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Crowds registering in rural areas, but as last year, many problems

Voter registration began Friday with crowds in some rural areas but few people in cities, our team of more than 400 correspondents reported yesterday. This was expected. Last year there was registration in the districts containing the 65 municipalities where there were votes on 11 October. But two thirds of Mozambicans in more rural areas can only register this year.

There were widespread problems with the opening of registration in many places, and many registration posts showed the same problems and misconduct reported last year in registration for municipal elections.

The ongoing rainy season caused disruptions in some places, and the war in causing delays in Cabo Delgado.

However in many places, registration is running smoothly. In rural zones, for example, in the Canxixe EPC in Marínguè, Sofala, there were many voters in the queues in the early hours of Friday morning. Ile, Zambézia, also saw crowds in the early morning. In Espungabera, Manica, at the Teresa Amuli Secondary School, by 14.00 50 voters had been registered. The same scenario was noted in Zambézia, Nampula and Niassa.

As expected, registration posts in urban districts, where most people are already registered, recorded low turnouts, and at some not a single voter appeared, notably in Maputo City. Below, we describe the scenario province by province.

Bad start is many places - even district administrators had problems registering

Many registration posts showed the same problems and misconduct reported last year.

In **Zambézia** two district administrators had trouble registering. In **Ile District**, it took 30 minutes to register district administrator Onório das Dores Pereira Vaz because of problems with the computer which printed the voter card twice with letters back to front. The administrator only obtained his card

on the third attempt. It then took 30 minutes to register the chairperson of the district elections commission, because of the slowness of the typist. In the post at the **Morrumbala Industrial School**, the district administrator was unable to update his voter card because the machine broke down.

At the Vanduzi EPC, in **Manica province** the brigade did not open the post at the scheduled time. According to the voters, the post was opened at 10.00 and the first to register was the district administrator. Then nurses and teachers registered - which in effect meant registering Frelimo voters first, which had been ruled illegal by the CNE last year. Registration of queuing voters only began at 12:30. Some voters complained that they had been in the queue since 04.00, and by 12:35 they had not yet been registered.

On the first day of voter registration in **Xai-Xai** city, **Gaza** province, two brigades visited did not open at the time stipulated by law. These were the brigades at the Amilcar Cabral first level EPC, in the Coca-Missava 6th neighbourhood, and the brigade at the Unit 11 EPC. At the two brigades the party monitors from RENAMO and the MDM were absent. At the brigade at the Unit 11 EPC, work was slow due to poor mastery of the machine. It was taking between 8 and 11 minutes to register each voter.

More than ten of the registration posts visited did not display the brigade identification number or even the CNE posters. To obtain the number of the post, we had to ask brigade members.

At registration post number 021323, in the Mucapane EPC, in **Moamba district, Maputo** province, the machines were experiencing breakdowns. According to the supervisor, the brigade began its activities at 07.00. But by 11.00 only one voter had registered. The STAE staff member said the voters should be sent home.

In **Maxixe, Inhambane**, at the registration post in the Mabil EPC, brigade number 87, registration began late. The delay was due to a lack of cables to print the voter cards. The voters are obliged to return the following day to pick up their cards.

Sofala province

Late opening of the registration posts, poor voter turnout, and difficulties in handling the computers marked the start of registration in Beira, where registration of opposition voters had been disrupted last year.

In the **Agostinho Neto EPC**, registration did not begin because the director of the school was not present to hand over the keys of the room where the registration will take place. **In the ASEMO and Mozambican Heroes Secondary Schools**, the registration is delayed.

Elsewhere in Sofala, members of the **Búzi** district elections commission, particularly those from Renamo and the MDM, complained that so far they have not received maps of the registration posts. They said they have been asking for the maps since before the start of the voter registration.

In the **Nhadula registration post, Chemba**, the supervisor said they were waiting for technical staff because cards were being printed with defects. In another brigades visited, by the time scheduled for the start of activities, the machines were not operational. The supervisor, Adelino Jumusse, said there were slight problems with the machines, mostly to do with printing. They were waiting for the arrival of staff from the district capital to repair them. So the voters who register will have to return to the post to pick up their cards.

In **Chibabava**, at the Muxungue 1st May Basic School and at Chibabava-sede secondary school, registration had not begun by 11.00 and potential voters were leaving, because the registration material had not yet arrived.

At the Mapangara primary school, in Machanga, by 10.00 the registration had not yet started because of technical problems with the computers.

Tete province

At the registration post at the Eusébio Lambo Gondiwa Secondary School, in **Vanduzi district**, there was a large crowd. By 08.20, there were 76 voters in the queue, 40 men and 36 women. Our correspondents noted that the brigade members were taking 45 minutes to register one voter. Because of the slowness, some voters were abandoning the registration post.

