond to the more fundamental problems of conflict management, deals constructively with them, bring opposition groups together in a collaborative process, and develop a practical, viable, cooperative system for constructive differential management. Conflict management theorists, therefore, assume that the conflict is an inevitable result of values and interests that cannot be eradicated within structures. Conflict can, however, be managed and constructively contained without allowing violence. Furthermore, the theory assumes that existing institutions and historical relationships, in addition to the established distribution of power, had the potential to cause violence. Therefore, electoral conflict cannot be eradicated but should be managed constructively by political parties to avoid violence. In addition, the theory assumes that existing institutions and historical relationships and the established power distribution can create violence. As a result, while electoral conflict cannot be eliminated entirely, political parties can manage it constructively to avoid violence.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a historical research approach to explain why electoral violence has continued to be a hallmark of every election in Zambia despite the existence of a thorough electoral code of conduct. Secondary sources used comprised local and international election monitoring reports; electronic and print media reports; ECZ election reports; Electoral Code of Conduct 2006, and the Commission of inquiry on voting patterns and electoral violence report. It was essential to analyse these documents' contents to demonstrate how political parties adhere to the electoral code of conduct. Reviewing reputable documents ensured the study's authenticity.

The process of document analysis involved: identification of relevant documents to study; examination of the authenticity and credibility of the documents; the breaking down of document content into manageable parts relevant to achieving the study objective. The pre-set codes were used to code data obtained through document analysis. Data were then grouped into themes and interpreted accordingly to answer the study objective.

Three political parties were included in the study: the Patriotic Front (PF), the United Party for National Development (UPND), and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) (MMD). The three major parties have all been victims or perpetrators of election violence. The parties were sampled on purpose. The PF was the reigning party at the time of the study, the UPND was the most influential opposition political party, and the MMD had previously been the ruling party for twenty years (1991-2011).

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study argues that political parties rarely adhere to the electoral code of conduct 2006 because they lack strong political structures and leadership. Secondly, the Electoral Commission of Zambia and Zambia Police fails to enforce the electoral code of conduct despite being mandated. The political parties had no confidence in the two institutions.

Section 7 of the Zambia Electoral Code of Conduct outlines the prohibitions that political parties were expected to avoid during the electoral process. These prohibitions include causing violence, carrying or displaying arms, making false, defamatory or inflammatory allegations, impeding others'

democratic rights, plagiarising the symbols, colours or other parties, removing or disfigure any political campaign materials offering any inducement (Electoral Commission Zambia, 2006).

The study through document review revealed that political parties selectively adhere to the electoral code of conduct. This is despite political party Secretary Generals on behalf of their political parties signing the Electoral Code of Conduct (ECCI) form to declare that they would comply with the electoral code of conduct.

The electoral commission and political parties are expected to publicise the code of conduct. In section 3, the Electoral Code of Conduct states,

“The Commission and Political Parties shall take all reasonable steps to publicise the Code of Conduct throughout the Republic.” (Electoral Commission of Zambia, 2006, p. 2).

Electoral violence would be prevented if the political parties adhered to section 3 of the code of conduct. It was incumbent upon political parties to educate their cadres on the code's provisions. However, politicians rarely take deliberate measures and steps to publicise the electoral code of conduct among their supporters. On the contrary, political parties do not adhere to the code during election campaigns. Political party leaders do not educate political cadres on the significance of adhering to the code of conduct.

Section 7 (1) (a) of the electoral code of conduct prohibits the use of provocative language during election campaigns or elections (Electoral Commission Zambia, 2006). However, politicians' language during campaigns is sometimes provocative and intimidating, contrary to the code's provision. For instance, in August 2011, the then Secretary-General of the PF issued a statement that was considered provocative. He said,

"MMD should not dominate the markets and bus stations because we have more youths than the ruling party...deal with the MMD like they are criminals because the police are not protecting you...whenever you will find them, hit them hard." (Maya et al., 2011, p. 1).

