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Brigade member arrested on orders of STAE District Director for denouncing illegal registration of 227 people in Mandlakazi

BBrigade member Dercilio Nhantembo was picked up on Wednesday morning (7 June) by two police agents, who were transported in a white Toyota driven by the owner himself, Jonas Mathe, the Manjacaze STAE district director. The vehicle has a South African number plate. Dercilio Nhantembo, who was a data input operator, was taken to the Mandlakazi district police command, supposedly to be questioned for having registered a voter (himself) twice.

He remained at the district command all morning and afternoon, and was only released shortly after 16.00. He was kept at the command because the STAE director made dropping the case against him conditional on Nhantembo withdrawing the complaint he had made against Mathe, about the improper registration of 227 people. But the complaint against the STAE district director was not submitted by the brigade member but by the Renamo election agent (see article below).

Jonas Mathe had made a complaint to the police accused the brigade member of organising the dual registration of a voter. But, as the “CIP Eleicoes” Bulletin has found, what he did was not an electoral crime, but a normal procedure for brigade members.

Dercilio registered in Madendere where he works, but then transferred his registration to Manjacaze, where he lives. The sources of the “CIP Eleicoes” Bulletin say that the STAE director knew about the process and it was up to him to eliminate the first registration to validate the second. But, for purposes of eventual revenge, Jonas Mathe wanted to use this trick to incarcerate the youth or oblige him to negotiate the withdrawal of the case that Renamo had begun against him .

Indeed, sources in the district STAE told our Bulletin that the main intention of the district director was indeed to have Dercilio jailed, but this intension was not supported by the STAE provincial director, who advised him to withdraw the complaint, since there was not enough evidence of an electoral offence.

Unhappy at this advice, Jonas Mathe decided, as a way to put pressure on Dercilio, to take two police agents from the district command in his car to go and detain the youth, and take him to the Mandlakazi district command, and not to the Madendere police post, located a few metres from the registration post where Dercilio was working.

The story began on 29 May, when Dercilio Nhantembo denounced the adulteration of the number of voters registered during the night. (See <https://bit.ly/CIP-EI-91>) The STAE district director had

ordered Dercilio to go to the district STAE office in Mandlakazi town to deliver the weekly report. But when he returned to his post the following day, he found that the computer he uses had an extra 200 voters more than he had registered.

Supervisors refused to sign protests and Renamo complaints in Mandlakazi

Renamo submitted a protest to the District Attorney's Office in Mandlakazi, in Gaza province, denouncing the introduction, on the night of 29 May, of an extra 200 voters in one of the computers ("Mobiles"). But the brigade supervisor refused to sign the complaints form.

Renamo says it was not just the supervisor of the brigade where there was clandestine registration at night, but all the supervisors of other registration brigades where the opposition submitted complaints. According to Renamo, the supervisors received an instruction from STAE not to receive any complaint from the opposition.

In its protest, sent to the District Attorney's Office in Mandlakazi. Renamo says that the brigade in question never registered 50 voters a day. But Mandlakazi says it registered nearly 4000 more people than there are voting age adults in the town.

Many registration posts are not displaying the voter rolls in the centre and north

Zambézia, Nampula and Niassa are the worst affected provinces. In Nampula and Zambézia there are registration posts with voters who still do not have their voter cards. Strangely, Sofala has many more posts with the voter rolls displayed than one might have expected.

In the South, particularly in **Gaza** and **Inhambane**, all the posts have put their registration books on display.

In **Niassa**, in Mandimba, of the three posts visited, only that at the Filipe Samuel Magaia Basic School was open. The STAE district director had sent home the supervisors at the Chanica registration post, telling them to return at 15,00 to receive instructions. At Ngame EPC, the printer had "broken down". In Cuamba, only the registration post at the Josina Machel Basic School is functioning. The other two did not display the registration books, allegedly because the printers were out of order.

In Malema municipality, in **Nampula**, there are still voters who have not received their voter cards and in all the voter registration posts, the registration books have not yet been displayed. The supervisors at these posts say they have no authorisation to display the books. And some posts that have not even printed the registration books,

From the survey made by our correspondents of some posts in Ribauè district, namely at Quithele, Ribauè town, Namiconha, Ratane and Chica, it was found that the books had not been displayed. However, at the Ribaue and Quithele posts, the lists had not yet been signed by the monitors of the opposition parties, and the process of checking voter cards with mistakes is continuing in all the posts.

At the Parque Primary School, in Nampula city, the registration books containing the voter rolls are not on display. Our correspondent in that area, on visiting the place, just found one brigade member sitting beneath the school acacia tree, who said the supervisor does not yet have instructions to display the books.

Printing cards is slow at Lili2 EPC, due to the lack of rolls for the printer during the three days that preceded the close of the registration. The post only received the cards (700 cards) on Monday, 5 June. The printer can only print 200 cards a day.

In **Zambezia** in Milange at Namaja and Mareço EPC in Milange town registration books have not yet been printed. Supervisors say the problem is a breakdown of the printers of the voters cards and registration books. At these posts there are still crowds of citizens attempting to collect their voter cards. At the Mereço post, there is talks of illegal charges “to make the process flexible”. Citizens fear that by today, the last day on which the brigades will be at the posts, they will not have finished delivering the cards to the voters, particularly in areas where the brigades were moved during the registration (Mauza and Paquete).

The post at the Eduardo Mondlane EPC, also in Milange, has still not displayed the registtition book. The supervisors claim that they have not yet received instructions from STAE, but promise to make the books available by Today, the last day.

The post at the Milange-sede EPC has books on display, but it is impossible to correct any names, because the Mobile has broken down. The supervisors say that the post is still receiving people who want to register, although registration has finished.

