

# Mozambique Political Process Bulletin

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## No majority in Beira assembly

Results of a parallel count by the Electoral Observatory confirm no party will have a majority in the Beira assembly. The assembly membership is expected to be: 19 Frelimo, 17 Renamo, 7 GDB (a citizen's list), 1 PDD and 1 PIMO.

With 257 polling stations out of 260, the Observatory parallel count gives:

For president (mayor):

|                |         |       |
|----------------|---------|-------|
| Lourenço Bulha | Frelimo | 41386 |
| Manuel Pereira | Renamo  | 2863  |
| António Romão  | PDD     | 1673  |
| Filipe Alfredo | GDB     | 474   |
| Daviz Simango  | GRM     | 76086 |

For municipal assembly:

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Frelimo | 49280 |
| Renamo  | 45822 |
| PDD     | 2725  |
| PIMO    | 4108  |
| GDB     | 18207 |

## Dhlakama blames loss on 1000s of voters brought from outside

“A massive presence” of people from outside all 43 municipalities who were brought in by the lorry-load in order to vote for Frelimo explains Renamo’s defeat, Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama told a press conference early Monday afternoon. This “flood” of outsiders was allowed to vote because all the people who were hired as polling station staff were members or sympathisers of Frelimo, he added. In response to media questions, he stressed he is not reconsidering his position because this was a victory “fabricated” by Frelimo, and not a real defeat of Renamo.

Meanwhile, the Renamo candidate for mayor of Montepuez, Tomé Fernando, told *Notícias* (22 November) that the election clearly was not fair because the result did not reflect the will of the people, because he did not win.

In his press conference, Dhlakama gave no details, except to claim this happened everywhere. But in support of the claim, Renamo did circulate an alleged document from the Frelimo central election office giving orientations to party cells. The document says that the main task of party cells is to ensure that all party members vote, and encourage others to vote for Frelimo. The document goes to great lengths to stress that Frelimo members must obey the law and not campaign openly on 17 and 18 November. On polling day, in encouraging people to vote for Frelimo, party members must always stay more than 300 metres from the polling stations, as required by law. Thus Renamo distributed a clear and sensible document, which is probably real, and in no way supports Renamo claims of planned massive fraud.

## Many votes left off registers

It appears that the computer-produced register books (*cadernos de recenseamento*) were not completely accurate, and in many places voters names were left off. Most polling stations also had copies of the hand-written register made at the time of registration, and often people appeared in that register, and thus were able to vote. The Renamo candidate for mayor of Montepuez, Tomé Fernando, for example, was not in the computer-printed register but could vote because he was in the manual register.

But our correspondent in Nampula city reports that there, many polling stations only had the computer-printed book, and not the hand-written one. Dozens of voters with valid registration cards could not vote.

The issue was confused by a pair of contradictory decisions by the National Elections Commission (CNE). On 12 November in Deliberação 125, the CNE ruled that anyone who appeared at a polling station with a voter's card but was not in the register book should still be allowed to vote, with their name and card number written in at the end of the register. But this decision was actually very badly written – it was probably intended that people should only be able to vote in the polling station for which the card was issue (the voters card contains the register number which is also the polling station number). But in fact it did not contain that restriction, and could be seen to allow voting anywhere. Thus on 18 November, the day before polling day, the CNE in Deliberação 129 revoked that part of Deliberação 125.

In his press statement, Dhlakama used Deliberação 125 to say this was the way many outsiders had been allowed to vote. This should be checkable, since it would involve thousands of names written into register books. But according to our correspondent, the problem was the opposite – many people with voters cards could not vote.

## Provisional count increases transparency

A welcome increase in transparency this year was the announcement by STAE of provisional counts. These were made available to the press daily, and for some of the larger cities even included partial counts. This new openness extended to the

cities themselves, where local STAE often gave the numbers to the press as well. This was a major improvement on past elections, in which no results were released until they were official, many days after polling.

These counts were provisional and unofficial, and were done by STAE in the same way as those tabulated by Radio Mozambique and the Electoral Observatory. They collected the basic numbers -- just votes for each candidate and party without worrying about blank and invalid votes and other statistics. These were collected from the results sheets (*editais*) by STAE staff and then simply added up, with a calculator or simple spreadsheet. The system was rapid, and was likely to be more accurate than the Radio Mozambique parallel count because STAE staff have automatic access to all editais. Of course haste means there will inevitably have been some errors in transcribing and adding up. But provisional results, even with the inevitable errors, were very important, showing quickly where victories were clear and where races were close. For close races like Nacala and Beira, it will be necessary to wait for official results.

STAE deserves congratulations for this innovation.

STAE is the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral).

## Which way should booths face?

A question which comes up in every election in Mozambique is the placement of voter's booths, the cardboard structures in which voters actually mark their ballot papers. The manual for polling station staff this year uses drawings similar to past manuals, which show the booth with the open side facing the table with the polling station staff, and the drawing on page 7 of the manual shows the booths quite close to the table.

This year, as in past years, many observers and our correspondents have criticised this. They say it is possible for polling station staff and party delegates to see how people vote. Particularly when the voter holds up the ballot paper to fold, it is often quite easy to see how they voted.

Some polling station presidents agree, and turn the booths so that the open side faces a wall. CNE and STAE might wish to consider a change in policy on this.

## Electoral observatory criticises training

The very slow processing of voters was partly due to inadequate training of polling station staff, particularly the lack of practical training and simulations, according to Sheik Abdul Carimo, spokesman for the Electoral Observatory. A few polling stations were taking up to five minutes per voter, leading to the large build up in queues. He noted that many polling stations coped with the long queues, while others were unable to deal with a similar number of voters.

Poor training also affected the count. Carimo cited one polling station in Gondola which required nine hours to count the ballots of just 300 voters.

The very slow movement of voters through polling stations is not just about poor training, however. The longest task in the process is where the president of the polling station explains the voting procedure, individually, to each voter. *Savana* (21 November) cited the example of a Maputo polling station president who did the explanation to four voters at a time. This may be a violation of the rules, but it seemed to work and people voted more quickly. Changing the rules to allow this could speed up the voting process. Otherwise, it may be necessary to split register books in half, to allow everyone to vote on one day (which is definitely an improvement on two day voting in the past).

## Young men misdirecting voters

Young men at polling stations in Beira and Gondola on 19 November who seemed to be trying to help organise the queues were discovered to be looking at people's voters cards and telling them to go to another polling station several kilometres away, when in fact they were already in the right place. When they arrived at the other polling station, they were, of course, told to return to the original one. Some older people gave up, deciding it was not worth another long walk. This was discovered by the Electoral Observatory, and seems to have been organised. But it is unclear what purpose this served.

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