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Leopoldo hits out at donors & MDM

CNE President João Leopoldo da Costa sharply criticised the G19 group of budget support donors, which contains all the main donors to Mozambique, in a long interview in *Notícias* yesterday (6 October). “The position of the [donor] group does not seem quite proper to me,” he said. (“*A posição do grupo não me pareceu muito elegante.*”)

The donors, he said, demanded a meeting which fit their calendar and not his, and then came with their position already taken. “The G19 came to give orders, which does not seem to me totally correct.” He then dismissed the donor meeting as unimportant. “It was like a minor traffic accident where we weren’t bruised, so we move on.”

Leopoldo da Costa also hit out at the MDM, “which only makes threats and cannot talk to us.” And he said that on 17 August, the MDM was still trying to submit documents which the CNE was not allowed to accept after 29 July. The MDM was also trying to change names on its lists after 29 July, he said. In Cabo Delgado, for example, MDM admitted it was two candidates short and tried to add the another two on 17 August, but that was clearly impossible and illegal.

He compared it to a football match – once the match starts, a team can only make substitutions from the players who are on the bench at the start. A team cannot suddenly bring in new substitutes from outside, which is what the MDM and other parties wanted.

The National Elections Commission (CNE) president also rejected two MDM charges. MDM says that it has receipts showing that the CNE did actually accept some documents on 29 July and later, but which then were excluded. Leopoldo da Costa responds that it is correct procedure for a lower level staff member (*funcionário*) to sign to indicate that a document has been delivered, but that is not the same a formal acceptance by the CNE, which only comes after the document has been inspected. Thus both sides agree that the MDM handed in lists on 29 July and further documents on 17 August, but physically taking them is not the same as formal acceptance.

Leopoldo da Costa also argues that it is totally impossible for documents to be lost or stolen. Once submitted, all documents are locked in a room and “people who go into the room are not allowed to go in with briefcases, bags or coats, so they cannot sneak documents out of the room.” In addition, only red pens are allowed in the room, to ensure that documents are not altered.

Finally, the CNE president noted that this year the CNE is being criticised for *not* being flexible, which is precisely what it was criticised for in local elections last year. Then it attempted to show tolerance and take into account the difficulties in obtaining documents, he noted. But it had its knuckles rapped by the Constitutional Council, saying that the law must

be “rigorously and strictly applied”. To avoid further problems with the CC, the CNE tried to do just that, Leopoldo da Costa said.

The full interview is on:

<http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/pls/notimz2/getxml/pt/contentx/896725>

Did CNE give special treatment to the flower party?

For the CNE, the PLD is an example of a new, small party that is very well organised and was able to submit correct documents and is now standing in 10 constituencies. But *Magazine Independente (MI)* says CNE documents show the party received special treatment.

According to articles in *MI* (30 September) and its fax counterpart *Diário Independente* this morning (7 October), PLD president Caetano Sabile showed it a set of documents which includes notification number 122/CNE/2009 of 1 September giving it five days to correct irregularities in the documents of its candidates. But this is three days after the CNE posted the “unalterable” lists of candidates, and thus is illegal.

According to *MI*, the 1 September letter gives PLD five days to supply a letter agreeing to stand from Abrão João Abudo and no criminal records certificates from Somar Aquino Amade Salimo, Omar Machude and Rachide João Abudo.

The PLD is officially the third largest party in the election, and it will receive 1.5 million meticaís (\$55,000) from state funds. But questions continue to be raised about whether PLD really is a national party, or has been created in an attempt to confuse opposition voters.

Our 120 journalists in most districts of the country have seen little sign of the PLD in the campaign. In Cabo Delgado, it had a rally in Pemba and in the village of Nigarruma, Chiúre district, where Caetano Sabile has a farm and where his workers wearing PLD shirts were out campaigning. The campaign has also been launched in Inharrime, Inhambane, and a campaign bus is now going north through Sofala.

Meanwhile, Sabile’s plant trade is flourishing and the PLD really is the flower party. Sabile has gardens and greenhouses in Laulane in Maputo and he sells the flowers and plants from his home, shop and party headquarters in Costa do Sol. And with all the publicity and increased movement, his flower trade is blooming.

Guebuza: no 3rd term

President Armando Guebuza pledged that if he wins this year’s presidential election, he will make no attempt to stand for a third term of office.

The constitution limits a president to two terms, but in several countries with term limits there have been disruptions caused by presidents trying to amend the constitution to allow them to stand again. And there has been media speculation that if Frelimo wins a two thirds majority in parliament, it will try to change the constitution.

Speaking to reporters on 4 October at the ceremony marking the 17th anniversary of the peace accord between the government and Renamo, Guebuza categorically denied that he wanted a third term, and said he would not change the current constitution.

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