

MOZAMBIQUE POLITICAL PROCESS BULLETIN

Issue 29a - e-mail extra
Election preview - 23 July 2004

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NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO BE 1-2 DECEMBER

Mozambique's third multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections will be Wednesday and Thursday 1 and 2 December.

Updating of electoral registers ran from Monday 28 June through Thursday 15 July. Registration was for people who had moved, lost their registration card, or will become 18 before the election date. Between 550,000 and 700,000 people are expected to have been registered.

Registration had been scheduled to run from 15 to 30 June, but had to be delayed because of the late arrival of material from South Africa. This occurred, according to Antonio Carrasco, general director of the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE), because "we were not able to pay the 50 per cent of the agreed cost in advance, as stipulated".

AIM reports that voter registration will cost \$6 million, paid by the government. The registration was undertaken by 2,494 brigades of three members. Each supervisor was paid 1.5 million meticaís (US\$63) and the other brigade members 1.3 million each.

The total cost of presidential and parliamentary elections will be \$21.5 million. Of this sum, reports AIM, \$5.8 million comes from the Mozambican state budget, \$12.5 million from the European Union, and the rest from the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP). These funds have been guaranteed, and are being paid to STAE as and when needed.

ELECTION CALENDAR

The election calendar is set by law, and is:

2 October: deadline for presidential nominations; each presidential candidate must submit 10,000 signatures and other required documents to the Constitutional Council.

7 October: deadline for parliamentary nominations which must be submitted to the National Election Commission (CNE); requires certificate of no criminal record for each candidate.

16 October: list of candidates published by CNE

17 October - 28 November: official electoral campaign; gives parties and candidates extra rights. No opinion polls.

1 November: CNE must publish list of all polling stations

10 November: deadline for parties and candidates to submit names of polling station agents (delegados), and to which polling station they are to be assigned, to the district election commission.

29, 30 November: quiet period, no campaigning allowed

1,2 December: election

2 December into morning of 3 December: count in polling station

4 December: all polling station summary sheets (editais), minutes (actas) and spoiled and protested ballot papers must be submitted to the provincial election commission. Copies of editais and spoiled and protested ballot papers then go to CNE.

9 December: deadline for publication of provincial results.

17 December: deadline for publication of national results by CNE, with copies submitted to the Constitutional Council for verification.

Deadlines for registration of observers and journalists remain to be defined by the CNE.

There is no deadline for action by the Constitutional Council. But after the validation and proclamation of the results by the Constitutional Council, the calendar is:

+ Within 2 days of proclamation, order publication in *Boletim da República*.

+ Within 15 days of publication, new parliament opens.

+ Within 8 days of parliament opening, new President is inaugurated.

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NEW ELECTION LAW:
SOME IMPROVEMENTS ...

The new election law (Lei no 7/2004 de 17 de Junho) is almost identical to the law for the 1999 national elections (4/99) and very similar to that for last year's local elections (19/2002).

The law retains the 5% threshold for parties to enter parliament -- a party or coalition must obtain at least 5% of the national vote to have MPs elected. Thus a party which wins enough votes to gain a seat in one province, such as Zambezia, will not be given that seat unless it has more than 5% of the total national vote.

Eight significant changes have been introduced, all responding to problems in previous elections:

- + Polling station staff, police and journalists can now vote at any polling station. Previously voters could only vote at the polling station where they were on the register, which disenfranchised most polling staff.
- + Following complaints from the opposition and observers about Frelimo using government vehicles and facilities, there is now a ban on the use by a party of any goods or property ("bens") of central government, local government, or state owned or controlled companies. (This does not, of course, apply to things available to all, such as the use of public halls.)
- + Following the omission of some party symbols from ballot papers last year, parties now have the right to check proof copies of the ballot paper before printing.
- + Party polling station agents ("delegados de candidaturas") will receive their credential from the district election commission, ending a confusion in previous elections.
- + Counting will still be done at provincial level, but results will also be published district-by-district.
- + Voting can no longer be extended for a third day.
- + in an attempt to reduce the large number of errors made by tired polling stations staff, on the formal results sheets compiled after the count ("actas" and "editais") the number of votes gained by each candidate must be written in both figures and words.
- + in the event of other documents being missing, the copies of actas and editais given to party polling station agents can be used for the count. (This follows an incident in Beira in the 2003 local elections, in which records from several polling stations disappeared, and Frelimo refused to allow the copies of actas to be used.)

