

Number 234-235 – 31 March 2024

Published by Centro de Integridade Pública, Maputo, Mozambique

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STAE and police intimidation increases against CIP correspondents

In some districts it is not enough to be accredited to observe the electoral process. Thursday and Friday (28-29 March), three cases were reported of serious intimidation against CIP correspondents in Gaza, Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces.

In Ribáuè, Nampula, on Friday (29 March) a CIP correspondent was at the voter registration post in Namiconha. By coincidence, the STAE spokesperson was at the same post. Although the CIP observer was duly accredited, the STAE spokesperson banned him from observing the registration at that post, and alleged that his credential might be false. He said “the world is full of technology and credentials can be forged”. This official did not bother to phone up the provincial STAE office to check the authenticity of the credential.

The intention was obviously to block election observation. Ribáuè is the district where, during last year’s registration, the district STAE director at the time was found clandestinely registering people from outside the municipality so that they could vote in the municipal elections.

Intimidation at home: And in two cases the intimidation was even more serious because it was carried out at the home of the correspondent. Also Friday, a CIP correspondent in Limpopo, Gaza, was threatened after he had been observing at the post in the OMM EPC. Two armed police agents, a Frelimo Party monitor and a member of the registration brigade alleged that he had taken photos at the registration post (which is legal and permitted). They asked him to prove that he was accredited. Even after they ascertained that he was indeed accredited, they continued to threaten him, but did not stop him from observing. Instead they waited and eventually followed him home.

On Thursday in Ngaúma, Niassa, an observer was also threatened. They let him observe, but later in the day the head of operations of the police and local STAE leaders went to collect him at his house to take him to the police command, and only released him at 19.00.

Comment: This return to the previous system of trying to block journalists and observers may reflect Celso Correia's removal as head of Frelimo's elections campaign. Correia wanted publicity for electoral misconduct to show Frelimo's absolute power, as in Maputo and Matola. Correia had a tight organisation and word clearly went down the chain not to harass observers and press. With

Correia side-lined, it seems that the old party strategy of trying to hide misconduct by blocking media observation and reporting is now returning.

Threats to honest brigade member in Namuno EPC

At Namuno EPC in Derre, Zambézia, a registration brigade members found that Frelimo had instructed the typist and the police to prevent the registration of citizens who are supposedly Renamo supporters. The typist was told to write down wrongly the name of the supposed opposition voter. On voting day, the name of the voter will appear incorrectly written and he will be prevented from voting.

The brigade member in question discovered this manoeuvre, and whenever he found a voter who potentially supported the opposition, he register them personally to avoid the manoeuvres. But now he is afraid STAE will replace him with a Frelimo loyalist.

The post also has other problems. The post at the Namuno EPC was only able to register 3 people on Friday. The brigade members then announced that the machines had malfunctioned. The voters had to go home without being able to register.

The post has been facing constant breakdowns since last 25 March, which has prevented the registration of many voters, particularly because this is a mobile brigade, which, as from next Monday, 1 April, will be moved to the registration post at the Zunguza Primary School.

Suspected misconduct in Sofala

During registration for municipal elections last year in Beira and other parts of Sofala, instructions were issued in some places to only register Frelimo members, and when opposition members want to register, say the machine is broken, or even unplug it. This appears to be happening again.

In **Caia, Sofala**, citizens interviewed by our correspondents say brigade members only register people supposedly belonging to the ruling party. At one post, only 3 to 5 voters a day are registered, all of them members of Frelimo, and the others are blocked until the end of the day without registering, the would-be voters say.

The population of Matondo locality, in **Cheringoma**, has denounced the priority given to Frelimo members and supporters in the queues.

The registration post in the **Chibabava**-sede primary school opened late due to breakdowns of the mobile ID. The supervisor said the problem of breakdowns in this post is recurrent. The public waits for hours for the equipment to be repaired.

At the post in the Heróis Moçambicanos EPC, in **Beira**, the Mobile ID temporarily stops working, and later operates again.

At the Julius Nyerere EPC, in **Marromeu**, the brigade member typing data and taking photographs was spending much of his time on his mobile phone. One voter became angry and almost left the post. It was taking 20 minutes to register a single voter

Heavy rains make access difficult in Zambézia

Our correspondents report zones where they cannot observe the voter registration due to the heavy rains falling in many of the districts of Zambézia province, including Namacurra, Ile, and Derre districts, and part of Mocuba. The rains are not only making roads impassable, but also are making it difficult for the Mobile-Ids to function in zones where there is no electricity. The mobiles are powered by solar panels, and there are districts that have gone for days without seeing sunlight.

Sofala and Manica provinces, Balama and Chiure districts in Cabo Delgado, and many of the districts in Niassa and Nampula have also seen heavy rain disrupting registration.

Equipment breakdowns mean crowds cannot be registered

In Buzi, Sofala, brigade members say that every day about 300 voters appear to register, but the equipment cannot meet the demand due to frequent breakdowns, so only 50 to 90 are registered. At the registration post in the Guara-Guara EPC on 27 March, as from 12.00 the "mobile-ID" (registration computer) began to have difficulties in recognising fingerprints. The next day there were problems with the printer.

