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Smooth start to election campaign, but with 2 accidental deaths and the same irregularities

The election campaign started Tuesday and soon after midnight parties were out putting up posters; two people were killed accidentally. Tuesday was a holiday, which meant many people were out on the streets to join the parades and party events. Although largely peaceful and lawful, there was some violence and intimidation, as well as improper use of state resources by Frelimo.

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Putting up posters proved to be unusually dangerous. In **Chimoio** in the early hours of the morning a Frelimo team was putting posters along the main N6 national road when they were hit by a Toyota Vitz travelling at high speed. Eduardo Domingo, head of Agostinho Neto primary school, was killed; others were seriously injured.

In **Milange** in 12 October neighbourhood, a person trying to put a Renamo poster on an electricity transformer post was electrocuted and died.

Confrontation: Our correspondents report a largely peaceful day, but with two incidents.



Even trees are covered in posters in Sussendenga. But over-enthusiasm has meant posters where they should not be, as on a road sign in Mocimboa da Prais and government building signs in Milange.

In **Nhamayabue, Mutarara** district, Tete, groups of supporters of Frelimo and Renamo going around the town met near 1st of May market at 2 am. Provocative words led to a punch up that involved sticks and stones. Six Frelimo supporters, including one woman, were seriously injured.

In **Dondo, Sofala**, in Bomba Nkomazi neighbourhood on the main EN6 road, a confrontation between Renamo and Frelimo ended without injuries.

In **Quelimane**, Frelimo used a health directorate bus to take supporters to Chirangano, where it was holding its opening rally.



Although illegal, the governing party often uses state vehicles in the campaign, and we are monitoring this.

Similarly, there should be no party posters in state buildings or state companies. But our correspondents report Frelimo posters in **Macia** in John Issa secondary school and the state telecommunications company, TDM. In **Chimoio**, health workers have put up Frelimo posters and a flag.

Vandalising opponents propaganda

Parties try to take down opponents posters and campaign material, even though this is illegal. In

Chibuto, Gaza, in Canhanda, Chimundo and Samora Machel neighbourhoods, our correspondent saw young people from the Frelimo youth group OJM tearing down Renamo and MDM publicity. In Gondola, Manica, Renamo accused Frelimo of destroying its flag. And in Chimoio many Frelimo posters had been torn down.



Correspondents in Sussundenga threatened

Our correspondents in Sussundenga were threatened Monday night (24 September) by people linked to Frelimo. They told Treva Francisco Gravata, a long time correspondent, to "not publish information about any party except Frelimo."

We have 150 journalists throughout the 53 municipalities reporting for us as well as their normal radio station or website. Our journalists are publicly known and have election press credentials. Normally they are able to work freely without threats or intimidations. This is the first incident this year.

Early start to intense campaign, with some initial intimidation.

Intense campaigning started early, indicating that Frelimo feels under pressure and the opposition sees improved possibilities. The official campaign started Tuesday 25 September, but there is nothing to prohibit earlier campaigning and parties have been having meetings, marches and rallies over the past two weeks to introduce their candidates for mayor (the heads of their lists).

The early start was calm, although there were some incidents of intimidation against Renamo.

In **Chimoio**, Manica, two Renamo houses were burned on the day that the Renamo head of list, Manuel Macocove, was to be presented at a public meeting in front of the house. On 18 September it was the house of the Renamo delegate in Heróis Moçambicanos neighbourhood; on 8 September it was the house of the delegate in Chianga.

In **Quelimane**, police fired in the air on 20 September to stop a parade of mayor (and candidate for re-election) Manuel de Araújo and his supporters. The Renamo procession was stopped in the suburban neighbourhood of Brandão. Police say they were not advised of the march (which is not required during the formal campaign period, but is required at other times). Renamo called it intimidation, and said Frelimo was allowed parades. Quelimane has seen violence and over-reaction by the police in previous elections.

A policeman in Quelimane holds his gun as police stop the mayor's parade



Mandlakazi, Gaza, is a Frelimo stronghold, where the party won 92% of the vote in 2013, and the strategy is to physically keep out the opposition. On 20 September large number of young Frelimo supporters with sound equipment and singing and dancing blocked the road planned for the Renamo parade with its head of list, Heique Maria Siteo. To avoid an incident, Renamo shifted it march, starting a CFM, intending to march to Eduardo Mondlane market and Mozambican Heroes Square. But at the square a large Frelimo

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group blocked the road. Eventually Renamo retreated.

Police trying to be neutral, so no candidate can blame them for loss

In past elections, police have been accused of pro-Frelimo bias. This year the police general command has trained district and squad commanders in election and security and protection.

Because of past criticism, the training had a strong theme: "We do not want to be blamed for the failure of any candidate."

And last week, Bernardino Rafael, police commander in chief, was touring the country. He met heads of lists and told them that the police would guarantee calm and tranquillity and help all candidates.

"We are prepared to accompany each party in the coming elections", he said, addressing heads of lists of all the municipalities of Manica. "The main objective of the Police is to make the elections simpler and safer. ... We count on your collaboration so that the electoral campaign does not turn into a bloodbath or involve destruction of property."

Not everyone believed him, and in Nampula the opposition said the police were still aligned with Frelimo and against them. Indeed, commander in chief Rafael's tour seems aimed at his own police, reminding them of the need for neutrality.

Teachers taught by Frelimo

During the pre-campaign our correspondents across the country report cases of teachers forced to attend Frelimo meetings.

In **Nacala**, on the afternoon of 19 September primary and secondary school teachers were told to suspend their classes and attend a rally at Clube do Ferroviário with Mayor and candidate for re-election Rui Chong Saw. The next day he had a campaign meeting at the ADPP teacher training centre and classes were suspended so students and teachers could attend. The election law

prohibits campaigning in school when there are supposed to be classes.

In **Quissico**, Inhambane, on Thursday 20 September the president of the Provincial Youth Council, Joaquim Pedro Mariano, led a marathon nine hour meeting, from 8.30 until 17.30. Nearly 200 students and young teachers from primary and secondary schools from across the district had skipped school for the day. At the meeting, the head of the Frelimo list, Abílio José Paulo, was presented. At the same meeting Frelimo organised what have come to be called "shock groups", which provide Frelimo muscle during the election campaign.



Bored students and teachers at Quissico's marathon Frelimo meeting.



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