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CIP survey shows 12% of registration posts not working

CIP correspondents across the country went to 1100 registration posts Monday and Tuesday 1-2 April to ask only if the posts were working and if there were queues. A huge proportion - 88% - were working normally, but 12% were not. There were three equally common equipment problems - printers and mobile IDs not working, and solar panels not working in rain and cloud. The fourth problem was a few very slow or badly behaved registration staff. Lack of planning and information about mobile brigades also caused problems with some mobile teams not open where they were scheduled to be.

The highest percentage of non-working registration posts were in the rural areas of Inhambane (29%), Nampula (21%), Tete (21%), and Zambézia (18%). These are rural zones still affected by the on-going rainy season and impassable roads.

As expected, in districts with municipalities where people had been able to register last year, there has been low turnout and very few queues of people waiting to register. But in other rural areas and small towns there have been widespread reports of long queues. This is especially true in the north and centre. Our correspondents reported long queues in parts of Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambézia, Tete and Sofala. But our correspondents were also surprised at the huge variability. Often one school would have no queue and a nearby one would have a long queue.

CIP correspondents visited 1104 registration posts for the survey, and found 136 were not working. But the correspondents were sometimes told by staff a post had been closed a few days before, but the STAE had repaired the equipment and the post had been able to reopen and was now operating normally.

Local officials refuse to accept provincial observer credentials

Observer credentials issued by the provincial STAE are not sufficient accepted and observers must obtain district credentials as well, according to STAE district directors in Mecufi and Ancuabi, in Cabo Delgado, and in Ribáuè and Larde, Nampula province. The badge (“crachá”) issued by the provincial STAE is not accepted and without a district pass CIP observers cannot observe, they say.

The STAE Mecufi director has ordered all the registration post supervisors in the district to inform the police immediately so that they arrest, and take to the district police command, any observer who goes to a registration post armed only with the badge issued by the provincial STAE.

Our correspondents have been issued with provincial "observer" credentials, but the police and the local STAE say that the documents are incomplete, and they must bring an additional credential, because the badge might be forged. One of our correspondents was detained last week in a police post in Ancuabe, even though he possessed a badge issued by the provincial STAE. The police alleged that he was working with a false badge, and was not authorised to observe the registration because he did not have a district credential. He was detained at 08.00 and was not released until 19.30.

When he was detained, the police confiscated his cell phones, so that he was unable to communicate. When he was released, the police warned him “If you come back to work without a credential again, you will end up in prison for ever”.

In Larde, the director phoned the STAE Provincial Directorate to find out if he could authorise them to continue observing the registration. After the call, he said “we were told he could not authorise us until we can present credentials issued by the CPE (Provincial Elections Commission) or the CPE should send a circular to the Larde district STAE, saying it is aware of the presence of our team of observers, and only then will the district STAE authorise us”. They were told to stop their observation, or face “consequences”.

In Inhassoro, in Inhambane province, our correspondents are accused of being spies and have been threatened with arrest.

CIP observer focal point still not accredited in Gaza

The Gaza Provincial Elections Commission (CPE) has still not accredited the chief observer who is the CIP focal point in Gaza. It is 42 days since CIP submitted its request for accreditation, and it is still waiting for the final observer to be accredited. Several attempts to speak with the chairperson of the Gaza CPE have failed. The secretaries claim he is busy. They say that the chairperson will only be in his office as from 13 April.

Observers threatened in Massingir

In Massingir, Gaza, the district STAE director photographed the faces of our correspondents, without their consent, during the meeting at which they were presented. Our correspondents feel that they are in “clear danger” in Massingir.

They say that, on 25 March, they went to present themselves at STAE and at the District Elections Commission (CDE), already duly accredited. “To our surprise”, they said, “after our presentation in the STAE meeting room, we discovered that without our consent, the STAE director was taking our photos.”

In last year’s municipal elections, our correspondents in Massingir were the victims of police detention and were insulted by members of Frelimo.

Massingir, like the entire province of Gaza, is very closed to the opposition, to the free press and to civil society

STAE in Nampula has no money to pay brigade members

The provincial director of STAE in Nampula, Luís Cavalo, has revealed that there are difficulties in paying half the agreed allowance to members of the voter registration brigades. As far as he was concerned, this is the only problem occurring in the current elections in Nampula.

As for the registration, Cavalo said that the voters are tending to register normally, particularly in the districts that do not contain municipalities.


Register the elephants, not the people, say residents blocking registration post in Massingir

The voter registration post in the Mavodze community, in Massingir district, in Gaza, has not yet been set up because the residents are refusing to register, and have blocked the installation of a registration brigade.

The population of Mavodze, which is a stronghold of poachers, accuse the Government of never solving the problem of the conflict between people and wild life in that region. Mavodze is in the zone of the Limpopo National Park, and on the outskirts of private reserves.

The Mavodze communities complain that elephants constantly invade their villages. The elephants have on occasion killed people, but the Government takes no action.

The communities claim that their crops are frequently devastated by elephants, which leaves them exposed to hunger. The Government remains passive. They accuse the Government of protecting the animals more than the communities. Hence they are rejecting the installation of a registration post. They advise the government to register the elephants, since they will not register.

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