



2009 Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

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Very high Tete turnout suggests massive ballot box stuffing

A highly unlikely 66% turnout in Tete suggests massive ballot box stuffing. There were probably at least 160,000 extra votes for Armando Guebuza and Frelimo, and Renamo may have been robbed of one seat in parliament (Assembleia da República).

Provincial results give Frelimo: 417 321 and Renamo 44 307, which would give Frelimo 18 seats and Renamo 2. But if the turnout had been a more plausible 46%, then there would have been 160,000 fewer votes. If all of those are "extra" votes for Frelimo, and they are removed, then Frelimo would only have 17 seats and Renamo would have 3.

Official results for Tete are:

Eleitores inscritos: 799 328

Presidente:

Votos na urna: 523 827 (Afluência 66%)

Votos nulos: 22 917 (4.4%)

Votos em branco: 15 562 (3.0%)

Simango- 19 333

Guebuza: 420 420

Dihakama: 46 830

Assembleia da República

Votos na urna: 527 099

Votos nulos: 15 294

Votos em branco: 16 511

Validos: 466 873

Frelimo: 417 321 (18 seats)

Renamo : 44 307 (2 seat)

PLD: 5245

Assembleia Provincial

Votos na urna: 517 286

Votos nulos: 10 565

Votos em branco: 27 826

Frelimo: 462 471

Renamo: 24 841

Votos validos: 477 312

Looking again at hundreds of thousands of ballot papers ...

Mountains of invalid votes (nulos) from the entire country are now being reassessed by the National Elections Commission (CNE) in Maputo. The process is open to the press and

observers. The process is necessary because many polling station presidents are too strict in their decisions during the count, rejecting ballots where the X or fingerprint goes outside the box or there is a squiggle instead of an X. The law says that a vote is valid if the intent of the voter is clear, and typically a third of the “invalid” ballots are accepted by the CNE, because the choice of the voter is obvious.

And many are obviously unacceptable. One voter wrote “thief” next to one candidate and “murderer” next to another. Some voters tick all the boxes. Thus the decisions are relatively straightforward and the CNE members and STAE staff seem to be consistent in their decisions, not favouring one party or the other. It is a relaxed atmosphere, with people showing around the more bizarre ballot papers, and discussion with colleagues about those papers for which the decision is less clear.

Ballot papers are treated one province at a time, and within that, one district at a time, so that valid votes can be correctly added back to the districts. And the piles of papers are huge – hundreds of thousands of ballots must be reconsidered in the next few days.

... which also show evidence of fraud ...

But watching the requalification also gives obvious evidence of tampering with ballot papers, and thus fraud by polling station staff. Yesterday much of the work was on Zambézia, and two frauds became obvious.

One example, which has been widely reported and has occurred in at least the last three elections, is that someone in the polling station puts an extra ink fingerprint on a vote for Renamo, to make it look like the voter has voted for two different candidates, and thus the ballot is invalid. A journalist from AIM reported yesterday one group of invalid votes (nulos) from Alto Molócuè had a striking pattern. “A series of ballots had been marked for Afonso Dhlakama, with either a cross or a fingerprint. Immediately above, in the square for incumbent president Armando Guebuza, someone had added another fingerprint. For ballot after ballot after ballot, it was the same. Quite clearly the same finger had added a mark to Guebuza’s box to make it look as if the voters concerned had tried to vote for two candidates.”

And the *Bulletin* noticed a new fraud, which we only saw for the first time last year. In votes for assembly from Quelimane, a set of 175 ballots were all for Frelimo, but all were obviously valid – there was no way that even the most rigid polling station president could have rejected them. After a brief discussion, it was decided that clearly valid papers had to be accepted. But it seems likely that as the ballot papers were being put in their plastic bags at 3 am in the dark of some polling station, someone simply took a large handful of Frelimo ballot papers and put them in the nulos bag instead. No one would ever know, because valid ballot papers are never checked again, but valid papers in the nulos bag are sure to be counted – thus these 175 ballot papers were probably counted twice.

