

Mozambique Political Process Bulletin

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Simango appeals to CNE & warns of fraud

The Daviz Simango campaign in Beira is appealing to the National Election Commission this afternoon over a change in the Renamo candidates list, which removed Renamo members who support Simango, such as the current municipal assembly president.

Simango also alleges that “Frelimo is preparing a giant fraud” and is manipulating the police and polling station staff to keep Simango’s poll watchers (*delegados, fiscais*) far enough away from the voting table so that they cannot see misconduct.

Simango is appealing to the CNE but at the same time effectively accusing it of corruption. When, at the last minute, Afonso Dhlakama selected Manuel Pereira to be candidate for mayor of Beira and present mayor Simango decided to stand as an independent, it seemed obvious that Renamo would also change its list of candidates for the municipal assembly to remove Simango supporters. And three weeks ago, Simango accepted that this had happened. This Renamo list is important, because if both Renamo and Frelimo are hostile to him, an independent mayor would be unable to govern.

More recently, however, the Simango campaign has claimed that it was the original pro-Simango list which was approved by the National Election Commission on 8 October, and then improperly changed later. Two lists of Renamo assembly candidates are circulating in Beira, which the *Bulletin* has seen, and they are apparently both signed by CNE President Joao Leopoldo da Costa. The second anti-Simango list is the one posted at the CNE in Maputo and published yesterday by *O Pais*.

The problem is that the list of candidates approved by CNE on 8 October has never been published by the CNE on its website or in *Boletim de Republica* – even though more recent decisions have been published. So the only formal record is the sheets of paper posted outside the CNE office in Maputo.

The Simango campaign alleges that at some point the sheet listing Renamo candidates for Beira was removed and the new one posted in its place – without any formal CNE decision. Thus the claim is of very serious misconduct.

CNE spokesman Juvenal Bucuane admitted to the *Bulletin* that changes had been made – but he said the only changes were to ensure that the names on the list corresponded precisely to what was on people’s identity cards, and that no actual candidates were changed.

Can *fiscals* watch for fraud?

In a statement issued this morning, Tuesday 18 November, Daviz Simango alleges that Frelimo is planning a giant fraud. Key is the claim that Frelimo will use polling station staff and the police to force party delegados (*delegados de candidatura*) to sit so far from the polling station table that they will miss fraudulent actions, he alleges.

The election law says the party delegates have the right to “occupy the best place to oversee all electoral acts”. This is quite important.

The Simango candidacy charges that extra ballot papers have been printed and they are being given to Frelimo member to put into the ballot boxes – something which could be seen if delegates watch closely.

The campaign also charges that Frelimo delegates are being given ink pads and told that during the count in the polling station, they should put second finger marks on ballot papers for Simango, in order to invalidate them. This is possible, because at the end of the count, delegates have the right to examine all the piles or sorted ballot papers. In a similar way, delegates could turn blank ballot papers into votes for their candidate. It will require vigilance by the Simango delegates to avoid this.

There is also a concern about improper voters being able to vote. Because of problems with the machines making the registration cards, not all cards have a picture, so the CNE reportedly decided last week that people can vote with a registration card without a picture if they have another photo ID card. This is reasonable, but Simango delegates will want to ensure that the identify card and voters card really do correspond. Similarly, delegates will need to ensure that voters names are checked – and that extra names are not ticked as well to correspond to extra ballot papers in the box. This requires delegates to be close to the main table with voting station staff. Thus the Simango fear that delegates will be pushed too far away.

Ballot box stuffing should appear on the results sheets as many more ballots in the ballot boxes than names ticked in the register.

Finally, the Simango campaign fears that in areas where it has strong support, special pens with disappearing ink will be introduced, so that votes for Simango literally disappear. This seems highly unlikely, and would show up in the results as a very high number of blank votes.

Joseph Hanlon, 18 November 2008

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