

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Zambia post-election brief August 2026

Zambia Summary 21 August 2026

President Hakainde Hichilema (2021-present) wins a second five-year term in Zambia's 13 August general election, defeating opposition challenger Brian Mundubile. However, allegations of violence and vote rigging taint the election and Zambia's democratic processes. A joint security task force kills opposition official and former transport minister, Mutotwe Kafwaya, during a raid on Mundubile's house on 14 August. Mundubile says he will petition the constitutional court, seeking to overturn Hichilema's re-election, alleging that widespread manipulation marred the presidential election and that the official results do not reflect the will of voters.

Hichilema secures second term

The **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** on 18 August declared that incumbent President **Hakainde Hichilema** (2021-present) had a second five-year term, defeating opposition challenger **Brian Mundubile** in Zambia's 13 August election. Hichilema won 61.4% of the presidential vote, against 38% for Mundubile, giving the incumbent a clear numerical victory and avoiding a second-round run-off.

The result broadly mirrors Hichilema's 2021 performance, when he won approximately 59% of the vote against former president **Edgar Lungu's** (2015-2021) 38%, although the political context is very different. Significantly, voter turnout declined sharply from 70% in 2021 to 57% in this election. In 2021, Hichilema's victory was also followed by a relatively smooth transition of power, but Mundubile has immediately rejected the results. Mundubile is now preparing a court [challenge](#) alleging fraud and serious irregularities (see below).

The parliamentary results also point to a more fragmented political landscape. The **National Assembly** has a total of 280 seats, including 226 constituency seats, 40 proportional representation seats and 14 appointed and ex officio seats, comprising presidential appointees, the vice-president, the speaker, and deputies. According to the ECZ's [current](#) results, the 226 constituency seats have been filled as follows:

- Hichilema's **United Party for National Development (UPND)** won 136 of the 226 seats;
- **National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP)** won 60 seats;
- 20 independent candidates have been elected;
- Smaller parties have won the remaining ten seats.

In his victory message, Hichilema struck a conciliatory tone, [promising](#) to govern for all Zambians, including those who did not vote for him. His second term is expected to focus on converting the macroeconomic stabilisation of his first administration into faster growth and employment. Key priorities include doubling the size of the economy, expanding investment, increasing copper output towards the government's target of three million tonnes annually, securing a new **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** programme and addressing persistent concerns over poverty and the cost of living.

Yet, despite the scale of his victory, this will remain a politically tainted mandate. The opposition has alleged that the election was manipulated and that the playing field was tilted in

favour of the incumbent. International observers have also identified concerns. The **European Union Election Observation Mission** [flagged](#) issues including delays and procedural shortcomings in vote tabulation, as well as unequal campaign conditions and restrictions on observer access in some areas.

Allegations of violence taint election process

The election was also overshadowed by violence before and after polling. The ECZ temporarily suspended vote counting after attacks on election officials and the theft of marked ballot papers. A party official was killed during the unrest, although reporting available at this stage does not conclusively establish responsibility for that death. Police and military personnel were deployed in **Lusaka**, while reports indicate that police arrested at least nine suspects in connection with the violence.

Tensions deepened further when a joint security task force team that included the **Drug Enforcement Commission** raided Mundubile's house, where he was with a senior opposition figure. Police say that upon arrival at the premises, the team was met with gunfire and resistance from unknown individuals, and in the process the task force returned fire, which resulted in the [death](#) of a former transport minister, **Mutotwe Kafwaya**. Inspector general of police, **Graphel Musamba**, said the joint task force recovered high-grade military-version automatic UZI weapons and five AK-47 rifles with 60 rounds of ammunition at the premises, claims Mundubile and his allies have [denied](#).

The **United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk**, has subsequently [expressed](#) concern about the arrests and called for due process. Hichilema is yet to comment on the killing incident but secretary to the cabinet **Patrick Kangwa**, during a press briefing on 20 August, expressed condolences to Kafwaya's family following his death and urged the nation to allow the investigative process to take its course.

The violence and the killing of the former minister mark a sharp departure from the democratic optimism surrounding Hichilema's 2021 victory and the president's immediate challenge will be to consolidate economic gains while addressing allegations of democratic backsliding, political repression and institutional bias. Whether he can reunify an increasingly polarised country may ultimately prove as important to his second-term legacy as his economic reforms.

Opposition heads to court as election dispute deepens

Mundubile has confirmed he will petition the constitutional court, seeking to overturn Hichilema's re-election, [alleging](#) that widespread manipulation marred the 13 August presidential election and that the official results do not reflect the will of voters.