However, he later clarified that the party had merely called for its cadres to defend themselves since the police had failed. Moreover, this was the stance and language the UPND had adopted and continued to use despite the PF currently in government, indicating that the language was provocative and supported violence. In the case of the PF secretary-general, the police acted by recording a warm-and-caution statement. However, he maintained that PF cadres would defend themselves if attacked by the MMD cadres. The UPND has also maintained that the party would continue to defend itself since the police had failed to provide security.

Another example of political parties acting against section 7 (a) of the electoral code of conduct was when the government spokesperson during a Sunday Interview Television programme on Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), stated that,

“People from Southern Province are so tribal such that they could not vote for Jesus Christ even if the Son of God stood against a Tonga candidate.” (Lusakatimes, 2016).

The UPND Spokesman responded by saying,

“Clearly, hate speech and promotion of tribal division is now an institutionalised PF Government policy away from real issues affecting our citizens, such as massive job losses, poverty and hunger, unemployment, and the general economic meltdown.” (Lusakatimes, 2016).

The appointing authority nor the party leadership publicly reprimanded the spokesperson. Such provocative language and disregard of the electoral code of conduct caused tension in the country and contributed to electoral violence. The commission of inquiry on the voting pattern and electoral violence found that,

"The failure by appointing authorities to act on allegations made against proposed appointees and ensure that those allegations are concluded before appointments continue to perpetuate the public perception of reward for wrongdoers, and this perception of reward for wrongdoers contributes to political tension in the country." (Government of Zambia, 2019, p. 102). According to section 7(1) of the Zambia Electoral Code of Conduct Regulations of 2006, carrying or displaying arms or weapons is prohibited.

"Carry or display arms or weapons, traditional or otherwise, of any kind at a political meeting or in the course of any march, demonstration or other public gathering or political nature" (Electoral Commission Zambia, 2006, p. 4).

In abrogation to the provisions of section 7(1), (b), the PF and UPND cadres clashed in Mulobezi, Western Province, ahead of the parliamentary by-election on 04 June 2015. The PF claimed that the UPND cadres had ambushed the PF Secretary General and his entourage in Mulobezi. The PF Secretary-General said,

"They came for the vehicle doors with knives and pangas, saying where is the Secretary-General. We were lucky that we were armed. If we were not armed, by now, it would have been a different story." (Mushota, 2015).

The police arrested two UPND cadres for weapon possession. However, the UPND claimed that the PF Secretary-General was the one who provoked the cadres by chasing Sesheke MP Siyanga's car, and his driver was shooting at them, hitting Mushaukwa in the thigh before beating him up (Mushota, 2015). Whatever the case was, this shows that political parties did not adhere to section 7(1) (b) provisions. The PF Secretary General confirmed that he was armed, and the UPND cadres were also armed.

The commission of inquiry on the voting pattern and electoral violence found that political party cadres carry guns during election campaigns. The commission found that,

"There is a growing trend of a gun culture amongst political party cadres. These guns are discharged whenever violent incidences occur among cadres. The commission is concerned that if this gun culture is not contained, public safety will be compromised." (Government of Zambia, 2019, p. 124).

The electoral code of conduct recognises the potential danger that defamatory or inflammatory allegations can cause during elections. Therefore, Section 7(1) (c) prohibits making,

"False, defamatory or inflammatory allegations concerning any person or party in connection with an election" (Electoral Commission Zambia, 2006, p. 4).

However, political party cadres usually make false alarms during elections. For instance, during the 2011 general elections voting, PF cadres delayed voting at Gondar when they demanded that voters not use the pens provided by the ECZ. They alleged that the ECZ pen faded after voting. ECZ, however, dispelled the claims (Mambilima, 2011). Although this incident did not result in electoral violence, it disregards the code of conduct.

