

2013 Local Elections

Mozambique political process bulletin

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Marromeu stolen?

On Monday the Sofala provincial elections commission declared that the Frelimo candidate for mayor of Marromeu, Palmerim Rubino, had won 4,518 votes (51.6%), while his sole opponent, Joao Agostinho of the MDM, took 4,235 votes (48.4%). The difference is a quite small 283 votes.

However, there was a very high 1,119 invalid votes (nulos), equivalent to 10.9% of the total vote. This raises questions about whether votes were intentionally invalidated, typically by adding a second mark to ballot papers for the opposition candidate.

In Marromeu in the previous election in 2008, there were 4.9% invalid votes for mayor, compared to 10.9% this time. An extra 6% of total votes is more than 500 votes. If these are actually ballots for the MDM candidate for mayor which were improperly invalidated by polling station staff, they would be enough to give victory of MDM's Joao Agostinho.

This kind of analysis is not proof of fraud. But nulos over 5% in urban areas are suspicious, and this looks highly suspicious. Did polling station staff steal the election?

Election commissions breaking the law

The electoral law requires that city and district election commissions must report within three days of the election - by last Saturday night. At least three election commissions have broken that law. Chibuto has still not reported, Maputo only reported today, and Beira on Monday.

The National Elections Commission has a responsibility to prosecute election law violations, and there is a member of the attorney general's office (Ministerio Publico) on the CNE. Will these three election commissions be prosecuted?

The electoral law also says: "Party delegates cannot be detained during the voting process unless they are caught in the act of a crime with a punishment of more than two years in prison." Many of the arrests of MDM delegates did not satisfy this criteria. Will the CNE bring action against the police?

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