

Mozambique Political Process Bulletin

2008 Local Election Issue 10 – 1600, 19 November 2008

Published frequently during the election period
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Published by AWEPA, the European Parliamentarians for Africa, and CIP, Centro de Integridade Publica

Campaigning in polling stations – more detail below

Fewer voters this afternoon – but queues remain where races are close

After a high turnout and long queues this morning in municipal elections, many of our correspondents report tiny queues this afternoon. But at mid-afternoon there are still significant queues in Beira, Nacala, Gondola, Gorongosa, Dondo, Mocimboa da Praia, Manica and Monapo. Some voters had been waiting since the morning.

This points to a turnout much higher than the 28% experienced in 2003 local elections. It also suggests that turnout is highest in places like Beira and Mocimboa da Praia where there are serious contests and the results uncertain.

In general, the process has been smooth with relatively few problems, but the one widespread complaint has been that voting is very slow – seemingly slower than in previous elections. Correspondents in Vilankulo, Maxixe and elsewhere said some voters gave up and went home, while in Beira, where the contest is intense, people complained of having to wait several hours.

A significant number of polling stations throughout the country opened between 30 and 90 minutes late. Because of the long queues and slow voting, this sometimes led to disturbances in the queues and invasions of polling stations by people wanting to vote in a few places in Beira, Dondo, and Catandica.

There have been a few reported problems with register books (*cadernos*). In Ulongue our correspondent reports that many polling stations received the wrong books and that many people could not vote. In Pemba in Mahapa there were two *cadernos* with the same number, 43. In Nampula in Manicopo a *caderno* was removed in the morning and only returned several hours later.

There have been many more complaints than in the past about police being too close to polling stations. The law and regulations require police to be more than 300 metres from polling stations, but still in a position to easily see the polling stations. Many correspondents reported police much closer than 300 metres. In polling stations in Macia and Monapo, they were actually sitting beside the polling station staff, which

our correspondents said intimidated voters. In Nacala, police were standing next to the polling station door.

Campaigning in polling stations

A frequent report from our correspondents is of people, particularly senior party members such as neighbourhood secretaries, staying in the school area after they voted and telling people to vote for their party. In one polling station in Chibuto, polling station staff actually stopped the voting until neighbourhood secretaries stopped telling people to vote for Frelimo, and only reopened the polling station after the secretaries had left the area. In Cuamba three Renamo members were arrested for campaigning inside a polling station in Mucuapa.

In Chimoio, Frelimo members were accused of standing at polling station doors showing people how to vote for Frelimo. Frelimo has set up an effective system to provide food and water to their party delegates in polling stations, often using senior and well know party officials, and in some places, notably Maputo, they have been accused of using those deliveries to campaign in queues of waiting voters. In Nampula, people who had been prominent in the campaign for Frelimo were in polling stations as “independent” domestic observers.

There are also a number of reports of party pamphlets and posters within the schools and even inside classrooms used as polling stations.

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