

2013 Local Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

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Low turnout today in Nampula rerun

Polls opened on time at 7 am this morning in Nampula city, but turnout was low. By 9 am there were no queues and by early afternoon no voters at all, for example at schools in Barragem, Niaro, Namicopo, Limoeiros, APEA and Nahene. At Centro Hípico this afternoon, the head of the polling station went out onto the street to invite people in to vote. At other polling stations, staff were asleep.

The election today, 1 December, is a rerun of the election which took place on 20 November. That election was annulled because of errors on the ballot paper – a candidate for mayor was omitted and the wrong name was given for a party standing for municipal assembly. But the election was only cancelled after polls closed at 6 pm and everyone had voted, which may have discouraged voters from voting again today.

But the election on 20 November was also annulled because of misconduct by the Nampula Provincial Elections Commission (CPE). Initially, despite the error in the assembly ballot paper, only the election for mayor was annulled, and the National Elections Commission (CNE) ordered that the assembly votes be guarded so that both sets could be counted at the same time. The CNE ordered that any movement of ballot boxes must be accompanied by party agents, but the Nampula CPE rejected this and moved the ballot boxes to a warehouse unaccompanied. Thus parties had no check that ballot boxes had not been tampered with, so the CNE annulled the assembly election as well.

This issue has highlighted a tension between the CNE and CPEs. The election laws were approved very late and the new CNE head Abdul Carimo was only appointed this year. CPEs were named by the previous CNE president, João Leopoldo da Costa. Carimo is a former head of the civil society Electoral Observatory, while Leopoldo is viewed as closer to Frelimo. Thus some CPEs appear to be more aligned to Frelimo and are rejecting instructions from Carimo.

Reflecting their concern, the CNE and the technical secretariat, STAE, sent high level teams to Nampula to oversee the election today.

Also in Nampula

An MDM poll watcher was refused entry to polling station 03001003 on the grounds that his credential from the 20 November election has not been updated. So there were two Frelimo delegates but no

one from MDM.

A polling station head was arrested at polling station 03001802 at Belenenses primary school. Hermínio da Silva Atumane tried to vote even though his voters card was issued in Angoche. He said he is a civil servant in the Angoche municipal administration.

A polling station vice president was expelled for being obviously drunk, at polling station 03004205 at Napipine primary school.

District administrators were seen in polling stations watching the voting. At 9 am the administrators of Mossuril (Nerina John), Lalaua (João Inteka), Mecuburi (Ernesto Anakapala), Ribaué (Juma Taratibo) and Erati (Ângela Benece) were all seen sitting in different polling stations in classrooms in Textafrica primary school.

New ballot papers were produced at no cost by the South African printers which made the original mistake, according to Felisberto Naife, director-general of STAE (Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral, Election Technical Secretariat). But the CNE has had to pay all other costs, including transport and salaries for polling station staff.

Frelimo holds narrow wins in Mocuba, Gurué after nulos check

Rechecking of invalid votes (nulos) has confirmed Frelimo's narrow victories in Mocuba and Gurué, Zambézia. All ballots considered invalid at the polling station are rechecked by the National Elections Commission and some are considered valid and added to the totals for the candidate. These votes can make a difference in a close race.

Normally more opposition votes are accepted, but in these two cases more Frelimo votes were accepted, widening the margin of Frelimo's narrow wins.

Gurué: After the count at city level, Frelimo mayoral candidate Jahanguir Hussen was ahead of MDM candidate Orlando Janeiro by just one vote, 6,626 to 6,625. But Hussen gained 31 reconsidered votes, for a total of 6,657 votes, while Janeiro gained only 7, for 6,632. For assembly the margin was wider; Frelimo had 6,804 and gained 39 votos, for 6,843, while MDM had 6,449 and gained 17, for 6,466. A further 290 nulos were accepted as invalid – just 2.1% of the vote.

