

2013 Local Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin

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Next step – parties & candidates

Registration ended Tuesday and final numbers are expected to be announced Thursday morning. Registration books are now on display for parties and individuals to check until 6 August.

Political parties, coalitions of parties, and citizens' groups began registration Tuesday and have until 6 August. And the National Elections Commission has set out the system for registering candidates between 7 August and 6 September. Procedures are set out in the electoral law (7/2013) and are largely just repeated by the CNE.

Registered parties, coalitions of parties, and citizens' groups must submit a formal statement that they are going to present candidates, a notarized copy of their statutes, and copies of their symbols and insignias. Coalitions must present evidence of agreement of the parties to form the coalition. Citizens' groups and parties must present a list of office holders. And all must name a party agent.

Checking lists at submission

The National Elections Commission (Comissão Nacional de Eleições, CNE) has only just released a decision taken 17 July to try to avoid some of the conflicts over candidates that occurred in 2009. (Deliberação número 26/CNE/2013)

Each candidate must submit at least five documents. In 2009, the CNE simply accepted folders and only later told parties that candidates had been rejected due to lack of documents. Some parties objected and there was a huge controversy.

The CNE now says all documents will be checked when submitted, and it will only accept a file if all the documents are there. If documents are missing the file cannot be handed in, and thus will be treated as never submitted rather than rejected, which should reduce the number of protests.

Documents can be handed in to local election commissions or the CNE. Traditionally, most candidates' files are only submitted on the afternoon of the final day – in this case, Friday 6 September. It is unclear if election commissions will be prepared to check thousands of files on

one afternoon. In 2009 the entire yard of the CNE was filled with unchecked boxes of files.

All candidates for municipal president and municipal assembly must submit:

- + Authenticated photocopy of identity card or birth certificate.
- + Authenticated photocopy of voter's card.
- + Certificate of no criminal record.
- + A declaration that they agree to be a candidate and accept the party agent.
- + A declaration that they are not on any other list and are eligible to stand.

Candidates for President must also present signatures of at least 1% of registered voters.

Although the list is long, one important change was made to the law this year. Previously a residence certificate was also required. These are issued by the neighbourhood secretary, who is often seen as a Frelimo party person. Opposition parties said they had trouble obtaining residence certificates, and some candidates in the past were excluded because they could not obtain one.

The new law (7/2013) says that a residence certificate will only be required if neither the candidate's identity card nor voter's card has an address within the municipality. In that case, a residence certificate is required to prove the candidate lives in the municipality.

This change in law is not widely known, and parties continue to complain about the need for a residence certificate.

Not using website

The CNE has a website but is only rarely using it. The electoral calendar has not been posted (it is available on our website) and it did not post the decision on procedures for candidates. That was the 26th formal decision this year, but only three are on the website. For the first time, the electoral law specifies the use of the website for publicity, but this is not yet being done.

Registration ends with queues, confusion, protest

Long queues and protests by both voters and registration brigade members marked the end of registration Tuesday.

In Dondo (Sofala) there was a demonstration by would-be voters who had been turned away by registration brigades saying that they had not presented evidence that they lived in Dondo.

In Nampula city, some registration posts closed with people still in queues, in violation of official instructions. At Parque Popular primary school, the supervisor sent away those still in the queue, and instructed operators to shut down the registration computer. At Pavilhão dos Desportos, staff said they were not being paid overtime and had to shut down in order to complete reports before their shift ended.

In many places there was a rush to register in the final days. For example at the biggest Quelimane primary school where brigade members had found themselves staring at the walls for lack of voters, there was suddenly a rush and even a queue on Monday.

And in Maputo at Julius Nyerere and Acordos de Lusaka primary schools, registration teams had to keep working after the official closing time on Tuesday.

Nampula STAE says worst process ever

Registration in the seven municipalities of Nampula province was "one of the worst, and a headache", compared to past registrations, said STAE provincial director Isabel Tirano. She blames a string of problems: late arrival of equipment, constant computer failures, problems with printers, and inadequate training of staff, which demotivated citizens who gave up trying to register, resulting in a low turnout.

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