

2013 Local Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

Number LE-36 6 November 2013



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Published by CIP, Centro de Integridade Pública and AWEPA, the European Parliamentarians for Africa
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Campaign opens, generally calm

Campaigns opened yesterday in most of the 53 municipalities with marches, meetings, and especially election posters everywhere. Nearly everywhere the campaign for the 20 November local elections was calm and orderly. The only incidents reported were in Gorongosa (below) and in Tete, where a confrontation between MDM and Frelimo left one person hospitalised.

At national level, Frelimo issued an instruction to its campaigners not to use state cars, but our correspondents report this has been widely ignored.

Gorongosa: army shots leave residents in fear

Shots by the army (FADM) caused fear and disrupted the first day of the campaign in Gorongosa.

A major Renamo attack north of Gorongosa yesterday killed 3 soldiers and injured 18, some of whom were brought to Gorongosa hospital. To clear a way for the ambulance through streets crowded with shoppers and campaigners, the army shot in the air – causing panic.

The recent attacks have been on the main north-south N1 road, in the section which runs from the River Save north through Muxungué and Inchope, through Gorongosa town, toward Maringué. So there is a substantial military presence and tension in the town.

Despite the tensions caused by the Renamo attacks along the road and the shots yesterday, normal campaigning resumed this morning. Gorongosa has been the only municipality which has had problems. Elsewhere in the centre of Mozambique the campaign opened normally, with parties, candidates and supporters out in the street trying to win votes.

CNE sees no reason to give different treatment to Gorongosa

There is not yet any reason to give special treatment to Gorongosa, the municipality closest to the military conflict zone. And this will only change if there is a serious threat to the electoral process. Speaking Monday, before the most recent incident, Election Commission (CNE) President Abdul Carimo said that there were no reasons to fear the voting could not take place in a free, just and transparent way. Until now, there have been no threats which suggest voting could not take place.

He noted that the electoral law (7/2013) says that in the case of a "natural calamity or perturbation of the public order", it is the district election commission which decides if it is necessary to delay

the vote, and the district commission then informs the national commission. If elections are delayed, they should take place on the second Sunday after the previously set date.



State car in campaign in Ilha de Moçambique

Widespread use of state cars

Use of state cars by Frelimo was widespread in the campaign opening yesterday, despite explicit instructions from Frelimo headquarters not to use government vehicles, and a warning by CNE president Abdul Carimo that such use is illegal.

Perhaps the most blatant example reported by our correspondents was in Nacala. The administrator of Nacala-Velha, Daniel Chato, was there to support his party in his protocol car, a Toyota Hilux D4D, registration ADD 362 MP. And a Nampula City Ministry of Public Works car, ABF 657 MP, with a ministry driver, had driven 200 km to Nacala with party leaders, and was seen with Frelimo posters.

In various places such as Mueda, Cabo Delgado, and Nhamatanda, Sofala, cars from the provincial water directorate and other services were seen, with Frelimo posters covering the registration numbers. In Gondola, Manica, agriculture and public works vehicles AAH-418-MP and AAZ-056-MP were in use by Frelimo.

In Chiure, Cabo Dalgado, the administrator's car and two others, ACD 055 MP and ADI 106 MP, were seen. State cars were also seen in use by Frelimo in Beira, Tete, Marromeu, Chibuto, Ilha de Moçambique (see photo above) and Angoche.

MDM says Frelimo pulled down its posters in Lichinga

The Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM, the main opposition party in this election) accuses Frelimo of having destroyed its election material in Lichinga, Niassa. This is confirmed by our correspondent there.

"You don't see any MDM posters, because Frelimo had groups pulling them down during the night," said MDM candidate Pedro Baptista. But he stressed he would not imitate those tactics. "We campaign in a civilised way"

There are also accusations of Frelimo pulling down MDM posters in Beira..

Campaign opening in various provinces

Manica

Chimoio awoke to a display of posters along the road and on local buildings. Frelimo, which currently governs the city, opened its campaign with a "showmicio" – a Brazilian word for a combination of show and meeting (comicio). It was in the Renamo stronghold at 7 de Abril primary school, and was attended by about 200 people, from civil servants to many children.

Renamo is boycotting this election, so the main opposition is the MDM, which chose to walk many kilometres through the city streets talking to people, stressing its difference from Frelimo.

Frelimo Mayor Raul Conde, standing for re-election, promised to "greatly reduce" urban poverty and bring social justice to the city through a fund to combat poverty. He also promised to expand water and electricity and improve roads and bridges. MDM promises better roads, improvement of children's health through creches and school lunches, and improvements to water and sanitation.

There was a minor confrontation when Frelimo members caught MDM members putting their own posters on top of Frelimo ones. Police were called, who reminded the MDM members that this is illegal. Canal de Moçambique reports that three MDM members were arrested in the incident, but our correspondent says this is not correct, and there were no arrests.

Sussendenga was plastered with MDM and Frelimo pamphlets and posters early yesterday morning. Caravans and parades of cars, bicycles and people on foot with sound systems crossed the town. In Gondola the campaign also opened with marches and parades, but less public interest.

Nampula

Frelimo and MDM are standing in all 7 municipalities in the province, Nampula city, Nacala, Angoche, Ilha de Moçambique, Monapo, Ribáuè and Malema. Citizen's lists PAHUMO and ASSEMONA are only standing in some places.

Frelimo was the only party to fully open its campaign in all 7; other parties were complaining about late arrival of materials. But there was some sort of parades and campaigns everywhere, and no reports of any incidents.

Zambézia

Again, Frelimo and MDM are the only parties standing in all 6 municipalities. In Quelimane, MDM opened its campaign in Namuinho neighbourhood and Frelimo in Sagrada. Small groups marched through various parts of the city, with no incidents reported.

PDD is standing in Milange, but did not open its campaign yesterday. In Gurué, where a close election is expected, campaigning only started yesterday afternoon.

Elsewhere

Our correspondents report that the campaign has opened across Inhambane, Sofala, Maputo, Gaza, and Niassa provinces and so far has been calm with no incidents.

Carimo appeals for civility and not repeating misconduct of 2008

The President of the CNE, Abdul Carimo, appealed Monday for civility in the electoral campaign. "My fear is that this campaign could be marked by incidents similar to those in previous campaigns." He referred to the use of children to block campaigns of opponents, physical violence, and use of state and municipal cars and resources.

He appealed to voters not to support disorder and violence, and for candidates not to use language that incites violence. And in the present climate of military incidents, any violence could discourage people from voting.

He also reminded parties and candidates that the electoral law prohibits the use of public goods such as cars, and even bars the use of material of public or state-owned companies.

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Published by CIP and AWEPA

web: bit.ly/MozEI13

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Academic citations: Cite as "2013 Local Elections, Mozambique Political Process Bulletin, Maputo"