Rains hindered the power supply of the solar panels, so the mobile-ID was taken to be recharged at the house of the locality chief, without any security to prevent ghost voters be registered. Daily, the brigades are managing to register 90 of the about 300 citizens who appear.

In **Nacala-Porto**, since early morning on Friday (29 March) voters are lying on the floor waiting for a miraculous resumption of activities at the post in Ontupaia neighbourhood in the Muanona administrative post. There were also long and restless queues at 25 September registration post, where the supervisor said that since 28 March the printer could not be connected to the mobile-ID.

12 adolescents jailed for falsifying documents to register

Twelve young people were charged, tried and sentenced to a year's imprisonment and fines of 36,500 meticaís (\$500) each for falsifying documents in Alto Molocue, Zambezia, so that they could register and hence vote in October. One was acquitted for lack of evidence.

Of the 13 initially detained, three were caught at the Malaua 2 registration post, while they were trying to register, five in the post at the Pedreira Alta primary school, and the other five at the Pista Velha EPC.

Some brigades in Maputo register few voters

Most people in municipal areas registered last year for the October local election, so few are registering now. For example, in Maputo City, the registration post at the Mavalane A EPC, in the KaMavota municipal district, only managed to register 73 voters in two weeks.

The same thing is happening at the Zona 8 – Relento registration post, also in KaMavota district, where 59 voters were registered in 14 days.

In the Combatentes da Luta de Libertação Nacional EPC, over the same period 54 voters were registered, while in the post at the São Paulo Community School, 70 voters have been registered since 15 March.

Matola municipality, however, is recording rather higher numbers. For example, at brigade no. 305, installed in the Liberdade Secondary School, 1,400 voters were registered in 14 days. At the Patrice Lumumba EPC, in the Machava administrative post, on average 20 voters register per day. In the last 14 days they managed to register 1,200 voters.

In the non-municipal areas, the scenario is much better. At Brigade no. 13, in the Salamanga EPC, in Matutuine district, 647 voters were registered in the same period. In the same district, Brigade no. 09, located in the Madjuva EPC, has already registered 270 voters.

Disinformation about conjunctivitis scares voters away in Majune

Our correspondents in Majune district say that at registration post no. 257, at Pindura, 90 km from the district capital, in Niassa, voters are not appearing at the posts because of a wave of disinformation about the conjunctivitis epidemic.

Today, 28 March, the registration post had practically no voters. Everything started when health workers gave a lecture on the care to be taken to avoid catching conjunctivitis. One of the recommendations was to avoid contact with infected people. For the local residents, the registration posts are potentially places of contagion. So they decided not to go there.

Renamo internal fight stops inspection of registration in Mueembe

Our correspondents report that, since the registration began, there have been no monitors from the opposition parties at the post in the Chiuanjota primary school, Ligogolo Basic School and the Ntamila Primary School in the Chiconono administrative post in Mueembe.

Influential members of Renamo say that the absence of their monitors results from internal disputes. Renamo members who monitored previous elections, but were not chosen as candidates for the current ones, told others not monitor the posts.

More reports from our correspondents

Maputo

Registration is slow at the post in the Checua EPC, in **Moamba district**.

At the Gumbane EPC, in **Matola Rio**, there is no registration because the machines have no charge, due to the temperatures which make it impossible to capture sunlight to power the panels.

The Patrice Lumumba EPC, in **Matola**, has no electricity and the supervisor had to leave the post to search for batteries.

The post at the Josina Machel EPC, in **Moamba**, today recorded a considerable crowd of voters.

Gaza

Our correspondents did not report any cases of equipment breakdowns in the registration posts visited, just an absence of voters. Only two schools in **Chongoene** (Nhgoanine EPC) and in **Mandlakazi** (Indine Secondary School) had a considerable turnout.

Inhambane

Considerable crowds of voters are reported at the 27 July and Magadice EPCs, in **Panda district** and at the Tome EPC in **Funhalouro**.

But elsewhere there were registration computer breakdowns: Nhampossa primary school in **Inhambane city**, recorded a breakdown of the machines, Chihunze primary school in **Massinga**, machines have malfunctioned on 27 and 28 March. The same happened at the Macapula 1st and 2nd level EP, in **Inharrime district**. And there were printer malfunctions in **Maxixe** at Nhampa EP and Alberto Natal Ngovene EPC.

Manica

Bad weather in Manica province means solar panels are not working at Sanga EPC, 5 km from **Guro town**, at Mupha EPC, 15 kms from Guro town, and at Revue EPC. The post at the **Macossa** Secondary School opened late because of a machine malfunction.

Sofala

At the Nhataca post, more than 35 km from the town of Inhaminga, in **Cheringoma**, the mobile malfunctioned. The work has been stopped since yesterday.

At the Samba EPC, in **Marínguè**, the HP printer, which prints bulletins, and the PVC printer, which prints voter cards, are still out of order. At the registration post in the Semacueza EPC, 48 kms from **Muanza town**, the printer has been out of order for the past 3 days.

At the Correia post, 100 km from **Chemba town**, it has not been possible to take photographs since Tuesday (26 March) because the roll of tape has broken.

