

Mugabe Instructs Party to Prepare to Win Next Elections

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Robert Mugabe was re-elected as President of ZANU PF at the party's congress held in Harare on Saturday, 12th December 2009. He told delegates that the Unity Government was only a short term measure and that his party should be defiant. Mr Mugabe admitted for the first time that he lost elections and blamed it on mounting factionalism. *"The reason why we lost in March last year was because of factions...When it comes to elections, the party strangles itself."* he said.

Mugabe strongly encouraged his members to prepare for the next elections and to ensure they regain the constituencies they lost in 2008: *"Let's begin to work for the party and to organise it strongly. Elections are not very far off,"* Mugabe told ZANU-PF members at the end of a two-day congress late on Saturday.

However, political commentators have stated that it seems unlikely that ZANU-PF will be able to regain its lost ground, leaving a likely MDC success at the next elections. The next election is expected to be held after a new constitution is drafted.

Mugabe has caused further strains in the Unity Government at the rally by calling the MDC a puppet of the West, saying they asked for sanctions to be imposed on Zimbabwe.