

2013 Local Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

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Riot police tear gas MDM rally in Beira; many injured

Riot police (Força de Intervenção Rápida, FIR) Saturday afternoon shot tear gas into the crowd at the final rally (showmicio) of the MDM mayoral candidate, Daviz Simango, creating panic. The rally was in Munhava, Beira. Shortly afterwards, members of the crowd retaliated by attacking the nearby Frelimo headquarters.

TVM reports 46 people treated at Beira Central Hospital, police say 21 arrests. TVM and Beira Hospital say there were no deaths, which now seems most probable, in contrast to earlier reports of deaths by observers, STV and Domingo.

A day after the events it is still difficult to get a clear picture of what happened. It appears that the police and riot police were escorting Frelimo cars, covered in Frelimo posters, to the nearby Frelimo headquarters. The police tried to clear a way beside or through the crowd, which responded by throwing stones at the cars. FIR responded with tear gas, creating panic.

The @Verdade correspondent adds a possible detail: one of the cars hit a young man, who responded, probably by banging on the car, and was then pulled into a car by police. Youth at the rally then tried to free the detained young man, causing a commotion and leading to the stoning of the cars.

Whatever the precise sequence of events, the riot police fired tear gas and shot live ammunition, at least shooting into the air, which caused panic in the crowd – most of whom knew nothing about the original incident.

Some young people in the audience responded by attacking the Frelimo cars and headquarters. Three Frelimo cars were burned and the Frelimo candidate for mayor, Jaime Neto, received minor injuries.

TVM at 13.00 showed that the Frelimo platform for the final rally in Beira today had been burned.

MDM president and Beira mayoral candidate Daviz Simango issued a statement this afternoon accusing Frelimo Secretary General Paunde of "coordinating a strategy of violence" and of being provocative by passing next to the MDM final rally.

This afternoon Beira is calm.

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