

2014 National Elections

Mozambique political process bulletin

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Registration problems continue

Problems continued to dog the first week of registration for national elections, according to reports from our 75 correspondents across the country. Heavy rain, equipment breakdowns, lack of generators in areas without electricity, lack of a stamp (*carimbo*), theft of equipment, and slowness by polling station staff were all reported. So far, turnout has been low.

In Zambézia province, 19 registration posts are closed because heavy rain has made access impossible. There are in the districts of Gurué (Mukunha, Murabue, Mukobala, Veiwa, e Moiwa), Chinde (Luabo), Nicoadala (Tripano e Magadiro), Namacurra (Macuse) and Inhassunge (Iciro). Seven registration posts in Angoche (Auve), Nampula, are also closed because of the rains..

Lack of generators has kept 10 posts closed in Zavala (Inhambane), 13 in Chiúre (Cabo Delgado), and 1 Mabalane (Gaza). In Meconta district (Nampula) at EPC de Imputo Velho, there was no stamp (*carimbo*) to stamp the voters card, so this had to be done at night at STAE and voters had to pick up their cards the next day.

In Morrumbene, registration has stopped at nearly all 23 posts because of printer problems. In Nacala-a-Velha, registration posts in Mepuhula e Namalala were closed Friday because of computer problems; there was a relatively high turnout and many people were turned away.

In Maganja da Costa, three computers were stolen from the STAE district office in the early morning of 18 February. One was STAE's own office computer, and the other two were from registration posts in Catangala and Mitange which are regularly brought in to recharge the batteries each night.

No registration in war zones

Registration has not begun in Gorongosa, Maringué and Chibabava districts, which are the areas affected by fighting between Renamo and the government. Registration staff are waiting in the district centres until they are told by the district authorities that there is sufficient security for them to move out, according to STAE spokesman Lucas José.

Misunderstanding leading voters to register again

Many people who voted in November think they must register again to vote this year. Our correspondents in Maputo report the in visits to registration posts, most people already had a voters card and did not realise they should not register again.

This was the case with Estino Alves in Nacala that we reported in Bulletin 3. He told our correspondent that he thought the old card was only for municipal elections and that the new card was for national elections. When he registered, he simply showed his identify card, and was given a new voters card. No one asked him if he had registered last year.

Outside the 53 municipalities, this is a totally new registration. Registration last year was only in those municipalities. In the municipalities, where most people have already registered, the process is mainly for those who turn 18 years old by 15 October, as well as those who have moved or lost their card and need to obtain a replacement voter's card.

This has not been made clear in the civic education programmes, which seems likely to mean there will be many cases like that of Estino Alves. At the very least, in the municipalities registration staff should be asking if people already have voter's cards.

Solar panels for remote registration posts

STAE has recently noticed that there are many registration posts which are far from an electricity supply making it difficult to recharge the batteries of the registration computers. Until now, diesel generators have been supplied, but STAE spokesman Lucas José says that solar panels will now be supplied in some places, to reduce the cost.

Commenting on other issues, José attributed the low turnout of would-be voters to the heavy rains in the centre and north of the country, combined with people thinking that with a 75 day registration period, there is still plenty of time. In terms of equipment problems, José noted that there were many fewer problems than with the registration last year. The biggest difficulty appears to be that some registration staff do not have enough experience with the computer system, and STAE is increasing the supervision visits by technicians in order to support staff in the registration posts.

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