

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

590 25 March 2022 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Local elections set for 11 October 2023

Municipal elections will be held on Wednesday 11 October 2023. The date must be set 18 months in advance, and sets in train the electoral process. This will involve national elections in October 2024, and registration after the rains, probably starting in April, in 2023 and 2024. The date was set by the National Elections Commission (CNE) and approved by government.

CNE must now move to set up provincial and district elections commissions and set registration dates. CNE has to start operating according to the package of electoral laws used for the 2018 and 2019 elections, while parliament discusses possible changes at its current session.

There are currently 53 municipalities which have about one-third of total voters - in 2018 there were 3.8 mn municipal voters registered and for 2019 nationally a somewhat inflated 12.7 mn (excluding the diaspora). Government and parliament must decide if they want to expand that number.

Other questions for parliament include if there are to be district elections, which should be introduced in 2024 under the current law, but seem likely to be delayed. And changes to the laws suggested by civil society and international observers include increases in transparency and an end to the ability to change the results completely in secret. Final results for 2019 were changed twice in total secrecy and never admitted; the Constitutional Council twice changed its decision but never admitted the changes. (Does any other democracy allow this? *jh*) See <http://bit.ly/Moz-2019-Elec-Bull>

In municipal elections voters choose a party list for municipal assembly, and the head of the list with most votes automatically becomes mayor. As well as national political parties, local citizens' lists can and do stand.

Comment

Local elections will be the battle ground

Following the deaths of both opposition leaders, the opposition parties are weaker than in 2019 and Frelimo is widely expected to win the national elections in 2024. Renamo's Afonso Dhlakala died

of diabetes complications in 2018 and Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) leader David Simango died of Covid-19 in 2021. Replacements Ossufu Momade and Lutero Simango do not have the charisma nor the same power within the party, and they will probably still be weaker national figures in two years.

Local elections will be totally different. Both opposition parties have local bases. Renamo controls 8 municipalities including Nampula, Nacala and Quelimane, which MDM controls Beira. And MDM and Renamo have seats in many municipal assemblies, even in the Frelimo stronghold of Gaza.

The 2018 local elections were hard fought and there was substantial fraud. Turnout was 60%, well above the 46% of the previous two municipal elections. And Frelimo officially only gained just over half the vote - 52%. Frelimo's victories were probably fraudulent in four municipalities - Matola, Mozambique's second largest city; Marromeu; Moatize; and Alto Moloque - where parallel counts showed a Renamo victory. The full table is on <https://bit.ly/Moz-Local-compare-2018>. The 81 CIP local elections bulletins are on <http://bit.ly/Moz-2018-Elec-Bull> with 70 and 72 giving the best summaries of these points.

There were secret counts or recounts without Renamo election commission members present in all four of those municipalities. Police intervened in Marromeu. Moatize had a very high 7% of invalid votes which implies enough Renamo votes were falsely invalidated to give Frelimo its 98 vote victory.

The battle will start with the naming of district and city elections commissions.

Frelimo's election machine in in 2019 national elections was told at local level that it had to win every district in Mozambique - by fair means or foul. And it won all, which was unprecedented and clearly not possible. The message this time from Frelimo will be that the party must win all 53 municipalities, by whatever means necessary.

One the other side, the opposition will be fighting to hold its 9 municipalities, which includes four important cities in Nampula and Zambézia provinces, and also win at least the 4 which were stolen in 2018. In addition Mocumba and Chimoio will be Renamo targets where it gained more than 44% in 2018, and Gurue will be an MDM target, where it won 44%.

To do even reasonably well in 2024 and keep seats in the national parliament, the opposition will have to make a credible showing in local elections the year before. MDM will have to hold Beira and Renamo will need to hold its current cities and win a few more.

Frelimo wants another whitewash, and a weakened opposition must use its historic local bases to win municipalities. Local elections in 2023 look likely to be a very hard fought, with the opposition's credibility on the line but a chance for continued local power. *jh*

Cyclone Gombe kills 61, dumps torrential rain

Cyclone Gombe killed 61 people in Mozambique, with 53 deaths caused by collapsed walls. Over 480,000 people have been affected.