Mundubile's **Tonse-Pamodzi Alliance** has also said it will contest the parliamentary and local-government results. Its allegations include ballot stuffing, violations of ballot-security procedures, improper transportation and handling of electoral materials, discrepancies between polling-station results and figures announced at the ECZ national tallying centre, and military involvement at results centres. The alliance also alleges that audit documents were confiscated and that results were subsequently altered.

There were objectively serious disruptions during the counting process. The ECZ [suspended](#) the counting and announcement of results on 14 August after reporting violence against election officials and theft of marked ballot papers before resuming the process later the same day. **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** observers [said](#) the suspension created "uncertainty and anxiety" and noted that they were unable to observe counting and collation during the suspension period. This was followed by an increase in political tensions, including the raid of Mundubile's location (see above).

More damaging to the credibility debate is an analysis of the results which argues that elements of the officially announced vote figures are difficult to reconcile and that the scale of some discrepancies warrants scrutiny. In several constituencies, considerably [more](#) votes appear to have been cast in the presidential election than in the parliamentary contest taking place at the same time. In the most extreme cases, the difference is extraordinary. Such numerical anomalies do not, by themselves, prove that votes were manipulated as they could also arise from transmission, collation or reporting errors. However, when combined with the suspension of counting, ballot theft allegations and restricted observation of parts of the tallying process, they provide the opposition with material to place before the court. The SADC mission itself said these aspects would require further examination in its final report.

Another intriguing element of the legal challenge is the split inside Mundubile's own political vehicle. Mundubile was adopted as the presidential candidate of the NRPUP before joining forces with **Makebi Zulu** and the **Pamodzi Alliance** to head the broader **Tonse-Pamodzi Alliance**. The NRPUP has already [accepted](#) the result, with president **Ezra Tembo**, who won the **Dag Hammarskjold** parliamentary seat in **Ndola (Copperbelt Province)**, congratulating Hichilema and saying the party would take its position as the official opposition in parliament.

That leaves Mundubile pursuing a court challenge against a result that the party whose ticket he used has effectively accepted. The Tonse Alliance insists there is no contradiction, arguing that the alliance, not NRPUP as a standalone party, is contesting the results. Yet the split could weaken the opposition's ability to present a unified case and could become an important issue if the constitutional court is required to assess the legal standing, evidence and authority behind the petition.

Hichilema secured roughly 61% of the presidential vote against Mundubile's 38%, giving him a sizeable numerical margin. But the court challenge means Zambia's 2026 election is unlikely to be remembered simply as a decisive Hichilema victory. The more consequential question is whether the constitutional court can establish, through the disputed tally and electoral evidence, whether the irregularities materially affected the result.

While the ECZ's own suspension of counting and the observers' inability to monitor parts of the tally provide the opposition with legitimate issues to place before the court, Mundubile faces a difficult legal task; overturning a presidential result requires more than demonstrating irregularities, and the petition will need to establish that those irregularities were sufficiently serious to affect the outcome. His strongest case will therefore depend on converting broad allegations into constituency- and polling-station-level evidence. On the other hand, the NRPUP split makes that task politically harder.

Planner

16 Sep 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** Bank of Zambia (central bank) **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decision

Chronology

20 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. The police summon **Tonse Pamodzi Alliance** presidential candidate, **Brian Mundubile**, and lawyer **Makebi Zulu** for questioning over various crimes they have allegedly been linked to, including activities police say could threaten national security;

20 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Reuters*. **United States**-based **Citi** upgrades Zambia's international bonds to overweight and said it expects to buy local government debt at the

upcoming 21 August auction, citing political stability following President **Hakainde Hichilema's** re-election;

20 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Lusaka Times*. The opposition calls on government to investigate the death of former government minister **Mutotwe Kafwaya** who was fatally wounded during a joint intelligence-led security operation conducted on 14 August;

19 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. The police confirm that former transport minister and **Lunte** lawmaker, **Mutotwe Kafwaya**, was shot dead during a reported intelligence-led joint security operation conducted in **Kabulonga** at opposition candidate **Brian Mundubile's** residence on 14 August;

19 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. The **Human Rights Commission (HRC)** expresses deep concern over rising reports of missing persons and alleged arbitrary arrests following the 13 August general election;

18 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. The wife of former government minister **Mutotwe Kafwaya** asks the Lusaka high court to order authorities to produce her husband before court and explain the legal basis for his alleged continued detention following a security raid in Lusaka;

18 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. **National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP)** presidential candidate, **Brian Mundubile**, rejects allegations that his party had a militia linked to foreign nationals and illegal military training camps, calling on authorities to provide evidence and allow due process to take its course;

