

Mozambique Political Process Bulletin

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Count proceeding with more openness

Data input for the editais is apparently complete, and yesterday (Monday) the CNE began consideration of invalid votes and has already done four provinces. So far, the process has been accompanied by more openness than in the past.

Each polling station produces a results sheet (*edital*) which is passed to various higher levels of the electoral machine. Copies are posted and given to party delegates in the polling station. The subsequent procedure is somewhat complicated, with three different channels.

- + The city election commission produces what is called an “intermediate count” which is posted and sent to the National Election Commission in Maputo. This should have been done in all cities by now.

- + Meanwhile, a copy of the edital is sent to the computer centre in the provincial capital; data input was done over the weekend and is apparently complete in most places. The provincial election commission then sends a CD-rom to the National Election Commission.

- + Thirdly, all ballot papers considered invalid (*nulo*) are sent to the CNE in Maputo, where they are all reconsidered. Most are obviously invalid, with marks for two candidates or words written on them. But some, where the intention of the voter is clear, are accepted.

The final step is for the CNE to compare the intermediate count from the city with the data on the CD-rom, add in the requalified *nulos*, and declare the results.

The process has been more open and efficient than in the past. In Maputo city, for example, a special terminal had been set up at which observers and journalists could look up all editais as they appeared in the computer. And in Maputo, a stack of copies of original editais was available for comparison. It would be easy for any observer, for example, to go in and check the polling station where they watched the count, to see if the computerised result matches

the original edital. In an important improvement on past elections, the observer terminal continued in operation after the data input was completed, allowing more time for checks.

The process of requalification of nulos taking place at the CNE is open to press and observers, and was filmed yesterday by STV. Four pairs of CNE members are going through the nulos, and their decisions seemed consistent. By the end of yesterday, they had finished with Gaza, Inhambane, Cabo Delgado and Manica.

The shift to more openness is not total, but is advancing. Gaining access to the computer terminal in Maputo city and the requalification room in the CNE both took time and discussion, because junior staff could not believe that such processes were now open. But senior staff responded positively.

Similarly, the CNE is now posting all of its decisions on its website, which is a major advance on the past, when they were all secret. But STAE staff have been running to catch up, so very few decisions after September have been posted on the web yet, and key recent decisions have been unavailable. The press office has distributed hard copies of some documents. But the full set of candidates lists for the 43 assemblies was never made easily available.

So far, there seems to be a real shift to more transparency.

Who is GDB in Beira?

The Group for Democracy in Beira (GDB) will have seven seats in the Municipal Assembly and it could hold the balance of power. It is a citizens group created for this election which is seen as closer to Frelimo than to Daviz Simango.

Its leader, Filipe Manuel Alfredo, received fewer than 500 votes as a candidate for mayor, but the list received more than 18,000 because many people voting for Daviz Simango did not want to vote for Frelimo or Renamo. Because the initials GDB were close to those of the group supporting Simango (GRM), some voters may have thought this was a list for Simango. In fact, Simango was dropped as Renamo candidate so late, that he only had time to organise his own candidacy, and not a list.

Alfredo was elected to the assembly. He denies that his Group for Democracy in Beira (GDB, Grupo para a Democracia da Beira) has links to any party, but its statements have been very critical of the leadership of Simango as the current mayor. This suggests that as a group in the Municipal Assembly it will be opposed to Simango.

GDB leader Filipe Alfredo is 45 years old, married with eight children, and a teacher. He also has basic training in theology. He is director of the REOM primary school, run by a religious NGO for orphans and children in difficult circumstances.

GDB's election manifesto was similar to other parties, calling for expansion of water and electricity to the outer neighbourhoods, improving sanitation, and guaranteeing peace and tranquillity for its citizens so that they do not go around the city fearing being assaulted.

Electoral Observatory parallel count proves accurate

The parallel count of 13 municipalities conducted by the Electoral Observatory is proving to be very close to the provisional count done by STAE. Below are comparisons of votes for assembly in just four municipalities:

	Gorongosa		Marrromeu		Mocimboa da Praia		Angoche	
	STAE	Obs EI	STAE	Obs EI	STAE	Obs EI	STAE	Obs EI
Frelimo	81.7%	81.5%	57.1%	56.2%	64.2%	63.2%	66.2%	66.5%
Renamo	12.3%	12.3%	37.1%	38.1%	35.8%	36.8%	32.4%	32.0%
PDD	5.4%	5.3%	3.2%	3.2%			1.4%	1.5%
others	0.7%	0.9%	2.5%	2.5%				

Results of 11 of the 13 parallel counts are published on our website: <http://www.cip.org.mz/pub2008/> and http://www.cip.org.mz/pub2008/index_en.asp

Parallel counts are conducted in many parts of the world, and serve two different functions. They are an important check on the election administration and a way to prevent fraud in counting. On the other hand, by providing an independent check on the vote, it prevents the parties from making wild claims that the count was improper.

The Electoral Observatory is an independent body composed of nine civil society organisations. The parallel count is based on the results sheets (*editais*) which must be posted on the door of each polling station after the count. The Observatory had observers in all polling stations in 11 municipalities and in 40% of polling stations in the other two.

The STAE provisional count was carried out in a similar way, but is based on the results sheets handed in to the STAE city office.

Formal Renamo complaints

Renamo has made formal protests to district election commissions in Ilha de Moçambique and Quelimane.

In Quelimane, Renamo complained that 40 ex-guerrillas (*antigos combatentes*) living in Nicoadala district outside the city were brought into Quelimane the day before polling day in a Mitsubishi truck. They also complained that members of government, including provincial directors, were present as national observers.

Our correspondent says that Frelimo confirmed both stories. The *antigo combatentes* did not vote but merely supported the party on polling day, it said. And the government officials were legitimately accredited as observers as they were members of civil society groups.

In Ilha de Moçambique the protest includes complaints of ballot box stuffing, of using an extra ink fingerprint to invalidate ballot papers, and of Renamo voters not being allowed to vote.

Some Renamo stories may be true

In post-election discussions, celebrating Frelimo militants have confirmed at least a few of Renamo's horror stories about the election. In one case, a young man in Frelimo said he had voted four times. When asked how, he said when he reached the polling station table he was recognised by the president of the polling station and given four ballot papers instead of one.

In Gaza, Frelimo militants in one town admitted paying 500 Mt (\$20) to Renamo party delegates to stay away from the polls, and our correspondent reported that indeed, there were few Renamo delegates in the polling stations. Frelimo also gave small gifts of 100-200 Mt (\$4-8) to church and traditional leaders who brought their congregations in groups to vote.

And in a rally on the last day of campaigning, a Frelimo official told his audience that the election computers would record anyone who did not vote for Frelimo.

Extra votes in Lichinga

In Lichinga, three polling stations had extra ballot papers in the ballot boxes. In polling station 0152 at Escola Amilcar Cabral, there were 397 voters but 398 ballot papers. In polling station 1009 at Escola Secundária Geral de Muchenga, 220 voters accounted for 222 votes. And in Bairro Popular in polling station 0999, 290 voters deposited 296 votes.

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