Four changes introduced last year for local elections are maintained:

- + Exit polls are effectively banned. No opinion polls can be published between the start of the campaign and the declaration of results.
- + Because some party polling station agents ("delegados de candidaturas") are illiterate, they were not able to write down accurately the results after the count, for use by parties for the own parallel count. Now delegados in each polling station are given a copy of the official summary sheet (edital) and formal minutes (acta) to take back to their party.
- + At least two of the five polling station staff must speak the local language.
- + Polling station staff are hired in a public competition and parties are allowed to suggest candidates.

The law clarifies previously confused rules about limits to activities near polling stations. Now, within 300 metres of a polling station, no voter can say who they voted for or planned to vote for. Observers and journalists are not allowed to talk to voters within this area. Also, within 300 meters of the polling station there can be no campaign posters or material, and no one is allowed to display a party symbol or other political symbol, nor wear a party t-shirt or party cloth (capulana).

... BUT MANY PROBLEMS REMAIN
OVER SEATS & COUNTS

Four serious problems in past electoral laws have not been resolved. First, the method for allocating the number of parliamentary seats to each province has not been changed and remains arithmetically wrong; there are supposed to be 250 seats, but when the method was used in 1999 it led to the allocation of 251 seats, and one seat had to be arbitrarily taken away from one province to bring the number back down to 250.

Second, all spoiled ballot papers (nulos) must be sent to the National Election Commission in Maputo and rechecked. In 1999, the CNE reassessed 500,000 ballot papers and accepted 130,000 as valid and added them to the results. There simply is not enough time to recheck that many ballot papers, and results have been late in every previous election because of this. It has often been suggested that this rechecking could be done at provincial level.

Third, with the exception that the number of votes be given in both figures and words, no change has been made in procedures for polling station staff to complete editais. Staff are tired after two days of voting and then an all-night count, and many mistakes are made. In 1999, 6.6% of presidential editais and 8.7% of parliamentary editais were excluded from the final count because of errors which could not be resolved. (The CNE could still issue regulations and design a better edital form, but this is not set out in the law.)

Fourth, there are no rules on the transparent development, timely testing, and publication of computer software used in the tabulation in Maputo. Renamo has often complained about the use of computers, and the secrecy makes tampering possible. Although parallel counts provide some check, the law does not require the publication of clear polling station by polling station results, making comparisons harder.

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RENAMO HARASSED
IN TETE -- again

Our correspondent in Tete has confirmed Renamo reports that its election monitors have been harassed. He reports that in Magoe district, in the far west of the province, four houses of Renamo members were destroyed by Frelimo party supporters and that Renamo party workers were stopped from accompanying the registration process in Frelimo brigades. In Chifunde district, in the north of the province, our correspondent reports that the Renamo

delegate was detained by the administrator for flying the Renamo flag. In both districts, this was enough to frighten Renamo and reduce the number of party monitors accompanying the registration process, he reports.

Renamo claimed on 5 July that its party monitors had been expelled from Changara and Chifunde districts, and that monitors in Magoe, Songo and Zobue district had been beaten.

Tete was the once place where Frelimo violence against Renamo was confirmed in the 1999 national elections. The Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin 24 (Jan 2000) reported that Renamo had been expelled from Changara district and there were no Renamo monitors in polling stations in that district. Without opposition monitors present, there were indications of ballot box stuffing in Changara in 1999. There were also indications of tampering with results sheets in Chifunde in that year.

In an incident in Muidumbe district in northern Cabo Delgado district, our correspondent reports that local people expelled Renamo representatives. Muidumbe on the Mueda plateau was the location of Frelimo's "central base" during the liberation war and has always been vociferously pro-Frelimo. In the 1994 election, Renamo head Afonso Dhlakama was stoned when he appeared here.

DOMINGOS TO STAND

Raul Domingos and his Party for Peace, Democracy and Development (PDD) will stand in the general elections and will not join other coalitions, Domingos announced on 21 July.

Domingos was number two in Renamo until he was expelled, and he could take votes away from Dhlakama in the presidential contest. Domingos' group stood as IPADE in last year's local elections. It did worse than expected, but nevertheless won a single seat in Beira and one in Dondo, both Renamo strongholds, taking 3% and 6% of the vote. The 1999 race was close, with Chissano gaining only 52% of the vote, so Domingos' candidacy could be a boost for the Frelimo candidate, Armando Guebuza.

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