

EC starts training of results transmission staff

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KAMPALA. The Electoral Commission yesterday started the training of trainers on the Election Results Transmission and Dissemination System (ERTDS) for the February 18 and subsequent polls.

The 50 trainers are going to be dispatched to various parts of the country to train EC staff including 112 district registrars, 117 assistant district registrars, 117 support technicians and 262 tallying clerks who will manage the exercise from February 8 to 14.

The ERTDS system, according to Mr Pontius Namugera, the EC director for technical support services, has three components including the national, district and polling station.

"It is a secure system, provides transparency of the results collection and announcement and above all it allows auditing, that is why we will be scanning the DR-form that

comes from the polling station and is going to be stored in the system," he said.

The ERTDS system was deployed by the commission in the 2011 general election.

The deployment of the system suffered a setback when the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), which had earlier committed to supporting half of the procurement cost, pulled out citing irregularities in the procurement process of the project. But the EC came

out and said they had procured kits despite the loss of funding.

Parallel transmission

Already, the Forum for Democratic Change presidential flag bearer's team has set up what they call "Dr Kizza Besigye 2016 P10 Tally Centre" to conduct an independent tally of the results.

The EC spokesperson, Mr Jotham Taremwa, said Dr Besigye's team, other candidates and entities are free to do so

for purposes of comparison but not to announce final results. "I hope on the basis of those tallies they are going to make, they are not going to announce themselves but for purposes of comparing what they have and what we are announcing at the end of the day," he said.

He added that the EC had received information that some elements were "planning to create pseudo-names on Facebook and make declarations, which is illegal."

HOW IT WORKS

When the results are counted, the presiding officer will fill in the scores for each of the candidates. The form will be signed by the presiding officers and countersigned at the back by the candidates' agents. For the presidential elections will have 11 copies, one will be sealed in a tamper proof envelope, the other in a ballot box, and the other copies will go to each of the candidates agents. The secured tamper proof envelope will be transported to the district which will be the first level at which the results will be computerised.

The information then will be transferred electronically at the national tally centre in Kampala. Each district depending

on size will have a minimum of three computers and a maximum of 10. The district returning officer will announce the results at the district tally centre.

A double entry system will be applied in digitising the results with two operators each entering the same results at different times. They will have to match before the returning officer approves. All the districts will be interconnected by different mobile telecom companies. At the national tally centre, there will be a display centre where the results will be projected. Accredited observers, media and candidates' agents will access results for each of the polling stations.