

Mozambique Political Process Bulletin

2004 Election specials by e-mail

Issue 29

Sunday 19 December 2004

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RESULTS LIKELY
TUESDAY OR WEDNESDAY

It seems unlikely that final results will be announced by the National Election Commission until Tuesday or, more likely, Wednesday. Processing by STAE will not be completed today (Sunday) and the CNE will need at least one day to debate and discuss.

Analysis of about 250,000 invalid votes (nulos) was completed late Thursday night.

STAE is still producing the second "provisional" count, but by Saturday afternoon had only input data from half of all polling stations, which means it has at least two days more work.

In addition, STAE is inputting (via a separate system) some of the 2000 results sheets (editais) sent by provinces because they were not accepted by the computer system -- either because of errors in the editais, or because of errors in the computer data base.

STAE director Antonio Carrasco said Friday that if STAE could work at full speed it could finish by late Saturday night or early Sunday. But this is clearly not possible. Each step of the process, include receipt of materials from the provinces and release for processing, requires the presence of Frelimo and Renamo CNE members together. The problem is that the CNE (and particularly Renamo members within the CNE) have been very slow to release editais for STAE to process. Input for the provisional count stopped for much of Thursday, for example, because CNE did not release editais from the warehouse. Processing of nulos also halted several times because sacks of nulos remained locked in the warehouse.

WILL THE PROVISIONAL COUNT
BE DROPPED?

It was the weekend of 18-19 December; only half the provisional count had been completed and the CNE feared that it might not be able to report before Christmas. Sound familiar? That was December 1999, when the CNE faced identically the same problem as today. The decision then was to abandon the provisional count and work directly with the CD-ROMs and editais sent by the provinces. That allowed the CNE to announce the results on Wednesday 22 December. Will history be repeated?

Also in 1999, in the last days CNE meetings went late into the night and were intense and angry. Renamo walked out on the Tuesday night and was not present for the final announcement. Details of decisions taken by the CNE in those key final days remained secret and were never published. Will history be repeated?

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

The counting process in Mozambique is quite complex. Each polling station produces two copies of the editais, sending one to the provincial election commission (CPE) and one to the National Election Commission (CNE) in Maputo. Polling stations also send all invalid votes to Maputo for reconsideration.

Each CPE inputs the data from the editais into a computer data base. This year, because of computer problems (see below), most provinces also processed some editais manually. The results are announced and are put onto a CD-ROM which is sent to Maputo, along with all editais which could not be processed locally. This includes both those with computer problems as well as those with errors, such as the now famous edital where a polling station with 1000 voters registered somehow claims to have cast 2000 votes. We estimate that 2000 editais have been sent to Maputo.

In Maputo the steps are as follows:

- + Editais from all over the country are used to produce a second complete national "provisional" count.
- + Provisional and provincial counts are compared, differences are resolved, and an agreed revised provincial count is produced.
- + Nulos are evaluated by CNE members and about one-third are accepted and added to provincial counts.
- + Editais sent from the provinces are considered by STAE first. Where obvious errors can be resolved (eg transposed digits in polling station or register numbers), these are corrected and the data input, both into the provisional count and separately as additions to the provincial count. Where problems are not so simple, the CNE (with STAE advice) makes a decision to accept, correct or reject the edital. Corrections can, for example, be based on the more detailed minutes of the polling station, which may allow the correction of a mistake in an edital. Accepted and corrected editais are added manually.

This process could be completed by Monday, but is more likely to take until Tuesday. Then the detailed minutes (actas) must be written up. Only then are results announced.

Most of these final steps are done in secret by the CNE, which has provoked harsh criticism by national and international observers. In exchange CNE members have privately promised that the actas will be much more detailed than in 1999, showing and explaining all decisions. It is yet to be seen if this happens. For example, when observers and press were excluded from most of the revalidation of nulos, they were promised that as each province was finished, an edital would be posted with the

results for that province. That continued until Monday, when five provinces had been posted, and then stopped; the other six provinces were never posted.