Another example of lack of adherence to the code was during the run-up to the 2016 elections when the UPND supporter impounded and searched eight new ECZ trucks in Livingstone on false allegations that the trucks were carrying materials for rigging elections (Lusakatimes, 2016). This caused political tension as cadres protested and burnt tyres on the road demanding to open the trucks. In the spirit of eliminating suspicion, the ECZ, through the police, opened the trucks, and it was discovered that they were not carrying any rigging materials but spare parts.

During the 2016 general elections campaigns, the study revealed that candidates and political parties campaigned vigorously and usually respected campaign regulations. However, both the PF and the UPND made statements that inflamed tensions throughout the campaign. There were several severe incidents of violence, including an attack on the parliamentary candidate of the FDD for Namwala, Southern Province on 17 June, and the death of a UPND supporter on 8 July in Lusaka, after the cancellation by the police of a UPND rally at short notice (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2016).

Section 7(1) (d) prohibits arranging,

"A public meeting, demonstration, rally or March at the same time and venue as another similar political event organised by another political organisation" (Electoral Commission Zambia, 2006, p. 4).

Contrary to this provision, during the run-up to the 2011 General elections, the PF and MMD cadres clashed. The PF had organised their provincial conference at Garden House Hotel on Mumbai Road in Kanyama Township. The PF cadres alleged that MMD cadres armed with machetes and slashers had

pitched a tent with a big banner declaring "2011 RB for President" close to the hotel where the PF provincial conference was held. The cadres further blocked the road to prevent PF President Michael Sata from attending the conference. They then attacked the PF cadres. On the other hand, MMD cadres alleged that the PF cadres were to blame. They were armed with catapults and knobkerries pulled down on the MMD flag from a shop in the area. The MMD president condemned the incident, and the police arrested five people (Ndandula, 2011). This caused violence.

The commission of inquiry on voting and electoral violence observed that,

"Political parties are engaged in the disruption of meetings and other political events through flashing symbols of their parties at their rivals' meeting or rallies, honking, throwing stones, blocking of roads, playing loud music or occupying part of the rally sites, throwing money and campaign materials."(Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2019).

Media report review revealed that during the run-up to the 2011 general elections in Zambia, all political parties and police signed a communiqué on 26 August 2011 prepared by ECZ. They committed themselves to several resolutions aimed at minimising electoral violence. However, electoral violence continued. For instance, the campaign turned violent when MMD and PF cadres clashed at the City Market over the placement of campaign posters; the Kanyama MMD office in Lusaka was petrol bombed, and MMD cadres attacked PF cadres on a door to door campaign in Matero in Lusaka. ECZ called upon the police to quell these violence cases countrywide (Ndandula, 2011). Section 7(1) (g) prohibits, "Remove, disfigure or destroy any political campaign materials of any person" (Electoral Commission Zambia, 2006, p. 4).

The Electoral Act and the Electoral Code of Conduct Regulations 2006 strengthened the rules relating to distributing gifts by political party candidates to procure votes. However, the provisions had not adequately curtailed these problems. European Union observers received several vote-buying allegations and reports that candidates and parties were distributing gifts to individuals and communities (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2006, p. 19). The claims of vote-buying have the potential to cause electoral conflict and violence.

Clearly, the forgoing shows the lack of adherence to the electoral code of conduct by political party leaders and their supporters. According to the Commonwealth Observer Group (2011), while in theory providing a sound regulatory framework for the conduct of the campaign and regulating the behaviour of stakeholders throughout the electoral period, the Code of Conduct proved inadequate and a weak deterrent due to a lack of substantive enforcement mechanisms.

The political parties on their own have failed to instil discipline in their members and are tolerant of violence in their operations as long as it does not affect them. Political parties were not committed to non-violence and were intolerant of divergent political opinions. The political party structures had no strong inbuilt structures to deter cadres from engaging in electoral violence. Thus, they needed strong institutions to supervise their conduct. This was in line with Jackson's (2013, p. 2) findings that 'political parties, the candidates, and other participants in an election publicly affirmed the code of conduct in principle before the start of the campaign, but in the absence of real consequences, the parties quickly broke their promises once the race began.' Therefore, they are to be monitored and controlled by the Zambia Police and Electoral Commission of Zambia.

