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Arrests, assaults, ballot box stuffing and low turnout in voting this morning

A massive police presence, some arrests and assaults, an attempt to introduce pre-voted ballot papers, and a very low turnout marked the first hours of the repeat elections this morning (Sunday 10 December). The elections were called by the Constitutional Council because of fraud in the 11 October elections and are all of Marromeu and parts of Gurué, Milange and Nacala-Porto. Again, Marromeu has particular problems.

Police violence and arrests in Gurué

The violence in Gurué began on Saturday night (9 December), when a supposed member of the New Democracy (ND) party was beaten by members of the police Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR), in the Cotxi primary school, in the Nacuacue neighbourhood, where five of the 13 polling stations are installed.

According to eye-witness testimony, the man was beaten up because he was walking through that area, which is now heavily guarded by police. "They asked him for a voter card and he said he didn't have one. They told him to lie on the ground, to be whipped. Because he refused, they hit him on the back of the neck with a rifle butt", said those who witnessed the assault. He was taken to hospital ([video](#)).

Also in Gurué, citizens were detained by the police on Sunday morning, allegedly for disturbing public order at the polling centre established at the Nacuecuè EPC. However, they were [released a few hours later](#). Two police vehicles of the Mahindra brand were placed at this school.

Marromeu again centre of problems - assisted ballot box stuffing and blocking observers

In Marromeu, Sofala, in the 25 June primary school, a voter was detained when he was caught slipping extra ballot papers into the ballot box at polling station 050331-05. The extra ballots were cancelled, but opposition supporters demanded the replacement of the polling station presiding officer and secretary. The presiding officer was eventually removed and taken away by the police, accused of facilitating the introduction of the pre-marked ballot paper.



A policeman registered as a voter in Beira, where he lives, but scheduled to work during these elections in Marromeu, tried to vote, but without success. He had been authorised by the Frelimo leadership in Marromeu to vote there. Amid confusion, was prevented from voting by members of the polling station staff. ([video](#))

According to the Mais Integridade civil society observation consortium, observation was prohibited in at least 15% of the polling stations in the Marromeu.

In Marromeu, the turnout was poor in many polling stations.



Empty polling stations in Milange and Nacala-Porto

In Milange, the election is running without upsets, but there are two polling stations where there are no voters. These are polling stations numbers 080581-04 and 080581-06, with 800 and 797 registered voters, respectively. There was a poor turnout at the other polling station (080585-01) in the Milange EPC with fewer than 30 voters in the queue.



The Renamo mayoral candidate Enoque Zaqueu blamed the low turnout on fear of police violence. He said the constant presence and circulation of the police at the polling stations could be why voters are not turning out to vote. Indeed, our correspondents report that the police passed through the polling stations and dispersed people who were watching the voting at a distance. There is an environment of fear and intimidation in Milange.

The Milange police commander, Alice dos Anjos, reacted to the Renamo accusations, by denying that the police are intimidating voters. For her, the police are just doing their job.

In **Nacala-Porto** where Renamo called for a boycott, the first two hours were characterised by a reasonable turnout with about 50 voters in the queues, but by 09.00 there were no voters at six of the nine polling stations in the Murrupelane EPC. The other three stations had very few voters in the queues.



In the Cristo é Vida Complete Primary School, the election began without problems, again with about 50 voters in the queue. But two hours later, turnout was down to less than 20 voters per queue. Some polling stations were completely empty.

In **Guruè** there were polling stations with more than 50 voters in the queues, but there are also polling stations without voters.

Observers today see same problems as on 11 October


The repeat voting "was once again marked by the same problems that called into question the integrity of the ballot on 11 October. In fact, there were reports of attempted fraud and friction between presiding officers and opposition candidates, as well as obstruction of observation," noted the [Mais Integridade civil society observation consortium in a report](#) (Portuguese only) published quickly this morning. The observers also confirmed ballot box stuffing.

Different voters list for parties and polling station team

Voting was stopped at polling stations in the Nacuecue EPC and Moneia EPC in Gurué, because the register being used by the polling station team was different from that which had been given to political parties.

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