Tete

In two weeks **Zumbo district** has registered 17,934 voters, which is 38.6% of the target.

In the Fíngoè EPC, in **Marávia district**, there are long queues, but the voters abandon the queues because of slowness in switching on the mobiles due to the bad weather. The mobiles do not start.

In **Mágoè**, on Wednesday and Thursday, two posts did not open because their mobiles malfunctioned. They did not take photographs. Votes were taken at the Cazewe and Tchodo posts. There are also reports that many posts had energy problems because of the rain.

At the post in the Fufuze EPC, in Muze, 150 km from the **Zumbo district capital**, for two days the registered voters have been unable to pick up their cards because of a printer breakdown. At the Malemia post, in **Doa**, the printer is out of order. It does not print cards.

On 27 March, two men were detained for disorder, in **Chifunde district**.

Zambézia

At the Hode EPC, 29 km from the **Pebane district capital**, 472 voters have been registered. Because of the rain, the post is now inaccessible, and there is no electricity in the school.

At the post located in the Namatida EPC, in Mexixini locality, in **Namacurra**, activities came to a halt at 12.49, on Thursday (28 March), due to the bad weather. The mobiles do not hold their charge for long. The brigade members are obliged to pause the work because sunlight is not falling with sufficient intensity on their solar panel. It is still raining in Namacurra, which makes access difficult to the registration posts in Macuse locality. At the Jacota EPC, in Mexixine locality, in Namacurra, there is a problem with the printer, which has not printed voter cards for the past 5 days. In the post at the Mazaro EPC, in Mixixine locality, in **Namacurra**, the printer does not print voter cards. STAE has been informed of the problem, but there has been no answer.

Since the start of registration, on 15 March, there have been problems of constant equipment breakdowns at the Namacala post, in the Mbauane administrative post, **Mulevala district**.

At the Sumale registration post, in Chilomo locality, **Morrumbala district**, the printer has malfunctioned.

At the **Ile sede** ESG, Zambezia, there have been two queues, one for general attendance and the other for students. More priority is given to the queue for students, which also contains members of Frelimo, and this is causing agitation. At the end of the day, the brigade members always record the names of the remaining voters so that they will be the first to be registered the following day.

In the post at the Continuadores EP, in Luabo town, registration is very slow, so that the voters stay in the queue all day, and at the end of the day go home with the recommendation that they will be registered on the following day. The brigade members say the slowness is due to problems in the computer system.

At the Conono EPC, about 25 km from **Mocuba city**, registration has been slow since the first day.

At the Mussama EPC, in **Inhassunge**, registration has stopped because of a malfunction of the solar panel.

A large number of potential voters are appearing at the Moniua post, in **Ile district**. Despite the crowds, the brigade will be moved to Macorlico, but will return to Moniua within 15 days. In Ile, STAE has 34 brigades – 17 of them fixed and 17 mobile.

At the Mugubia EPC, in Pida locality, in **Namacurra**, the attendance of voters is poor, due to the low temperatures, which affect the operation of the machine which depends on sunlight to power the panels.

Nampula

The registration post at the Ampoense Basic School, in **Mossuril**, is working again after a 5 day stoppage due to a malfunction of the mobile.

System failures are characterising registration at the post in the EPC-Lili2 EPC, in **Nacala-Port**.

The registration post installed at Mochiua, 57 km from the **Mogovolas district capital**, still has problems in issuing voter cards.

At the Muessi EPC, in **Malema**, since Thursday there have been problems in printing voter cards.

The post set up at the **Angoche Secondary School** is not working because of a lack of voter cards. According to the brigade members, at the Angoche STAE, there are days when they resort to the neighbouring posts.

Between 08.00 and 09.00 at the **Moma Sede EPC**, there was no registration of voters for lack of roll.

Voters at the Namalala administrative post, in **Nacala-a-velha**, complain that they are being charged money to register.

Voters at the registration post in the Cabo Lourenço EPC, in Meconta, accuse the brigade members of not giving priority to the elderly, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.

Niassa

There are no voters at the post in the Teterane EPC, in **Cuamba district**, due to malfunctioning of the machines.

Registration began late at the Lussangasse post, 20 km from **Mandimba town**, due to the low temperatures.

Cabo Delgado

In Nacussa village, in **Ancuabe**, activities were halted on 28 March because the machines are out of order. At the post in the Buji EPC, 10 km from **Mocimboa da Praia town**, by 11.30 registration had not yet begun.

At the registration post in Muade village, in Mualela locality, in **Nangade district**, attendance is slow. At the post in Zaulane EPC, brigade 9, post 15, in Murrebue-sede locality, **Mecufi district**, the voters are complaining of slow attendance by the brigade members.

There was no registration on 28 March at the **Metuge-Sede** Basic School, because there was no roll.


Access roads remain a problem in **Mueda** and STAE complains of a shortage of transport and of fuel.

At the Tratará EPC, in **Metuge**, registration is going ahead, but the brigade members have to contribute their own money to buy Credelec (pre-paid electricity).

Brigade 06, at the Naplimuite EPC, in **Mecufi**, returned to work after 4 days of paralysis because of the rain.

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