

All communications to be addressed to
the Director-General
P. O. Box 33812, LUSAKA
Tel : +260-21-1- 251 327/57
Fax : +260-21-1-251 342
[E-mail : info@hrc.org.zm](mailto:info@hrc.org.zm)



Human Rights Commission

Head Office

20th August, 2026

Press Release
For Immediate Release

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONDEMNS THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN DIVISIVE POLITICAL RHETORIC

The attention of the Human Rights Commission has been drawn to a video that has been circulating on social media showing an identifiable child using insulting and derogatory language against the President-elect of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Hakainde Hichilema. The Commission has also noted a separate video in which three adult women are shown using similarly insulting and derogatory language against the President-elect in the presence of children.

With regard to the video involving the three adult women, the Commission recognises that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that is essential to democratic participation, political debate and public accountability. However, the use of abusive, degrading or dehumanising language excludes free participation and in turn escalates fear, deepens divisions and tensions. A democracy cannot function well where robust debate is overridden by language which attacks the dignity of the person.

Further, the Commission decries the involvement of a child in politically charged and divisive content, which raises serious concerns regarding the child's rights to protection, dignity, privacy and development. Of particular concern are the adult voices heard in the video, encouraging or prompting the child to continue using derogatory language rather than providing appropriate guidance on respectful communication and responsible conduct. Children should not be exploited, manipulated or drawn into political disputes or adult political battles.

In the spirit of child rehabilitation, the Commission is urging members of the public to desist from further circulation of the video or disclosure of the child's identity. The continued sharing of these divisive videos may expose the child to public ridicule, stigma, psychological harm and a permanent digital record that could adversely affect the child's wellbeing and development. Public discussion of the incident should therefore prioritise the protection, welfare and best interests of the child rather than condemnation or punishment of the child.

The Children's Code Act, No. 12 of 2022, requires the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration and protects children from maltreatment and exploitation. Parents, guardians and other adults have a responsibility to protect children and guide them towards respectful communication, responsible citizenship and positive development.

In order to ameliorate this unfortunate children's rights incident, the Commission is calling upon the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, through the Department of Child Development and Social Welfare, together with other relevant authorities, to take appropriate, child-sensitive measures to safeguard the subject child. Any interventions should focus on the child's protection, welfare and rehabilitation while avoiding further exposure, stigmatisation or trauma.

Lastly, the Commission echoes its calls for parents, guardians, political actors, media organisations, social media users and the general public to protect children from political exploitation and promote responsible and respectful public discourse. Political differences should be addressed without compromising children's rights or undermining the dignity and rights of others.

About the Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission is an independent National Human Rights Institution established under Article 230 of the Constitution of Zambia and operationalised through the Human Rights Commission Act, No. 4 of 2024. Its mandate includes promoting and protecting human rights, investigating human rights violations and abuses, monitoring the observance of human rights, and conducting human rights education. For more information, visit www.hrc.org.zm.

(Original Signed)

Dr Pamela Towela Sambo

CHAIRPERSON

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION