

# 2013 Local Elections



## Mozambique political process bulletin

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## 17 parties want to stand - but not Renamo

Ten parties, one coalition, and five citizens' lists (which want to stand in individual cities) had submitted their documents to the National Elections Commission (CNE) by the deadline at the end of today. Renamo was not among them, confirming its decision to boycott municipal elections on 20 November.

The CNE has approved some, and the rest must still be considered.

The ten parties are:

- + Movimento Democrático de Moçambique (MDM, Mozambique Democratic Movement),
- + Humanitário de Moçambique (PAHUMO, Mozambique Humanitarian Party),
- + Frelimo,
- + Trabalhista (PT, Labour Party),
- + para Paz, Democracia e Desenvolvimento (PDD, Party for Peace, Democracy & Development),
- + Independente de Moçambique (PIMO, Independent Mozambique Party),
- + Nacional de Moçambique (PANAMO),
- + de Renovação Nacional (PARENA), National Renovation Party) and
- + Progresso Liberal de Moçambique (PPLM, Mozambique Liberal Progressive Party).

One coalition has submitted documents, of the Ecologista (Ecologists) and Movimento Patriótico para a Democracia (MPD, Patriotic Movement for Democracy).

And five local citizens' lists want to stand: Juntos pela Cidade (JPC) and SINFORTÉCNICA (Maputo), ASSIMUNA (Nampula), ASTROGAZA (Xai-Xai), and ANATURMA (Manhiça).

Of these, only Frelimo, PDD, PIMO, PT and JPC stood in 2008. The Ecologists stood in a different coalition. Frelimo won 42 of the then 43 municipalities in 2008. PDD and PIMO have one seat each in the current Beira municipal assembly, and JPC has 2 seats in the Maputo assembly. Citizen's lists and parties not standing this year won seats in Manhiça, Beira, Cuamba and Milange.

## Registration in the rain

With the election date confirmed for 15 October 2014, it is apparent that registration will take place during the rainy season.

CNE must publish the number of parliamentary seats for each province 180 days before the national election. Seats are based on registered voters, so registration must finish before 15 April. That forces registration to start in January 2014, at the peak of the rainy season.

In turn, that means all equipment must be ready and registration brigades trained in December, soon after the 20 November 2013 local elections.

The director-general of the Election Technical Secretariat (Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral, STAE), Felisberto Naife, said that the contract for supplying registration equipment covers two years, with some material delivered earlier this year, and the rest to be delivered in time for the national registration. Naife adds that the existing equipment will be used to give more intensive training to new brigade members, reflecting a recognition that registration teams were inadequately experienced for the recent registration.

## President violates election law - again

President Armando Guebuza violated the electoral law for the second time when he set the date for national elections in 2014. The date will now be Wednesday 15 October 2014 everywhere.

The constitution requires the President to set the election date. But in writing the new electoral law, parliament accepted the advice of domestic and foreign commentators that there should be a fixed date and it should be before the rainy season. To also satisfy the constitution, the law says that the President will announce a date at least 18 months before the election, and that it must be in the first half of October 2014.

The first violation of the law came when the President failed to make the announcement in time, so the law was urgently amended by parliament to allow a delayed announcement.

When the council of state was established, one of its tasks was to advise on elections. When it met last week, it wisely advised the President to follow the law.

When the law was being debated in parliament, there was another sensible suggestion. In Mozambique polling day is a holiday, and is usually a Wednesday (but this is not specified in the law). But there are two parliament seats reserved for the diaspora and turnout was low because Wednesday is a working day in South Africa and Europe. Thus it was suggested that polling in the diaspora be the Sunday before the normal voting day. This was rejected by Renamo, which insisted polling must be on the same day everywhere. So this change was not made.

But when President Armando Guebuza announced the dates last week, he announced Wednesday 15 October 2014 in Mozambique and Sunday 12 October 2014 in the diaspora. A shame-faced CNE admitted it had incorrectly advised the President on the date, which will now be 15 October 2014 everywhere - unless parliament changes the law again.

## CNE legality challenged

A group of six parties which have never succeeded in electing anyone have joined together as the Helping Hand Opposition (Oposição de Mãos Dadas) and are presenting to the Constitutional Council a challenge to the legality of the National Elections Commission (CNE).

They argue that the CNE is defined as a collegial body and thus the failure of any member to participate means the body is not legally constituted and cannot take decisions. Renamo is boycotting the electoral process and has not taken up its seats on the CNE. This makes all CNE decisions illegal, says the group.

The group is led by Partido de Ampliação Social de Moçambique (PASOMO), which is joined by

five other small parties: Liberal de Moçambique (PALMO), Popular Democrático (PPD), Nacional Democrático (PANADE), de Liberdade e Desenvolvimento (PLD) and de Unidade Nacional (PUN).

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