

'Ratify democracy charter before 2023'

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GOVERNMENT has been urged to complete the ratification of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) before the 2023 general elections in order to promote free and fair elections.

The call was made by legal think-tank Veritas in its latest *Bill Watch* publication, where it said ratification of the AU charter would promote peace and stability in the country.

Zimbabwe signed ACDEG on March 21, 2018, but has not yet ratified it, according to the African Union (AU) status list for the charter which is on its website.

In March 2019, Parliament passed a resolution approving the charter after President Emmerson Mnangagwa had signed it at his first AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in Kigali, Rwanda.

Veritas said further delays in ratifying the charter would affect the smooth running of the 2023 elections.

“Whatever the reason for the delay in ratification, government risks the accusation that it no longer subscribes to the ideals of democracy, free and fair elections and good governance embodied in the charter,” Veritas said.

“With Zimbabwe coming up for a United Nations Universal Periodic Review and also seeking admission to the Commonwealth and needing foreign investment, Veritas urges government to deposit the Instrument of Ratification of the charter at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa.”

It said although Mnangagwa was commended for signing the charter, he had delayed endorsing it.

“This approval did not mean, however, that Zimbabwe was now a full State party to the charter.

“Parliamentary approval of the charter should have been followed by the President signing Zimbabwe’s Instrument of Ratification of the charter and the deposit of the Instrument of Ratification at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa by our ambassador to the African Union,” Veritas said.

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