

2018 Local Elections - 9

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Low turnout; half of polling stations opened late

Overall turnout in the Nampula mayoral by-election was low. By late morning there were few voters. (see photo)

Following the fiasco last month of distribution to parties of poorly copied flash drives with register books, the heads of CNE and STAE were both in Nampula, but it did not help. Administration was again a shambles, and 47% of the 401 polling stations opened late. The main reason for delays was the late arrival of polling station materials such as ballot boxes, and late arrival of register books which in some cases were sent to the wrong polling stations. Polling stations were supposed to open at 7 am but some had not opened by 9.30 am.

Register book problems persisted throughout the day. At Malimusi school with nine polling stations, voting was interrupted twice this afternoon. The first halt was at 14.00 and lasted 40 minutes when party delegates (scrutineers) found that the copy of the register book given to them did not correspond to the one being using by the polling station staff. A STAE (Election Technical Secretariat) member arrived and voted restarted, but was halted again at 15.40 over the same issue.

In several polling stations, voters with cards found their names were not in the register book.

At 14.47 the polling station staff at Muengane primary school went on strike and would not let people vote, claiming hunger and the failure to pay them.



Polling station staff at three polling stations in Belenenses primary school have nothing to do and sit outside waiting for voters at 11h45, but there are a few voters at the fourth polling station at the rear of the photo.

Possible fraudulent vote found

A ballot paper marked for the Frelimo candidate for mayor was left behind in a voting booth. It was shown to our news editor by the head of polling station 03001702 at secondary school 12 Outubro. Did someone simply fail to put their ballot paper in the ballot box and no one noticed, or was it brought in from outside and intended to be deposited by a Frelimo voter? The head of the polling station said a check of numbers would be done to see if the ballot paper came from that polling station or another.

Critical report from Votar Moçambique

Votar Moçambique, the civil society coalition that includes this newsletter, did a survey of the opening which was highly critical. It is available in Portuguese on <http://bit.ly/2Bp3KSS>.

There were problems with the police, who are not supposed to be within 300 metres of a polling station, but were in a few cases seated just outside the polling station and in one case (EP1 da Pedreira) were inside the polling station. Five agents of the riot police (Forças de Intervenção Rápida - FIR) were allowed to vote at EPC de Muatala without showing any documents. Police, as

well as observers, journalists and party delegates are allowed to vote at any polling stations, but they must show their voters card.

There were complaints of campaigning and of campaign materials by both MDM and Frelimo in or near several polling stations, which is not allowed.

In EPC de Namuato B five people voted without any documents being shown, with the authorization of STAE. At least one person with a valid card was not allowed to vote.

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