Mocuba: Frelimo candidate Beatriz Gulamo led by 427 votes at the polling stations and was awarded 80 while the MDM candidate, Fernando Pequenino, gained only 1 requalified vote, so the Frelimo candidate won 10,897 to 10,391. A further 495 nulos were still considered invalid – just 2.3% of the total vote.

Gurué after requalification

Mayor	Valid at polling station	Votes accepted by CNE	Final total
Jahanguir Hussein (Frelimo)	6,626	31	6,657
Orlando Janeiro (MDM)	6,625	7	6,632
Municipal assembly			
Frelimo	6,804	39	6,843
MDM	6,449	17	6,466

Source: CNE

Mocuba after requalification

Mayor	Valid at polling station	Votes accepted by CNE	Final total
Beatriz Gulamo (Frelimo)	10,817	80	10,897
Fernando Pequenino (MDM)	10,390	1	10,391
Municipal assembly			
Frelimo	11,163	66	11,229
MDM	9,876	7	9,883

Source: CNE

In Beira MDM gains 1100 votes from CNE reconsideration

In Beira, where the MDM (Mozambique Democratic Movement, Movimento Democrático de Moçambique) won an overwhelming victory, it also gained many requalified nulos. According to *CanalMoz*, of 4,397 municipal assembly nulos sent by the Beira city election commission, 1,100 for MDM and 108 for Frelimo were considered valid. For mayor, Daviz Simango of the MDM gained 871 votes and Frelimo's Jaime Neto 198.

Polling station staff are still illegally invalidating votes for the opposition

A vote is invalid if the intent of the voter is not clear, if there are marks for two different candidates, or if a word is written on the ballot paper. All invalid votes are reconsidered by the National Elections commission, which makes a judgement as to whether the intent of voters is clear. And as we note above, the CNE does accept as valid ballot papers which had been rejected at city level.

Invalidation occurs when polling station staff add an extra ink mark to a ballot paper, making it look as if a person has voted for two different candidates, and thus the vote is invalid (nulo). Often there is an X for one candidate and an ink mark for the other. This became a serious problem in 2009, when we estimated that 1% of all votes had been falsely invalidated by polling station staff. To try to prevent this, the law was changed to prohibit any ink in the polling station during the count.

The reconsideration is done in public at the CNE headquarters in Maputo, and our journalists watched last week. And it became clear that the law change had not been enough, and that polling station staff are still invalidating ballot papers. For example, in the reconsideration of the 4.397 nulos for presidente of Beira, it was clear that many of them were votes for the MDM candidate Daviz Simango. The voter had put an X next to Simango, but someone else had added an ink mark – not as a fingerprint as in the past, but some kind of object dipping in ink and drawn across the ballot paper.

But when the CNE agreed procedures for reconsideration of nulos this year, they made it impossible to identify who was responsible. Each polling station sends its nulos in a plastic bag, but CNE instructions are that all the bags are opened and all the nulos for a municipality should be put in one pile. This destroys the possibility of finding out which polling station sent the illegally invalidated ballot papers, and ensures that the guilty staff are safe and cannot be prosecuted.

Quelimane nulos not reconsidered

Quelimane is the only municipality in which nulos were not reconsidered by the CNE last week, said CNE member António Macuarica. Apparently some polling stations are still missing; it has already been reported that the Zambézia CPE said some results sheets were missing. CNE spokesman João Beirão said he did not know anything about the matter.

Chimoio protest march

MDM supporters in Chimoio staged a peaceful demonstration Tuesday to protest what they consider to be misconduct by the city election commission.

Manuel de Sousa, MDM Chimoio Delegate, said "on Monday we submitted proof of fraud. We have results sheets (editais) proving the use of non-existent registration books and that we are the great winners in this city." Chimoio city election commission gave the Frelimo candidate for mayor, Raul Conde, 53% of the vote, while the MDM count gives 51% to its candidate, João Ferrão.

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