This morning the CNE was working on Manica ballots for parliament (Assembleia da República). In a quite short period we saw more than 100 ballot papers that had a quite neat X or + for Renamo and then a very suspicious extra fingerprint elsewhere on the ballot paper. It seems likely that hundreds of votes for Renamo were improperly invalidated by polling station staff in Manica.

... and fraud is successful

CNE members and dozens of assistants are concentrating on reconsidering hundreds of thousands of ballot papers in just a few days. But that means that they are not looking for fraud, and have no way to deal with it if they see it. They ask only one question: is the ballot valid or not. They are not primed or trained to look for obviously improper groups of ballot papers. Nor do they have any way to respond – there is no way to record obvious improprieties, nor to follow them up.

The first problem is that nulos arrive in plastic bags which identify the polling station, but there are people opening the bags and putting the nulos into large piles, dumping the bags on the floor. There is no way to find out which polling station a group of ballots came from.

The Alto Molócuè ballot papers were clear enough that it would have been possible to identify the fingerprint, and if the polling station had been known, it would only have required a few fingerprints – 7 staff members, 2 party delegates, and any journalists or observers present – to know who had committed the crime. But separated from their bag, there is no way to identify the polling station. Similarly for the 175 extra votes.

Thus, corrupt polling station staff can be sure that the actions will never be traced and that they cannot be identified. In other words, fraud works.

Provincial elections confirm MDM Beira victory

Results published Wednesday by the Beira daily *Dário de Moçambique* confirm that turnout is higher when the contest is exciting, and also confirm the dominance of MDM and Daviz Simango in the city. With a 52% turnout, Beira was one of the few places where more than half the potential voters actually went to the polls. And blank and invalid votes were very low. The results for Beira for provincial assembly were:

Registered-inscritos	243 556	
Voters-votantes	125 886	52%
Blank-brancos	2 756	2%
Invalid-nulo	3 147	2%
Frelimo	51 451	41%
Renamo	9 089	7%
MDM	59 443	47%

People want a choice

Dário de Moçambique also published the provincial assembly results for all the Sofala districts, and they show people want a choice. In those districts where only Frelimo was standing, the level of blank ballot papers (brancos) was very high: Chibabava 43%, Caia 23% (and turnout was only 30%), and Gorongosa 29%.

Cheringoma, where there was a close contest between Frelimo and Renamo, had a turnout of 53% and only 3% blank votes.

Frelimo came first in all districts where there was a contest, which suggests that MDM has yet not spread its influence outside Beira.

Some counts were open, some closed

District and provincial election commissions had no orientations as to whether counts were open to observers or closed, and made very different choices. In some places commissions were totally open and domestic and international observers could watch the entire process; in other places, they were totally closed and observers were barred.

CNE responds to Renamo allegations

Renamo never told us, but nevertheless we ordered the police to release its polling station delegate, the head of the CNE's legal department, Antonio Chipanga, told AIM on Thursday.

Chipanga was responding to press conferences by Renamo Tuesday and Wednesday in which it said that its delegate at polling station 541 at EP1, Jembesse, Lumbo on the mainland part of Ilha de Moçambique, had been arrested for trying to stop ballot box stuffing, and that 10 other delegates had been detained and not allowed to stay in polling

stations. Chipanga said such detentions are clearly illegal, but said Renamo never informed the CNE about them.

In the incident in Lumbo, Chipanga tells a different version of the incident. He says the incident led to a furious argument in the polling station between the Renamo and Frelimo delegates. The polling station president ordered both of them to leave the polling station. But the Renamo member clambered back into the polling station through a window, breaking the glass to do so. He then physically assaulted the returning officer. It was at this point that the police were called and arrested the monitor. Despite the violence, CNE president João Leopoldo da Costa insisted that the man should be released.

But there seems agreement that the man accused of ballot box stuffing was not arrested or charged. And this particular polling station has been accused by other sources of being involved in what appeared to be ballot box stuffing later in the day.

Chipanga adds that ballot papers are shipped in supposedly tamper proof packages, and that he wants to see the ballot papers in Renamo's possession to try to find if a breach of security occurred. Three of the presidential ballot papers had numbers 03889365 to 7, which may help him to identify where they were sent.