Section 4 (2) of the Zambian Electoral Code of Conduct empowers the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) and Zambia Police to enforce the code and promote conditions conducive to the observance of the code.

"The Commission and any member of the Zambia Police Force shall enforce the code and shall promote conditions conducive to the observance of the code" (Electoral Commission of Zambia, 2006, p. 2).

The fact that Zambia continues to experience electoral violence is an indication that political parties do not adhere to the provisions of the code of conduct. Furthermore, occurrence of electoral violence is an indication that the two institutions, the ECZ and Zambia police, had challenges in enforcing the Electoral Code of Conduct. The study argues that political parties rarely follow the electoral code of conduct because they lack confidence and trust in the ECZ and Zambia police.

As established by the study and as put forward by many scholars, the nature of electoral institutions in a country is another central area from which electoral violence's causal factors can be distinguished (Höglund, 2009). Political scientists and sociologists have come up with many different ways to define and conceptualise 'institutions'. For example, Hall (1986, p. 19) defines institutions as "the formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy." Helmke & Levitsky (2004) argue that formal and informal institutions can be conceptually separated from one another by looking at how they are codified and enforced. They suggest that formal institutions are "rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official". In contrast, informal institutions are "usually unwritten [...] and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004, p. 727).

For the most part, the study was concerned with formal and informal rules and their impact on political parties and their members' behaviour. The political parties had not institutionalised formal and informal rules to compel their members to adhere to the electoral code of conduct. Besides, they had no confidence in the institutions mandated to manage elections. Unfortunately, the ECZ and the Zambia police had equally failed to enforce the code of conduct. The study shows that as measured by how electoral institutions are effective and formal rules are implemented, institutional capacity is not robust in Zambia. Indeed, there still exists a significant discrepancy between what formal institutions are supposed to do and what they actually can do. The European Union (2016) argues that even though the ECZ's operations have significantly improved, the institution still has to do a lot to inspire most players' confidence in the electoral process, especially political parties.

Ideally, both formal and informal rules of the electoral process can facilitate conditions conducive to peaceful elections. It is argued that electoral governance rules cover areas like a party, candidate and voter eligibility and registration, vote counting, tabulating and reporting techniques, election monitoring and conflict resolution mechanisms, and campaign financing (Mozzafar & Schedler, 2002). However, the electoral game's formal and informal rules can equally facilitate electoral conflict and violence (Höglund, 2008; Sisk & Reynolds, 1998).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The capacity of democratic institutions such as political parties and electoral management authorities to conduct credible elections free of electoral violence is determined by their levels of competence and structure. The study concludes that to a great extent, the lack of credibility of electoral institutions such as the ECZ and Zambia police results in some of the members of political parties disregarding the Electoral Code of Conduct and resorting to the use of violence. The electoral code of conduct comprehensively covers the possible offences that could trigger electoral. Unfortunately, weak political party structures cannot effectively compel party members and supporters to adhere to laws enforced by institutions they had on confidence. According to the findings, political parties were not founded on a solid institutional ideology. No wonder they expected other institutions to regulate the behaviour of their members. Worse still, the political party in power was equally abrogating the code of conduct thus did not inspire confidence in opposition political parties and the citizens. Thus, cadres from the opposition parties disregarded the code claim to act in self-defence.

5.2 Recommendations

Political parties should develop their own written political party code of conduct to guide their members and supporters' behaviour. Failure to adhere to the political code of conduct and electoral conduct 2006 should attract punitive measures against the erring members.

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Kennedy Sialoombe holds a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies (Human Rights, Governance and Peace building) from the Copperbelt University (CBU) and a Bachelor of Arts with Education from the University of Zambia (UNZA). He also holds a diploma in Defence and Security Studies from UNZA and has done several courses in military studies. His research interests include military history, civil-military relations, housing, human rights and socio-economics, education, governance and peace building.

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