COMPUTER & DATA BASE CHAOS CAUSES REJECTED EDITAIS AND PHANTOM POLLING STATIONS

Data input at both provincial and national level was made into a pre-organised data base which listed all polling stations, the number of registered voters, and the register books used at the polling station. But this data base was produced very hurriedly and very late; for Gaza it was only finished after the election was over. And it turns out to be riddled with errors, both because of the haste, but also apparently because it did not use the final clean list of register books.

This caused two problems. First, the computers rejected hundreds of legitimate polling station results sheets (editais) because the correct numbers on the sheets did not correspond to the wrong numbers in the data base. This forced most provinces to process many editais manually, and send some to Maputo.

It also seems to have caused the 556 phantom polling stations which have created so much confusion. The number of polling stations was established by the National Elections Commission (CNE) in a directive published on 4 November. This was an unalterable list of 12,804 (12,744 in Mozambique, and 60 for Mozambicans voting abroad). But in each province, when the summary sheet for the partial totals was displaced on the observer and party delegate computer terminal, the number of possible editais was always larger than the number of polling stations. The national total is 556 larger. The opposition parties see this as fraud, and the Bulletin has been perplexed, in part because there seem to be extra polling stations but with no extra registered voters.

STAE invited press and observers to a meeting on Friday morning to try to explain. Mario Ernesto, STAE director of operations, stressed that there could be no extra physical polling stations because polling station kits, with numbered results sheets to be filled in, were only prepared for polling stations which were on the list published on 4 November (plus 10 kits extra in each province for emergency, which were carefully controlled).

So there could be no extra physical polling stations, but the possibility of some sort of computer-based fraud remained. Elena Garrine, STAE head of registration, admitted that they were not, themselves, sure of precisely what had gone wrong. But she said they believed that what went wrong related to errors in the data input for polling stations which had more than one register book.

Further discussion with computer experts suggests this explanation is plausible. What seems to have happened is that the computer data base has a list of register books and a list of polling stations with more than one register book. If an error is made in one list, such as a wrongly typed number, but not in the other, the computer finds a register book not accounted for. It then says it is waiting for the results from that book, and it automatically creates a phantom edital -- which, of course, is never produced because the register book has already been included in a real polling station edital. We cannot be sure, but we think that based on what we know about the software and errors in the data base, this explanation is reasonable and acceptable.

REVISED RESULTS

It has proved extraordinarily difficult to obtain the official provincial editias, and we have made several mistakes, most importantly with Nampula, where we massively overestimated the number of editais being sent to Maputo. Based on this we reduce our estimate of editais sent to Maputo to 2000.

Here are revised results for three provinces:

NAMPULA province

Presidential election - 2247 editais of 2282 processed, including 54 processed manually. 35 sent to Maputo.

Armando Guebuza (Frelimo)	223,538 (49.86%)
Afonso Dhlakama (Renamo)	196,743 (43.88%)
Raul Domingos (PDD)	15,712 (3.50%)
Yaquib Sibindy (PIMO)	7,396 (1.65%)
Carlos Reis (MBG)	4930 (1.10%)

Blank 3.96%, nulo 4.80%

Parliamentary election - 2236 editais of 2282 processed, including 56 processed manually. 46 sent to Maputo.

Frelimo	206,604 (48.14%)
Renamo	172,430 (40.17%)
PDD	9,400 (2.19%)

Blank 6.33%, nulo 5.90%

Seats (50): Frelimo - 27; Renamo - 23

INHAMBANE province

Presidential election - 776 of 786 editais

Armando Guebuza (Frelimo)	147,247 (78.29%)
Afonso Dhlakama (Renamo)	17,998 (10.04%)
Raul Domingos (PDD)	6,256 (3.49%)
Carlos Reis (MBG)	1,701 (0.95%)
Yaquib Sibindy (PIMO)	1,688 (0.94%)