By the end of the day, some brigades had not arrived at **Chinthopo, in Mágoè district**. The Mutendezi brigade only registered 42 people because the machine broke down and did not print cards. In Daque, the registration was halted for about two hours, but the problem was solved by STAE technical staff.

At 15:46, the registration post at the Doa EPC was already sending potential voters away, alleging that it was closing time and that they should come back the following day. Some asked for tickets, so that they would not have to queue up the following day, but they were told the post had run out of tickets.

In **Cahora Bassa district**, we noted that in some posts, the machines are continuing to fail.

Zambézia province

Zambézia was marked by breakdowns. In **Nadala locality**, in the Mocuba-sede administrative post, by 10.00 the machines were still not operational. According to STAE, the delay was because rolls had been forgotten.

At the Macuvine Basic School, in **Mocuba**, the brigade members said the machine would not start. Dozens of potential voters went home. In the **Mulevala Sede Basic School**, the registration began very late due to a breakdown of the equipment. The machines were not taking photographs.

At the **Mulevala General Secondary School** registration has not yet begun. It was claimed that the equipment had broken down. The brigade members had nothing to do all day. Nobody was registered. The voters ended up abandoning the queues because they were tired.

At the registration post in the **Montes Namuli – Gurué Basic School**, the camera in the machine did not take photos, which caused potential voters to give up. By 10.00, no voters had been registered. At the **Eduardo Mondlane Secondary School**, by 10.00 registration had not yet begun due to machine breakdowns.

Nampula province

In **Nacala-Porto**, the first day was characterised by serious problems: in the Triângulo EPC, the printer did not work; there were difficulties in recognising the password of the supervisor to operate the machine in the Nacurula EPC; some registration posts opened late. In this city there was a poor turnout of potential voters.

Nampula city. At the post in the Parque Popular EPC, on the outskirts of the city, the machine was out of operation for two hours, for reasons that were not explained to our team. This situation led a significant number of voters to abandon the queues. At the same school, the printer was not printing voter cards, and the voters were just asked to come back the following day to pick their cards.

In the Cerâmica EPC, the start of registration was marked by complaints from voters due to the inability of the brigade members to handle the equipment properly. The registration post at the Imputo velho EPC was paralysed due to battery problems which delayed registration and contributed to the build-up of a long queue. The technical staff explained that the breakdown was because of the long time the equipment had been in storage.

At the **Moma Sede EPC** there was an equipment breakdown which took about 30 minutes to solve. There was a large turnout by potential voters.

By 11.15, the registration post at **Najaca, in Larde district**, which is about 42 km from the district capital was suffering a breakdown to its mobile-ID.

At Nacurrare EPC, **Murrupula**, by 09.00 activities had not yet begun because of a breakdown of the tripod on which the background for the photograph is attached. The brigade was waiting for the technical team from the local STAE. Also in Murrupula, at the Tapatero EPC, the building where the registration post operates makes access difficult for disabled people, since it has no ramp. There is also no safety because of the degraded condition of the building itself.

In **Malema**, the mobile at the Malema-Sede EPC had a breakdown which made it impossible to produce voter cards because the signature of the supervisor had disappeared.

In **Mossuril**, the Ampoense registration post did not work properly due to problems with its Mobile which, according to the supervisor, does not update cards.

At the registration post in the 26 September Boleia EPC, in **Angoche**, the voters are registering but are not receiving voter cards because the printer does not work. The post at the Mussoriri Farlahi primary school was not working, supposedly because there was no computer system.

Niassa province

The first day of registration was marked by slowness in the Mobile-ID processing, in the fixed brigade at **Muembe town**, above all difficulties in taking photographs, either automatically or manually. It took about 25 minutes to register one voter.

Logistical questions hindered the start of registration throughout **Lago district**. We ascertained that, of the 39 brigades, only 18 are at the registration posts or on their way. On Friday only brigades within the municipal perimeter had begun working.

In **Ngauma** district, only two posts are functioning, both in Massangulo, the Ngaúma district capital. The other posts are suffering delays due to transport difficulties in distributing the brigade members.

In the 24 June EPC, in **Chimbunila town**, registration began with a substantial turnout, but the brigade members were very slow because they had poor mastery over the machines.

In **Majune**, the registration began late because the machines were installed in points without electricity and the Mobile-IDs did not start because they are using only one panel.

The first day of registration in **Mecanhelas district** took off with problems in the computer equipment at the post in the Chapola basic school in Insaca municipality, which led citizens to abandon the post.

In **Metarica**, the Cuvir and Nancar posts, both located on the outskirts of the Metarica district capital, began late, at between 09.20 and 10.15. The delays were due, on the one hand to poor mastery of the equipment, and, on the other, to the delivery of incomplete kits.

