

2014 National Elections



Mozambique political process bulletin



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Recruitment of polling station staff starts tomorrow

Recruitment of polling station staff for the 15 October elections starts tomorrow and continues until 10 September. There will be 17,000 polling stations, each with seven staff members, so 120,000 people have to be recruited. All must be at least 18 years old, have 7 years of primary school and should have a tax number and speak a local language. For each polling station, four members are selected through a public competition, as in the past, but in a concession to Renamo as part of the negotiations, Frelimo, Renamo, and MDM (Mozambique Democratic Movement) each nominate one person.

But some parties may not have sufficient people with 7th class or who meet the other requirements, or may prefer people they trust over people who are better educated. The reality is that the National Elections Commission (CNE) will need to bend the rules to allow unqualified nominees. The last thing the CNE wants is for a party to say after the election "we do not accept the results because CNE did not accept our people for polling stations." Partly in response to this, the CNE is extending polling station staff training to 10 days, hoping that even those party nominees lacking the official requirements will learn enough not to cause problems on polling day.

Meanwhile, there are two other problems in recruiting polling station staff. Many are teachers or older students, and the election comes only a month before the end of non-exam classes on 14 November and exams on 27 December. That close to the end of the term many pupils and teachers will not want to miss classes. Voting is in schools, which are closed on polling day, but there are also training and preparation periods. This caused recruitment problems in some places for the 20 November 2013 municipal elections.

The other problem is that the Ministry of Finance demands that all short term polling station staff meet the same requirements as permanent staff, including having a bank account and tax number. For teachers this will not be an issue, but for many people in rural areas this is a problem. Can the Ministry be more flexible?

Which districts?

Confusion continues over changes in districts. A law approved by parliament last year and now being implemented splits some districts and creates 13 new ones. The district is the base for electoral affairs, with district elections commissions and electoral administrations (STAEs). Also the

district is the constituency for the provincial assembly, meaning parties have district lists. But which set of districts?

There were 149 districts and municipalities, and the CNE decided to maintain the old district boundaries for the elections this year - for election commissions, STAEs and district constituencies - and parties have submitted candidates' lists for the old districts. But in some provinces, notably Nampula, the government has moved quickly to create the new districts and the recruitment of new election commissions started, until the CNE decided it would not create new commissions and STAEs.

The district law was passed without taking into account the elections and does not set out how electoral authorities should deal with this. Nonetheless, there is growing concern that using the old district boundaries may violate the law.

African Human Rights Commission considers claim against Mozambique

The African Commission on Human and People's Rights has agreed to consider a case against the Mozambican government. The case has been brought by Francisco Campira, President of the party PASOMO. The law requires that CNE decisions be challenged with three days. Campira tried to challenge a CNE decision two weeks late, in August 2013, and the rejection of this challenge was upheld by the Constitutional Council. Campira argues that his rights were violated by the very short time scale to seek judicial redress.

The case is detailed in an article by Professor Gilles Cistac in the Observatório Eleitoral's Newsletter 6 of June 2014. He notes that by accepting the case, the Commission has forced the government to respond.

A detailed report on the 2009 elections is available, in two parts, on
<http://bit.ly/MozElec2009-1a> and <http://bit.ly/MozElec2009-2>

The Portuguese edition of the Bulletin is more detailed, and can be read on <http://www.cip.org.mz/election2013/> Some English bulletins cover two Portuguese bulletins and have a double number.

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