Blank 2.40%. nulo 3.88%

Parliamentary election - 773 of 786 editais

Frelimo	125,793 (70.42%)
Renamo	16,239 (9.09%)
PDD	4,939 (2.76%)

Blank 4.47%; nulo 4.19%

Seats (16) - Frelimo 15, Renamo 1

MAPUTO PROVINCE

Presidential election

734 of 752 editais processed, of which 32 processed manually; 18 sent to Maputo

Armando Guebuza (Frelimo)	180,127 (89.88)
Afonso Dhlakama (Renamo)	17,259 (8.61)
Raul Domingos (PDD)	2,834 (1.41)
Yaqub Sibindy (PIMO)	862 (0.43)
Carlos Reis (MBG)	635 (0.32)

Blank 1.51%; nulo 2.94%

Parliamentary election

748 of 752 editais processed, of which 78 process manually; only 4 sent to Maputo.

Frelimo	161,588 (88.25)
Renamo	16,600 (8.86)
PDD	3,338 (1.78)

Blank 3.26%; nulo 3.26%

Seats (13): Frelimo 12; Renamo 1

This also allows us to update a table comparing blanks votes and nulos with 1999. This year, nulos are very similar to five years ago everywhere, and blanks votes are sharply reduced. The percentage of nulos is the percentage at provincial level, before reconsideration in Maputo.

We also include Tete and Gaza, which are subject to allegations of ballot box stuffing which would affect the percentages.

NULOS Province	PRESIDENT		PARLIAMENT	
	1999	2004	1999	2004
Cabo Delgado	3.3%	4.3%	4.4%	4.3%
Nampula	4.8%	4.8%	6.1%	5.9%
Zambezia	4.4%	4.5%	5.7%	6.8%
Inhambane	5.0%	3.9%	4.4%	4.2%
Maputo prov	2.8%	2.9%	2.8%	3.3%
Maputo city	2.1%	1.9%		
Tete	4.5%	4.8%	6.2%	5.6%
Gaza	3.2%	2.6%	4.6%	2.9%

BLANK	PRESIDENT		PARLIAMENT	
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Province	1999	2004	1999	2004
Cabo Delgado	9.0%	6.1%	13.0%	8.8%
Nampula	8.9%	4.0%	12.1%	6.3%
Zambezia	8.1%	4.5%	10.8%	7.3%
Inhambane	5.2%	2.4%	8.5%	4.5%
Maputo prov	2.6%	1.5%	4.5%	3.3%
Maputo city	2.1%	0.7%		

Tete	6.1%	2.0%	10.8%	3.2%
Gaza	4.6%	1.9%	7.8%	3.4%

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Mozambique

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HARSH CRITICISM FROM EU,
WHICH ALSO SAYS IRREGULARITIES COULD
REDUCE RENAMO PARLIAMENT SEATS

The electoral process was harshly criticised by an angry European Union chief observer Javier Pomes at a press conference at 12.30 this afternoon. He cited "serious shortcomings and irregularities", including producing false results sheets (effectively ballot box stuffing) which gave inflated results for Frelimo and Armando Guebuza, particularly in Tete but also in Gaza.

He noted that this often occurred at polling stations where national and international observers and party delegates were not allowed to be present.

Pomes said that the irregularities were not enough to change the global outcome, which is a massive win for Frelimo and Guebuza. But he stressed that there were enough irregularities to take parliament seats away from Renamo.

He also criticised the National Election Commission (CNE) and the poor work of electoral organs. He said the CNE could have done much better, but failed to make good use of the time, money and expertise available to it.

As examples of poor work by electoral organs, Pomes cited:
+ problems with the registration, "serious errors" in registration books, and a rushed and incomplete correction of the register,

- + that many polling stations opened but never received voting materials so no one could vote, or opened in the wrong place, or opened very late, due to "inadequate and last minute planning"; and
- + that the computer tabulation software never worked properly.