Starting in the rain

Various delays and law changes forced the start of registration in the rainy season. In **Manhiça district, Maputo province**, the day was marked by difficulties in access to some administrative posts after the passage of the moderate tropical storm “Filipo”. According to STAE–Manhiça, Calanga, Ilha Josina Machel and Xinavane are the most affected administrative posts. Early on Thursday morning (14 March) two STAE vehicles broke down when they were taking brigade members and their material to the registration posts.

In **Chimoio, Manica province**, heavy rain fell on Friday afternoon, forcing the early closure of the registration post at the Tarangapasso EPC. The post operates in a cottage with a leaky roof. Drops of rain began to fall inside the room where registration was under way. Fearing damage to the equipment, the brigade members decided to interrupt the registration. There was no queue for registration. Only 3 voters were turned away..

Delayed start in Cabo Delgado

Wars and heavy rain earlier this month delayed the start of registration in Cabo Delgado.

On the first day of the voter registration, all the posts in **Ibo** district were closed, without any sign of registration activity in the district. The electoral civic education campaign has not yet been launched, although the civic education agents have been trained. To date the brigade members have not been trained. The doors of the STAE and CNE offices were closed due to the waves of terrorist attacks.

In **Namuno district**, the lack of transport to distribute electoral material is hindering the registration. On Friday (15 March) the brigade members were sitting underneath cashew trees waiting for transport to their places of work outside the town.

In **Namuno town**, the brigade members lamented the disorganisation of STAE. In the town, three of the four brigades are operating, in the Santa Maria of Namuno Secondary School, the Napito EPC, and the Cumone B EPC. In the Namihuro EPC, registration has not begun because the machine jammed and has been taken away.

In **Montepuez**, registration did not begin due to lack of transport for the brigade members and the electoral material. STAE in Montepuez district was obliged to dispense with the technical staff. Its known that, even with the arrival of the necessary vehicles, the registration will be held up because access roads to some places are impassable due to the heavy rains that have fallen in the region.

Only Friday afternoon did the registration machine for the Muripa EPC arrive from **Montepuez**

Torrential rain in the afternoon caused a poor turnout of voters at the registration posts in **Nangade town**.

At the Rovuma 2 EPC and Lilondo, in **Mueda**, the computer equipment was installed late.

Our correspondents report difficulties in starting the registration in **Quissanga and Mocímboa da Praia**, districts affected by terrorist attacks.

In **Pemba city and Chiure town**, where there had been municipal elections, most of the registration posts were completely empty, without any voters. In Chiure we visited Nahavara, Muajaja2, Namiciri, Kuphe and Micone. The machine that was broken down at the Chiure-Sede EPC has now been repaired.

Normality in other provinces

Maputo City

By 09.00 Maputo city registered few new voters. There were none at Quisse Mavota Secondary School, Maxaquene EPC, the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education of the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), Coop EPC, the field near the CRPS, and at the Estrela Vermelha Secondary School. Brigade members just talked among themselves.

In the post at the Maputo Industrial Institute, an hour after opening, just one voter had been registered. At the Kurhula EPC, two voters had registered.

At the registration post in the Zimpeto National Stadium, by 09.00 there was no registration, because of a lack of a table on which to put the material.

Maputo Province

Again, districts with municipalities saw few people registering. At the Zintava EPC, in **Marracuene district**, by 14:40 one person had registered. At the Abel Jafar EPC, also in Marracuene, two people had registered by the same time.

At brigade 126, in the Mabasso–Relento post, in Matola-Rio, in Boane, by 09.00 no voters had registered. It was the same at the post in the Machauchau-Relento creche.

Inhambane province

In **Vilankulo**, where Renamo unexpectedly won municipal elections, registration posts were deserted. The team of observers visited 6 registration posts, Vilanculo-Sede Basic School (just one voter so far), the Gamela Basic School (1 voter), 16 June EPC (no voters), the Mucoque Secondary School (no voters) and the 18 April EPC (no voters).

At the Doane Secondary School, brigade number 443, Post 779, the brigade members have problems handling the machines. It takes a long time to register just one voter.

Nampula province


In the posts at the **Nacala Secondary School and the 7 April EPC**, which used to operate with two (2) Mobile-ID computers each, just one Mobile was allocated to each post. This will make it impossible to update the voters who have lost voter cards that were registered on the Mobiles that have not been allocated.

In **Murrupula district**, in the six registration posts in the district capital, the registration was characterised by a high voter turnout and by great flexibility shown by the brigade members. It took between three and five minutes to register each voter.

At the **Malema sede** EPC, the Eduardo Nihia Secondary School, the Nioce EPC, and the Cahunha EPC, our correspondents report a normal scenario. But on the outskirts of the town, and in the localities the brigades were slow in typing data, taking between 30 and 45 minutes per voter.

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