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Without district elections

CNE proposes general elections for 9 October 2024

For this to happen, the President of the Republic should, on the proposal of the National Elections Commission (CNE), publish by 8 April the decree that fixes 9 October next year as the date for holding the presidential and parliamentary elections, and the elections of the members of the Provincial Assemblies and of the provincial governor.

The CNE's proposal does not include district elections, since holding those elections depends on approving separate legislation. Last February, the Standing Commission of the Assembly of the Republic, with a majority consisting of Frelimo members, voted to withdraw from the parliamentary agenda the proposals submitted by Renamo about the legislative framework for the district elections (see Bulletin 29).

The CNE proposal, decided on Tuesday (21/03) at its extraordinary session, is in obedience to the law which states that the date of the elections must be fixed 18 months in advance. The CNE does not want to wait for the outcome of the Frelimo proposal to amend the electoral law to reduce the period for fixing the date of the elections from 18 to 15 months, which might risk violating the law.

Thus, it is expected that the proposal will be submitted to the Council of Ministers by next week.

Deadlines for requests for accreditation of monitors have expired, but the CNE will continue to receive them, even beyond the deadline

Legally, the deadline for presenting requests for accreditation of monitors to observe the voter registration expired Tuesday (21/03), but the political parties can still request accreditation, even beyond the deadline envisaged by the law. In the meeting with political parties held on Monday (20/03), the representative of the MDM again presented concern at the lack of territorial demarcation of the boundaries of the new municipalities, which is preventing the political parties from defining the number of monitors to be accredited. As a solution, the National Elections Commission (CNE) decided to continue receiving requests for accreditation for the political party monitors, without observing the legal deadlines laid down in the law.

This process will run simultaneously with the accreditation of monitors by the CNE's local support bodies in the districts and cities, which should end three days (16 April) before the start of voter registration (20 April).

In the Ministry of State Administration and the Public Service, the demarcation of the municipal boundaries was approved more than a month ago. This will reach the Council of Ministers after the opinion of the provincial assemblies of the provinces where the municipalities are located. There are no specific deadlines, but it is expected that the demarcations will be approved, at the latest, by the first week of April.

According to the law, the political parties and coalitions of political parties should present the requests for the accreditation of their monitors to the CNE's local support bodies "up to 30 days before the start of the voter registration". The deadline for the political parties, coalitions of parties and citizens' groups to present their accreditation requests was 21 March. However, the Government has not yet approved the territorial boundaries of the 12 new municipalities. We have learnt that this process is stuck in the Provincial Assemblies which should issue an opinion about the territorial boundaries of the new municipalities in their provinces.

Imbroglia in the debate on proposal to amend the Electoral Law

The Renamo parliamentary group has requested a postponement in debating the Frelimo proposal to reduce from 18 to 15 months the deadline for fixing the date of the general elections. Renamo justifies its request on the grounds that it needs "to undertake the due and pertinent consultations" about the matter. As we have learnt, the Renamo parliamentary group understood the master stroke of Frelimo in proposing a reduction in the deadline to allow the date of the 2024 elections to be announced by 14 July. This would allow Frelimo, as from 13 June this year, to approve constitutional amendments unilaterally, without needing votes from the opposition.

The Constitution can only be amended five years after the previous changes took effect, and the amendments require the votes of two thirds of the deputies. Before the five years are up (on 13 June), the Constitution of the Republic can only be altered by three quarters of the votes of the deputies in the Assembly of the Republic. In this case, right now Frelimo would need votes from the opposition to amend the Constitution (see [Bulletin 40](#)). The current version of the Constitution is only five years old on 12 June this year. It has been in force since 12 June 2018.

The Renamo request to postpone the debate in parliament entered the Assembly on Tuesday, 21 March ([link](#)).

Pilot registration did not reach 50% of the voters envisaged

In the south of the country, only 25% of the potential voters were registered during the 20 days of registration. Manica managed to surpass 50%. In Nampula the figure was 48%.


The results of the pilot registration could be a warning that in the south more persistent work is needed to mobilise the public to register. The reasons for this lack of interest in the south of the country are not officially known, but the electoral administration bodies point to the conflict between humans and wildlife as one of the causes for the low turnout in Matutuine, Maputo province, given the proximity of the registration posts to the Maputo Reserve. The rains were also indicated as an obstacle to the registration in Moamba and Magude districts, also in Maputo province.

But the pilot registration is only intended to train staff, and is not a real registration. Many people believed they were receiving voter cards when they were not. Hence, there may have been little support in areas where people understood that this was not real registration.

In terms of numbers, in the three southern districts, 8,267 voters were registered, which is 25% of the 33,000 voters expected to register. While in the south, turnout was very poor, the same cannot be said of the centre and north. In the three districts of Manica, in the centre of the country, turnout reached 54%. That is, 17,852 voters were registered out of a total of 33,000 forecast. In the north, in Nampula province, turnout reached 48% of voters, which is 15,758 voters out of a total of 33,000 expected to register.

Overall, the number of voters registered in the pilot registration was 41%. That is, only 41,877 voters registered out of the 99,000 forecast.

Rain was the greatest problem in the three provinces, because not only did it hinder potential voters from going to the registration posts, but it also disturbed the work of the voter education agents, not allowing them to reach members of the public to raise their awareness.

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