Higher abstention in the North

The four northern provinces had the lowest voter turnout this year, and three of them – Zambézia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado – also had very high levels of blank votes, over 10%, according to an analysis by Luís de Brito of IESE, the Social and Economic Studies Institute in Maputo (Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos).

He also notes that there were proportionately fewer polling stations in Zambézia and Nampula, where the opposition is stronger, compared to Tete and Gaza, where Frelimo is strongest. This means voters had to walk longer distances to vote in Zambézia and Nampula.

de Brito also notes that higher than average turnout in Tete and Gaza is probably due to “local fraud”. He points out that “in Changara, of 5 polling stations observed, in three the turnout was 100% and the Frelimo candidate had 100% of the votes, with not a single vote for another candidate”.

His paper “Uma análise preliminar das eleições de 2009” is available on the IESE website, http://www.iese.ac.mz/lib/publication/outras/ideias/ideias_22.pdf

Finally, de Brito makes some more general comments. “Even with the participation of less than half the possible voters, these elections put Frelimo in a position of total supremacy. This could have serious effects on the construction of democracy. This results both from the efforts of Frelimo as well as from the incapacity demonstrated by Renamo for the past 15 years to act as a real political party and assume the role of an opposition.”

And he cautions about the “way in which Frelimo, as party which has historically been confused with the state, occupies the political space, establishing a serious barrier that its adversaries have a real problem to climb over.”

District final results

The first official tabulation is done a district level. Surprisingly, there seems to be no national system to collect together the district results. From our correspondents and other sources, we have now collected results from 115 districts. They are posted on our websites:

www.eleicoes2009.cip.org.mz

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Provincial final results

These are the official provincial results as announced by provincial elections commissions:

Presidente

Provincia	total de Eleitores	Total	6 Nov 2009 Votos válidos			%			Turnout
			Simango	Guebuza	Dhlakama	Sim	Gueb	Dhla	
Niassa	554 770	198 909	9 945	163 839	25 125	5%	82%	13%	41%
Cabo Delgado	888 197	356 141	20 097	285 423	50 621	6%	80%	14%	
Nampula	1 801 249	574 307	31 494	386 375	156 438	5%	67%	27%	39%
Zambezia	1 770 910	498 567	33 719	270 892	193 956	7%	54%	39%	33%
Tete	799 328	486 583	19 333	420 420	46 830	4%	86%	10%	66%
Manica	648 969	259 856	19 621	182 306	57 929	8%	70%	22%	
Sofala	772 630	325 387	84 127	168 282	72 978	26%	52%	22%	
Inhambane	641 387	269 425	20 809	233 090	15 526	8%	87%	6%	47%
Gaza	639 658	371 950	12 278	356 221	3 451	3%	96%	1%	
Maputo Prov	616 208	280 209	27 078	241 308	11 823	7%	65%	21%	
Maputo Cidade	695 354	356 825	54 020	285 947	16 858	15%	80%	5%	
Total	9 828 660	3 978 159	332 521	2 994 103	651 535	8%	75%	16%	

Assembleia da República

Provincia	total de Eleitores	Votos válidos			Assentos - Seats		
		Frelimo	Renamo	MDM	Fre	Ren	MDM
Niassa	554 770	163 036	24 559	6 805	13	1	
Cabo Delgado	888 197	276 423	50 165		19	3	
Nampula	1 801 249	382 812	162 718		32	13	
Zambezia	1 770 910	278 908	197 518		26	19	
Tete	799 328	417 321	44 307		18	2	
Manica	648 969	180 698	64 206		12	4	
Sofala	772 630	164 415	72 482	75 306	11	4	5
Inhambane	641 387	207 989	18 991	4 780	15	1	
Gaza	639 658	352 896	5 106		16		
Maputo Prov	616 208	242 257	21 250		15	1	
Maputo Cidade	695 354	268 854	18 511	57 017	14	1	3
Total	9 828 660	2 935 609	684 107	143 908	191	49	8

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