

VERY
URGENT

PRESIDENT LUNGU CONFERS WITH EU ELECTION MISSION

Lusaka, (Wednesday, 12th June, 2019) -----His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia has met the European Union Election Followup Mission (EU- EFM) at State House this morning. The delegation paid a courtesy call on the President to follow up on its recommendations on the country's electoral process.

The European Union Election Followup Mission (EU- EFM) was led by former Chief Observer for the European Union Election Observation Mission 2016, Mrs Cecile Kyenge who is also Member of the European Parliament.

During the meeting, the President said Zambia has made significant strides to enhance democracy as can be seen from the freedom of expression and assembly that citizens are able to exercise freely.

The President says it is during the reign of the Patriotic Front government that the country has seen the opening up of a number of television and radio stations, an indication that there is media freedom in Zambia.

And the President is concerned that tribalism and regionalism continues to threaten democracy not only in Zambia, but also the African continent.

The President says until sentiments and attachments to tribe or tribal groupings are eradicated, it will be very difficult for the entire African continent to achieve democracy.

"Unless tribalism and regionalism is tackled on the African continent, democracy will elude the continent," the President said.

The President says to address tribalism and regionalism there is urgent need to institute education campaigns to sensitise citizens on the importance of coexisting as brothers and sisters regardless of different persuasions.

The President urged the EU-EFM to be cognisant of the dynamics at play, such as tribalism and regionalism which had a bearing on how citizens exercised their rights or how they voted during elections, as they conduct their monitoring on the electoral process in Zambia and in other countries.

The Head of State notes that tribalism and regionalism has resulted in intolerance hence making Government efforts to propel the country to economic prosperity difficult.

"There is need for the Mission to also conduct a comparative study on elections in Zambia and other African countries as this will enable countries to learn from each other," the President said.

Meanwhile, the President has advised that political parties including the ruling party should not harbor perpetrators of violence.

"There is need to disown political supporters who perpetrate violence with impunity to bring peace to the political space. They must be educated that political parties can not be associated with violence. Therefore, sensitisation must be an ongoing process and not only be done in the shadow of electioneering," the President said.

And Mrs Cecile Kyenge-Head of the EU-EFM hailed Zambia as a strong actor in the Southern African region particularly the SADC region.



Mrs Kyenge said with Zambia's strong position in the SADC region, the European Union will continue to work closely with the Zambian government.

The EU-EFM Head urged the President to ensure that Zambia continues to work hard to maintain its strong position in the SADC region.

And Head of the EU Delegation to Zambia Ambassador Alessandro Mariani who accompanied Mrs Kyenge to the meeting paid tribute to the people of Zambia for their peaceful nature.

Others who accompanied the Head of EU-EFM to State House included EU Election officials and experts.

Presidential Affairs Minister Freedom Sikazwe, Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Malanji and Permanent Secretary Chalwe Lombe also attended the meeting.

The overall objective of the EFM is to contribute to improving the electoral and democratic framework during the inter election period and raising awareness and understanding of the European Union- Election Observation Mission.

The team is in the country to hold a series of engagements with various stakeholders.

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