

Runoff election in Zimbabwe likely

by UPI

HARARE, Zimbabwe -- The lack of official vote totals left Zimbabwe with conflicting reports as to whether President Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai were headed for a runoff. The government-owned Herald newspaper, while not offering a clear source for its information, reported the Mugabe-Tsvangirai contest likely would advance to a runoff because neither candidate received a majority of votes during last weekend's elections, The Washington Post reported Wednesday. However, the BBC reported that Tsvangirai's MDC Party said their candidate received 50.3 percent of the vote and has avoided a runoff. Official figures haven't been released. An independent election observer indicated Tsvangirai received just less than 50 percent of the vote, Mugabe got 42 percent and Simba Makoni received 8 percent. The top two finishers advance to a runoff if no one receives more than 50 percent of the vote. Results for the parliamentary elections indicate Mugabe's ruling party running slightly behind, with 93 seats, the Post said. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change captured 96 seats. Sources told the Post that unofficial contacts between Mugabe's advisers and opposition members about Mugabe's exit from power were under way. However, opposition leaders have denied that such discussions have taken place or that there would be any agreement with Mugabe before election results were published officially.

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