

2013 Local Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

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Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)
Deputy editor: Adriano Nuvunga News editor: Teles Ribeiro

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Gurué election campaign passes without incident

The short campaign for the rerun of the Gurué municipal election began Tuesday 4 February and ends this afternoon, 6 February. The campaign has passed with civility and order. For example, the campaign has been characterised by substantial movement and there have been various meetings of parades of the two parties, but no confrontations.

Both parties see this election as important and have sent high officials. Frelimo's campaign includes Sérgio Pantie (a member of the Frelimo Political Commission), Lucas Chomera (Vice-President of parliament and ex-Governor of Zambézia), Joaquim Veríssimo (present Governor of Zambézia), most district administrators from Zambézia, and most Frelimo mayors from the province.

The Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) mobilised its top people, including party president and Beira mayor Daviz Simango, Luis Boavida (MDM Secretary General), Manuel de Araújo (mayor of Quelimane), and Mahamudo Amurane (mayor-elect of Nampula).

MDM mayoral candidate Orlando Janeiro has been promising voters that he will build a new market providing better conditions for traders and shoppers, pave the main roads which are in poor condition, and expand the electricity network. Frelimo candidate Jahanguir Ussene promises to solve the problem of lack of water, buy an ambulance, and rehabilitate school classrooms and provide desks.

The campaign ends this afternoon, 6 February, and both parties will hold rallies at 13.00. There is no campaigning tomorrow, Friday.

The election is being rerun after the Constitutional Council ruled the 20 November vote invalid. Results sheets given to party delegates and observers at the polling stations after the count on 20 November showed an MDM victory, but the results announced by the district election commission inexplicably showed a Frelimo victory.

Gurué has 36,672 registered voters and 49 polling stations. There will be many observers in Gurué Saturday and we hope to be able to publish results by midnight GMT, 02.00 Maputo time.

Election commissions intervene to release improperly arrested MDM members

The Gurué district and Zambézia provincial elections commissions acted to gain the release of four members of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) improperly arrested Friday 31 January in Gurué. They were accused of illegal campaigning for the Saturday 8 February rerun of local election. The official election campaign period is only Tuesday-Thursday 4-6 February.

The spokesperson for the National Elections Commission (CNE), Joao Beirao, told AIM that the MDM group had indeed been detained, but they had done nothing illegal. Thus the elections commissions intervened with the police to ensure that the four men were released.

The electoral law gives extra rights to political parties during the official election campaign, but there is no law banning campaigning before that time.

CanalMoz reports that the MDM candidate for mayor of Gurué, Antonio Janeiro, said the four were not wearing MDM T-shirts or other party symbols. Indeed, they were not even urging a vote for the MDM. Instead they were simply telling people they should vote, because of a false rumour being circulated that people who voted on 20 November did not need to vote again.

The constitutional council in its ruling on the 20 November local elections severely criticised the police for arbitrary arrests of people from the opposition.

EU cites 'serious shortcomings' in electoral process

European Union observers on 29 January issued a strong criticism of the police and of "serious shortcomings" in the electoral process. The joint statement by EU, Irish, Norwegian and Swiss observers notes:

"A number of serious shortcomings have been highlighted such as the arbitrary arrest of party agents, the failure to accredit many national observers in Beira, the disappearance of tally sheets, some indications of double voting and attempted ballot stuffing, as well as interference with ballots resulting in their being declared spoilt. Effective appeal against irregularities and holding to account those responsible are important in ensuring the credibility of the elections."

"A key issue is the need to ensure the integrity of the process and the safety of voters for the forthcoming elections. In this regard, it is important to investigate the excessive use of force by the security forces which resulted in deaths and injuries in some municipalities and to hold those responsible to account."

The full texts of the statement are on the web on:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mozambique/press_corner/all_news/news/2014/20140129_en.htm

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mozambique/press_corner/all_news/news/2014/20140129_pt.htm

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