18 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *BBC*. The **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** declares that incumbent President **Hakainde Hichilema** won the presidential election with 60% of the vote, while opposition leader **Brian Mundubile**, who received 38%, has rejected the results and plans to challenge them legally;

17 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Reuters*. The government says the police arrested several leading opposition figures on the night of national elections last week, accusing them of posing a threat to state security;

17 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. Catholic bishops urge authorities, political parties and citizens to respect the will of voters expressed at the ballot box, warning that the country's peace must not be sacrificed for political ambition as the counting of votes from the general election continues;

17 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Lusaka Times*. Government says a joint security operation in Lusaka's **Kabulonga** area on the night of 14 August uncovered a suspected militia cell and seized high-grade military weapons, with eleven people apprehended, including **National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP)** presidential candidate, **Brian Mundubile**;

16 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Reuters*. President **Hakainde Hichilema** leads the presidential vote count with 54.82% of declared votes from 105 of 226 constituencies, ahead of opposition candidate **Brian Mundubile**, with 43%;

16 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Lusaka Times*. The **Tonse, Pamodzi, Woza Alliance** issues a strongly worded statement alleging a widespread pattern of interference in the counting, verification and declaration of Zambia's presidential election results, and demands that the **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** account for every **Gen 20** form and disclose the whereabouts of detained political figures;

16 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Aljazeera*. International observers monitoring Zambia's presidential election have raised concerns over reports of intimidation and abductions, after vote counting was suspended for several hours amid violence at polling stations;

16 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. **National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP)** presidential spokesperson **George Chisanga's** family confirms that he has been missing for two days and is now being held at **Chelstone Police Station**, but relatives have been denied access to see him;

16 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. The **European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM)** calls for transparency and strict adherence to procedure as **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** continues tallying results from the 13 August general election;

15 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Lusaka Times*. Two senior **United Party for National Development (UPND)** figures lose parliamentary seats on the **Copperbelt**, with former mines and mineral development minister **Paul Kabuswe** defeated in **Chililabombwe** and **Anthony Mumba** losing **Kantanshi** in **Mufulira**;

15 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. The **Southern African Development Community (SADC) Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM)** calls for urgent legal reforms to political party funding, changes to the appointment of **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** commissioners, and stronger protection of media freedom following Zambia's general election;

14 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Reuters*. The **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** says it has resumed the counting of votes in presidential and parliamentary elections after an earlier suspension triggered by reports of violence against officials and the theft of ballot papers;

14 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *Zambia Monitor*. **National Reconciliation Party for Unity and Prosperity (NRPUP)** presidential candidate **Brian Mundubile** accuses the **Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)** of using the suspension of the announcement of election results as a ploy to deny him victory in the presidential election;

13 Aug 2026 **Lusaka (Zambia)** *AP News*. Zambians have started voting in the general election, with the presidential election setting incumbent President **Hakainde Hichilema** against 13 candidates, with opposition leader **Brian Mundubile** of the **Tonse Alliance** seen as his strongest challenger amid concerns over the cost of living and restrictions on dissent;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

ARC's core consulting services include integrity due diligence and corporate investigations, political advisory and country assessments, opportunity monitoring and reputation risk management. Most relevant to private equity firms is ARC's integrity due diligence and corporate investigations capability. Specifically, ARC offers pre-deal integrity checks to highlight red flags before negotiations start; full, detailed multi-jurisdictional reputation due diligence; and supplier and senior hire vetting and repeat due diligence for compliance programmes. ARC is unique in that it offers a 10-day delivery for routine integrity due diligence. ARC also offers a suite of corporate investigations services from immediate investigation, evidence gathering, e-discovery, forensic accounting and whistle-blower support on one end to crisis media management and regular monitoring on the other.

www.africariskconsulting.com

About ARC Briefing:

ARC Briefing is ARC's essential business information service.

Companies at any stage in their Africa expansion, whether building or communicating an Africa strategy, investing directly, expanding current operations, financing other investors, doing the legal leg-work or researching the Africa growth trend, need ARC Briefing.

ARC Briefing is an information service keeping you:

- Up to date with Country Chronologies of business-critical events
- In the know via Country Briefings on political, economic, business and operating trends. Written in-country, ARC experts analyse and comment
- Ahead with Country Planner which details future elections, budgets, regulatory changes etc.

www.africariskconsulting.com

Getting in touch

Please contact us by email info@africariskconsulting.com

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) Pty Ltd expressly forbids the collection of information and content from ARC Briefing as data to train generative artificial intelligence models.

© Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)