

**South Africa: SA Opposition Calls On SADC Leaders to Reject 'Fatally Flawed' Poll**  
**BY Nomalanga Moyo**  
**8 August 2013**

South Africa's main opposition party says regional leaders should not allow President Robert Mugabe to get away with a "fatally flawed election", and backed calls for an independent audit of the process.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) said regional bloc SADC would have failed Zimbabweans as well as itself, if it continues to endorse Zimbabwe's flawed poll as a true reflection of democracy.

Speaking to SW Radio Africa Thursday, DA senior official Ian Davidson said the process did not meet the conditions for elections as set out in the Global Political Agreement (GPA).

"The GPA, among other issues, set out pre-conditions such as free and equal access to the media, ensuring that security forces were contained and not there to influence results.

"None of those were adhered to and as recently as the (March 16th constitutional) referendum, there was concern from our international relations office that these were not being met.

"Secondly the voters' roll was in a chaotic state: it had names of more than a million dead people, around 200 names of people aged over 100, while close to two million young people failed to register," Davidson said.

The DA official said given these and many other irregularities, it was wrong for anyone to declare the election credible and fair: "Yes polling day was peaceful, but prior to that there wasn't enough space for opposition political parties to make themselves heard."

He said the serious queries raised by civil society groups, SADC, the AU, and his party's officials, contained enough compelling evidence that discredited the poll.

Davidson said an independent audit, as called for by Botswana, would make it possible to examine all the factors, including the path leading to polling day.

"Ultimately, elections aren't just about the actual day considering the Zimbabwean context, you wouldn't declare the election free and fair given what went on before."

Davidson's remarks come against a backdrop of a growing list of congratulatory messages from African leaders to President Robert Mugabe over his re-election. The latest is from Mozambican President and SADC chairperson President Armando Emilio Guebuza.

In an effusive message reprinted in the ZANU PF mouthpiece the Herald newspaper Guebuza, commended Mugabe on his win "in a landslide manner," during what he termed the "harmonised and SADC rules-based elections".

Among other things, SADC guidelines call for the full participation of citizens in the political process, political tolerance, and impartiality of electoral institutions.

The Zim election failed to meet these on many levels, with millions of Zimbabweans either left out of the process or intimidated into voting for ZANU PF.

Davidson said that it was worrying that African leaders were lauding Mugabe on a "farce election". He said glossing over the electoral irregularities for the sake of peace and an outcome "distorts the whole concept of democracy".

He urged regional leaders to demand truly free, fair and credible elections from their members, adding that the absence of violence alone cannot become the new standard for elections in the region.

As reported by this station on Sunday, the DA rejected the Zim electoral process at the outset, condemning it as neither free nor fair.

The party's Shadow Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Masizole Mngasela, who was part of the SADC Parliamentary Forum observer mission, refused to sign off the mission's statement the poll, citing voters' roll irregularities.

The DA has already slammed South African President and GPA facilitator Jacob Zuma, for his message Sunday urging Zimbabweans to accept the poll outcome "as an expression of the will of the people".

David reiterated his party's position expressed earlier in the week, that regional leaders should meet and "have a very good look at the concerns raised in various reports, in relation to what the GPA said should happen in Zimbabwe".

© allAfrica, 2013