

2013 Local Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

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Skirmishes and arrests in election campaign

Increasing aggression between members of the two main political parties, Frelimo and MDM (Movimento Democrático de Moçambique, Mozambique Democratic Movement), was noted toward the end of the first week of campaigning for the 20 November municipal elections.

A main form of campaigning is with "caravans" - cars, lorries with party militants, and supporters on foot and bicycle - which parade around the town. When caravans meet, there are often confrontations.

Some of these cases are reaching the police and there have been some arrests, but there are also cases in which police try to calm the situation by appealing to victims of attacks to not press charges.

Quelimane

MDM and Frelimo caravans met in Sagrada late Thursday afternoon and the skirmishes were serious enough to draw the police. Four MDM members were arrested. Zambézia police spokesman Elsídia Filipe said this is the only serious incident so far.

Filipe complained parties do not plan or announce their routes, so meetings are inevitable, and parties need to restrain their members. This is made harder because party caravans include drunks and children who are not voters.

Also on Thursday in Bairro Popular a Frelimo youth and women's brigade happened to meet the car of a *vereador* - the equivalent of a minister in local government, and in this case a member of MDM, which has the mayor of Quelimane. The *vereador* was not campaigning, but the Frelimo brigade threw water, sand and stones at the car, as well as yelling insults.

Both Frelimo and MDM promise to conduct their campaigns with civility and not aggression, and to discipline their members.

Catandica: MDM members are accused of attacking Frelimo member Zacarias Muzaja with sticks and injuring him severely enough that he was hospitalised. The incident happened when two caravans met in Sabão neighbourhood at 11 am Thursday. MDM candidate Rangel Mairose and spokesman Neto Mussona said the attack was a response to what they called constant persecution during the campaign

Nyamayábue: MDM candidate José Francisco Gimo accuses Frelimo of vandalising its campaign material, and of setting fire to a hut used for the campaign on 1 November. Frelimo Mutarara district spokesman Francisco Coutinho Guta says the charge is false and that Frelimo is mature and responsible, with great respect for the law. Nhamayábue is the new municipality in Tete province and will be interesting because it is an area which has historically voted for the opposition in a province which is both dominated by Frelimo and which in past elections had serious Frelimo fraud. MDM sees a good chance of winning, but it will be a hard fought election.

Dondo: MDM district delegate Chico José and a Frelimo member were detained and accused of destroying campaign propaganda of the other party, and of inciting violence. Frelimo candidate Castigo Chiutar said the incident occurred because MDM was bringing in people from Beira to support the campaign - a slightly odd complaint as Frelimo is doing this nearly everywhere, and it is not against any rules. MDM candidate José Chiremba accuses Frelimo of bending the law to intimidate the opposition.

Xai-Xai: MDM members Alfeu Bila and Arlindo Mathe were jailed in a summary proceedings for attacking a woman who was a Frelimo supporter in the informal market known as Mercado Dhlakama on Friday.

Chibuto: In Bairro Chimundo, the neighbourhood secretary, Fernando Mandlate, is accused of tearing the campaign t-shirts of five MDM members Friday. MDM has protested to the district election commission.

And an example of civility: A Frelimo caravan met the MDM caravan with its mayoral candidate, Venâncio Mondlane, at Xiquelene market, Ka Maxaquene district, Maputo, on Thursday. But instead of the expected confrontation, the two sides sang and danced together for 10 minutes and then went on their separate ways.

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Frelimo still making free use of state cars

Frelimo continues to make illegal use of state vehicles in various municipalities, our correspondents report.

Nacala-Porto: Government drivers have brought in cars from neighbouring districts, where there are no elections, to support the campaign in Nacala-Porto. Government cars plastered with posters for mayoral candidate Rui Chong included a white double cabin car ACT 229 MP, double cabin grey Ford Ranger ADI 698 MP and white small truck AAW 668 MP. Pictures of two of the vehicles are on the next page. Frelimo is also accused of improperly putting posters on the wall outside the main hospital, photo on following page.





Inhambane: Several state cars have been identified, but with the registration numbers covered by pamphlets. One white double cabin pick-up could be identified with registration MMF 02-12. Our correspondent in Inhambane city notes the significant number of public servants participating in the Frelimo campaign during working hours.

Cabo-Delgado: The Governor of Cabo-Delgado is using a car from the provincial directorate of agriculture to campaign for Frelimo in Mueda, Mocímboa da Praia, Chiúre and Pemba. The car is a Toyota D4D ABZ 697 MP.

Ilha de Moçambique: A state Toyota Dina registration ACE 88 MP was seen covered in Frelimo posters and transporting Frelimo supporters in the campaign..

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STAE training 24,000 polling station staff

STAE (State Secretariat for Election Administration, Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral) is training 24,000 staff for 4,214 polling stations in 53 municipalities for polling day Wednesday 20 November.

The head of the Maputo city elections commission, Victor Miguel, stressed that "the process must be free, fair and transparent. Poling station staff members cannot alter, replace, remove, steal, destroy, erase, disable or change the voters register, ballots, minutes, notices or other documents to which they have access in the polling station."

CNE spokesman John Beirão stressed that this year members of polling station staff have personal responsibility for any act of fraud taking place in their polling station.

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