



# 2009 Elections



## Mozambique political process bulletin

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## EISA & SADC join chorus of critics

EISA, the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa, added to the criticism of the National Elections Commission (CNE) in a statement issued yesterday. The problem started with the selection of civil society CNE members. "The transparency in the selection of CSO [civil society] representatives was questionable, thereby casting doubt over the integrity, impartiality and independence of the CNE"

Using an identical phrase to that used by the Commonwealth and European Union observers, EISA said "improvements are required to level the playing field, afford equal opportunity to all, and improve the transparency of the electoral process."

EISA went on to "encourage the CNE to demonstrate more transparency in the management of the electoral process. Decisions must be explained in a timely manner to all stakeholders where necessary."

And in a press conference this morning the SADC Parliamentary Forum said that the CNE had failed to share information with stakeholders in good time. SADC experience is that elections are more successful when "these matters are fully discussed so that they are well understood far in advance". The exclusion of parties was partly due to lack of information and consultation.

### Transparency at heart of criticism

International observers have been genuinely surprised by the high level of secrecy and lack of information in the Mozambican electoral process, and stress that Mozambique really is unusual in this respect.

Mark Stevens of the Commonwealth team argued that more transparency should not be a problem. He noted that Mozambique is a member of the Commonwealth and that "elsewhere in the Commonwealth, such transparency is easily provided."

He stressed that the "the work of the National Elections Commission, as a public institution, must be public. It is the only way to ensure confidence. The CNE may be acting perfectly properly, but it must show that to the public by being transparent."

**COMMENT:** Mozambican media, notably television and radio, have all reported observers' praise for polling day. But there has been little reporting of the harsh criticism of the CNE, nor of the general view that there was not a level playing field. And there has been no explanation that Mozambique's electoral process is quite unique in its lack of transparency,

which means that Mozambican citizens do not understand that the lack of transparency and information is not normal in many other Commonwealth and SADC elections. jh

## More media coverage of Guebuza

European Union observers monitored the media from 5 to 29 October. There was praise for providing sufficient information, and for making positive efforts to include the small parties. The coverage of the campaign by Radio Moçambique, *Notícias* and *Domingo* “was balanced and generally presented in a neutral tone”

But the volume of coverage was not balanced. *Notícias* and *Domingo* gave Guebuza 67% and 76% of the space for presidential candidates, compared to 18% and 17% for Afonso Dhlakama and only 15% and 7% for Daviz Simango. Similarly, Radio Moçambique gave Guebuza 63% of presidential airtime, compared to 23% for Dhlakama and 14% for Simango.

## Lichinga: Voting til midnight, counting til morning

In Lichinga, Niassa, in many polling stations the count did not start until just before midnight. Polling stations closed very late, because queues had moved very slowly, because polling station staff were dealing with voters very slowly. In addition, people who came after 1800 were permitted to join the queue and vote.

At Escola Secundária de Muchenga, counting continued until Thursday morning. Staff took breaks to rest, leaving the polling stations for 10 to 15 minutes purely under the guard of the police.

## Polling station staff demonstrate in Nampula

Riot police (Polícia de Intervenção Rápida) used tear gas to disperse demonstrating polling station staff in Nampula on the night of 29 October. Staff of many of the 266 polling stations were demanding an increase in salaries. They claimed, allegedly from talks with international observers, that they were supposed to be receiving a food subsidy of 150 meticias (Mt) a day (about \$5.50) for three days of work at the polling station, and Mt 1000 (\$36) for the 10 days of training, but in fact STAE (Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral) was paying them only Mt 50 and Mt 500. Polling station staff refused to hand over voting material until they were paid the higher amount.

The demonstration took place outside the Commercial and Industrial School (Escola Instituto Comercial e Industrial) where they were scheduled to hand in the material and receive their pay. The demonstrators and the tear gas disrupted night classes at the school. Three polling station staff were hospitalised because of the effects of the tear gas.

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