In Quelimane, the registration books are not yet on display on more than ten posts, namely the Moropue registration post, the field of the 1 May neighbourhood, the Acordos de Lusaka School, Coalane, Sangariveira, Manhawa EPC, Icidua, Quelimane EPC, Torrone Velho, Janeiro EPC, Sinacurra Secondary School, and 1st May Industrial and Commercial Institute. The STAE press office in the district does not yet know when the books will be displayed.

In Guruè the posts at the Aeródromo EPC, the Projecto EPC and the Gurué ESG closed before 14,00, and not at 16.00. The opposition monitors are being prevented from gaining access to the printing of the voter rolls and of the registration reports.

In Nhamatanda, in **Sofala**, at Heróis Moçambicanos EPC, 3 February EPC and 1 June EPC, the brigade members are present but the registration books are still not available for consultation by the voters.

In the Patrice Lumumba EPC, in **Matola**, not all the voter cards have been printed, but the brigade members say they registered 5,125 people which corresponds to the 7 registration books on display at this post. At the post in the 8 March EPC, at around 14.00 we found the brigade members braiding their hair, with the registration books kept in their briefcases.

Observers report bad start to public check of registration books

40% of registration posts visited by observers on the first day were not open or did not have register books (cadernos) available for inspection. This week it is possible for voters to inspect the register, in part to check the accuracy of their own record. Registration posts must print out copies of their own register books, and many did not do so. Observers from the civil society consortium Mais Integridade visited 138 registration posts yesterday, and 25 were not open and another 31 had problems - mostly no registration books to display. Problems were particularly notable in Zambézia and Cabo Delgado.

Few voters were attending to check the register. Many more were still trying to register or came to collect voter cards which had not been printed during the registration period.

In two registration posts in Alto Molocue, party monitors said that extra registration books had been secretly added. At Pista Velha EPC, which had been a contentious post throughout the registration, the monitors said there should only be 8 books, but 11 appeared. At Malua II EPC they said there were 8 books instead of the 7 there should be.



Mais Integridade Position:

Failure to Deliver Cards to Thousands of Voters by the End of the Voter Registration

From 20 April to 3 June 2023, millions of citizens living in the 65 municipalities of Mozambique registered as voters, in compliance with their legal duty and their constitutional and civic rights, so that they can take part in the 6th municipal elections, as voters and as candidates.

However, by 24.00 on 3 June 2023, the date and time of the end of voter registration, thousands of registered citizens had not received from the registration body their voter cards, the only proof of their registration and the main means of electoral identification.

Failure to deliver the voter cards will call into question the exercise of electoral rights, since without the voter card, a citizen cannot, for example, be a candidate for the elections, and is unable to prove that he is duly registered so that he can vote on 11 October 2023.

This situation is the entire responsibility of the electoral administration which, because of its incapacity to guarantee the adequate operation of the electoral equipment which it acquired and managed, in particular the printers that print the cards, and to provide the registration brigades with sufficient material to operate the printers, did not comply with its legal obligation to register the eligible citizens that appeared before it, in a complete manner, including the issuing and delivery of the voter card.

Thus thousands of citizens who left their houses and queued up for many hours, and sometimes for several consecutive days, to comply with their legal obligation, because of the failure to deliver their cards, find themselves at risk of not being able to enjoy their constitutional right to vote and to be elected, as a result of non-compliance with legal obligations on the part of the electoral administration.

From 5 to 8 June 2023, the voter rolls will be on display at the places where the voter registration posts operated. This means that, in this period, the registration brigades and their equipment will remain in places near to the citizens they registered.


The electoral consortium “Mais Integridade” (“More Integrity”) is thus urging the National Elections Commission to identify the brigades that did not issue all the cards of the voters they registered, and to create urgently the technical, material and logistical conditions so that the cards are printed and delivered to the voters during this period of displaying the voter rolls while the brigades remain near the homes of these voters. It said that an intensive information campaign should be undertaken to make voters aware that they should go to the registration posts to receive their cards. If necessary, the presence of the brigades at the posts should be extended beyond 8 June, to ensure the delivery of all the cards.

The electoral consortium “Mais Integridade” is observing the voter registration in the following municipalities: Cuamba and Insaca, in Niassa province; Montepuez, Mocimboa da Praia, Pemba and Chiúre, in Cabo Delgado province; Nampula City, Mozambique Island, Nacala-Port, Angoche and Malema, in Nampula province; Quelimane, Mocuba, Gurúè, Alto Molócue and Morrumbala, in

Zambézia province; Moatize, in Tete province; Guro, in Manica province; Beira and Marromeu, in Sofala province; Massinga, in Inhambane province; Chókwè, Mandlakazi and Massingir, in Gaza province; Matola and Matola-Rio, in Maputo province; and Maputo City.

The Consortium will observe all the acts in the 2023 election process, including the registration, the campaign, the vote and the count, up until the declaration of the results by the Constitutional Council. The Electoral Consortium “Mais Integridade” consists of the Episcopal Commission on Justice and Peace (**CEJP**) of the Catholic Church, the Centre for Public Integrity (**CIP**), the Nucleus of Women’s Associations of Zambézia (**NAFEZA**), Solidarity Mozambique (**SoldMoz**), the Civil Society Learning and Training Centre (**CESC**), the Mozambican Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (**MISA Moçambique**) and the Forum of Mozambican Associations of Disabled People (**FAMOD**).

Formed in 2022, the goal of the Consortium is to contribute to the transparency and the integrity of the 2023-2024 electoral cycle, assessing, in an objective and impartial manner, producing public and credible information and analysis about the various phases of the process, encouraging the level and quality of citizen participation, and contributing to the reduction of electoral tensions.

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