Cyclone Gombe hit Nampula province on 10 March and moved west into Malawi, then suddenly turned south-east and as a tropical storm in ended off the coast of Beira, where it brought torrential rain to Sofala and Zambézia. Beira and surrounding areas received an incredible 300 mm of rain in two days, 16 and 17 March. The main EN1 road between Nicoadala and Namacurra, in Zambézia, was washed out and closed for nearly a week, when a culvert was overwhelmed and the road cut by flash flooding.

Several cyclones in recent years have made loops like this, going inland then returning to the Mozambique Channel where they pick up more water and energy. This may be related to global

warming and the increasing temperature of the water in the Mozambique Channel. Many Mozambicans roads and houses are not built to withstand this sort of intense rainfall.

Electricity was out for up to a week along the Nampula coast, but has now been restored. Damage just to electricity links is estimated at \$4.8 mn.

Since the start of the current rainy season in October, at least 134 people have died and over 760,000 have been affected by natural disasters in Mozambique.

Mozambique was the driest in 40 years in October-December, especially in the north - but was wetter than normal in Maputo province and southern Gaza, according to the National Meteorological Institute (INAM).

Cabo Delgado: fighting continues as 24,000 flee

Thousands continue to flee ongoing violence in Cabo Delgado province, the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, said 22 March. A series of attacks since January have displaced 24,000 people within Nangade district, UNHCR spokesperson Boris Cheshirkov said in Geneva. Nangade town is deserted, reports *Carta de Moçambique* (23 Mar).

Attacks continue in Nangade, Mueda and Macomia (especially along the N380 main road) and have resumed in Ibo district, where three days of heavy fighting on Matemo Island killed 24 people on both sides.

Both UNHCR and a ministerial delegation led by Labour Minister Margarida Talapa said that is not yet safe for displaced to return home to Mocimboa da Praia or Muidumbe. (*Carta de Moçambique* 24 Mar)

Malawi reported its first case of wild poliovirus (type 1) in 30 years and has launched a vaccination campaign. Mozambique on 24 March launched a first phase of a drive to vaccinate 4.2 million children under five years of age in central and northern regions bordering Malawi. "The diagnosis of the wild form of the poliovirus poses a serious concern", Health Minister Armindo Tiago stated.

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\$2bn secret debt trial: Daily press clippings in English on <https://bit.ly/Moz-Debt-Map-Trial> .

Important external links

Exchange rates 2006-21 & minimum wages 1996-2021 <https://bit.ly/Moz-Exch-wage-2021>

Covid-19 daily updated data <https://www.facebook.com/miguel.de.brito1> and <https://covid19.ins.gov.mz/documentos-em-pdf/boletins-diarios/>

Daily flood and monthly dry season reports - <https://bit.ly/Moz-Flood-2022>

Cyclone trackers, <https://www.cyclocane.com/> and <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war <https://www.cabolidado.com/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/MozNews2022> and <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021>

Downloadable books: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books> Election data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

Cabo Delgado

Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data <https://bit.ly/Moz-CDg>

Special reports on the war

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 27 Feb 2020 <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>
Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 <https://bit.ly/Moz-492>
Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-496>
A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-498>
Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - 2018 - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>
Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>
2001 first article- *Metical* - English and Portuguese <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001>

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng
Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Background reading

Special reports

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>
Special report on four poverty surveys: bit.ly/MozPoverty

\$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>
Kroll - Full report on \$2bn debt - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz>
Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>
Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>
Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt
2018 Constitution - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>
Election newsletters are on <http://bit.ly/2H066Kq>

Ten books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)
Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014) is on <https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer>
Há Mais Bicycletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)
Civil War Civil Peace (2006): <https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace>
Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)
Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000 (2001)
Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)
Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996)
Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991)
Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)
Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986) <available shortly>

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)
Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013)
Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)
Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)
Beggars Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique (free): <http://clubofmozambique.com/>
Zitamar (paywall): <http://zitamar.com/>

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall):

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz
O País: www.opais.co.mz
@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>
Carta de Moçambique <https://cartamz.com>

Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:

Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP <https://cipmoz.org/>

Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR <https://omrmz.org/>

Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE <https://www.iese.ac.mz/>

Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD <https://cddmoz.org/> (some CDD in English)

Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) <http://www.fmo.org.mz>
and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).

To subscribe to all CDD publications: <http://eepurl.com/gO9l6v> (English or Portuguese).

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