Pomes and the EU in an accompanying report accept that some concessions were made on transparency, but they did not make the process transparent. In particular:

- + the corrected voters list was never made available for public scrutiny;
- + the complete list of polling stations and their registration books was never given to political parties or observers,
- + "inaccurate and insufficient information was given by electoral authorities on the technical problems and deficiencies during the tabulation process;" and
- + observers were not allowed to watch the reclassification on invalid votes, except at times defined by CNE.

Pomes also objected to the "many interferences in our work" by both electoral organs and the press. He was particularly angered by an article in the daily Noticias this morning which included a photo of an earlier EU observation press conference with the caption saying that observers "considered that the process was just, free and transparent." International observers no longer ever use those words, and Pomes made clear that he did not think they applied to this election.

Finally, the EU observer mission criticised "the over-politicized structure and working mode of the National Election Commission and STAE."

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Results due later today

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**CARTER CENTER &
ELECTORAL OBSERVATORY
CITE IRREGULARITIES**

"Irregularities" and serious weaknesses "undermine the credibility of Mozambique's electoral authorities", warned the Carter Center in a strong statement issued this morning. It cited ballot box stuffing in three provinces and problems with the computer tabulation systems. It also warned that these "could lead to the incorrect distribution of seats" in parliament. As did the European Union, the Carter Center

cites the existence of votes for Renamo which have been invalidated by polling station staff with an extra ink mark.

Although the Carter Center did gain some additional access, the statement criticises the continuing lack of transparency at key points in the tabulation process. It also notes that no part of the tabulation has met the legal deadlines.

Although irregularities may change the outcome of the parliamentary race in at least one province, Tete, it says that it "does not expect these irregularities to alter the overall outcome of the presidential election."

Meanwhile, in its statement today, the Electoral Observatory, a coalition of seven prominent Mozambican civil society groups, also cited "irregularities". It noted that in some places register books were missing or people were not on the register and that people had to walk unacceptably long distances to vote. It also cited the computer system. And it noted that police did not always say 300 metres away from the polling station, as required, which may have sometimes been intimidating. And the Observatory also criticised the lack of transparency.

The Observatory criticised the partisan nature of the electoral process and all electoral bodies. It also noted that difficulties of both observers and party delegates to obtain credentials in Tete and some other provinces.

In statements yesterday and today, the Observatory stressed the right of peaceful protest and seemed to hint that the opposition should protest. It was a clear message to the state not to block peaceful protest. But it also stressed the importance of non-violence. In his statement today, Brazao Muzula said we did not want another Montepuez. After the 1999 election, in November 2000, armed Renamo men invaded Montepuez, killing several policemen. Eventually many of the invaders were jailed, and more than 100 suffocated to death in an overcrowded prison cell.

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Summary of the final results. Details tomorrow.

Turnout: 3.3 million of 7.6 million potential voters, 43%

PRESIDENTIAL

Armando Guebuza 2,004,226 63.64%
Afonso Dhlakama 998,059 31.74%

Blank votes: 2.91%
Invalid votes: 2.65%

PARLIAMENT

only two parties gained seats in parliament

Frelimo 1,889,504 62.03% 160 seats
Renamo 905,289 29.73% 90 seats

Blank votes: 5.01%
Invalid votes: 3.31%

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COMPARED TO 1999

In 1999 the result was

President

Chissano 2,338,333

Dhlakama 2,133,655

Blank: 6.5%

Invalid: 2.9%

Parliament

Frelimo 133 seats

Renamo 117 seats

Blank 9.6%

Invalid 4.9%

Blank votes were substantially reduced this year and invalid votes were also lower.

COMPARED TO THE PARALLEL COUNT CARRIED OUT BY THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATORY

The parallel count was accurate:

Guebuza actual 63.6% parallel count 63.3%
Dhlakama actual 31.7% parallel count 31.8%

Frelimo actual 62.0% parallel count 61.5%
Renamo actual 29.7% parallel count 30.0%

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with reports from 50 correspondents

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