



Press Statement

**Sean McCormack, Spokesman**

Washington, DC

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## **Pre-Election Irregularities Endanger Zimbabwean Elections**

We are concerned that actions of the Zimbabwean government will preclude free and fair elections on March 29. Independent organizations report extensive pre-election irregularities, such as inaccurate voter rolls, violence and intimidation of competing political parties and civil society; overproduction of postal ballots for police, military, diplomats, and electoral officials and absence of independent observation of the counting of postal votes to prevent multiple voting; inadequate polling stations in urban areas; bias against the opposition in the government-controlled media; permission for police to be present inside polling stations in breach of the recent SADC-brokered agreement; and politicized distribution of government-controlled food, and other benefits and government resources.

We call on the Government of Zimbabwe, including the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, to take concrete actions to address these significant shortcomings, including respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Zimbabwean people. Despite these obstacles, we encourage all Zimbabweans to exercise their democratic right to vote in a peaceful and orderly manner.

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