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With requalified nulots included, Nacala still unclear

After the requalification of invalid votes, based on the two different parallel counts, we estimate that the Frelimo candidate Chale Ossufo has either 49.86% or 49.80% of the vote – more than 100 votes short of what he needs to avoid a second round. Details are given in the attached file.

Our new estimate is based the requalification of invalid votes this morning by the National Elections Commission, which gave Chale Ossufo 868, Manuel dos Santos 431, Julio Cipriano 39 and Cesar Gabriel 72.

This table is based on the parallel count done by the Electoral Observatory:

	Votos	Requali- ficados	Total	
Chale Ossufo	21 870	868	22 738	49.86%
Manuel dos Santos	21 372	431	21 803	47.81%
Julio Cipriano	446	39	485	1.06%
Cesar Garbriel	508	72	580	1.27%
TOTAL	44 196	1 410	45 606	

This table is based on the provisional count done by STAE:

	Votos	Requali- ficados	Total	
Chale Ossufo	21 843	868	22 711	49.80%
Manuel dos Santos	21 504	431	21 935	48.10%
Julio Cipriano	444	39	483	1.06%
Cesar Garbriel	505	72	577	1.27%
TOTAL	44 296	1 410	45 706	

Requalification of the nulots is open to press and observers, and the *Bulletin* watched the entire requalification process for Nacala Porto. We consider that the process was

correctly and consistently done. A surprisingly high 56% of nullos were accepted as valid, and most of them were obviously valid and it is not clear why the polling stations considered them invalid in the first place. For some, the decision was less clear-cut. For example, a ballot paper is considered invalid if it has any design or word. And the CNE team rejected any words, such as “voto”, and signatures. But single letters and scribbles made by illiterate voters were accepted, consistently and, in our view, correctly.

Decision on the second round depends on the official count as issued by the National Elections Commission, and that will be at least partly based on details of the voting results sheets (editais) being entered into a computer by the Nampula Provincial Election Commission. As of this morning (Wednesday), input of editais from Nacala had only started, and may not be complete until later tomorrow (Thursday).

Disqualified votes in the Ilha

Nulos for Ilha de Moçambique were also reconsidered this morning. The *Bulletin* saw what appeared to be a particularly flagrant example of valid votes which seem to have been intentionally made invalid by someone in the polling station. In this instance, a large number of ballot papers for Renamo had a second ink mark in a different colour ink. Normal inked fingerprints look brown on the ballot paper, but the second mark on these ballot papers was done with purple ink.

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