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CNE admits ballot counting irregularities

"By the time of the tabulation at the polling stations, reports of irregularities were mounting up, constituting real electoral offences," admitted the National Elections Commission in a [statement today](#).

"We will be ruthless with our members and electoral agents who have disturbed the process. That is how the law dictates. Therefore, all members involved in illegal practices will be held accountable if there is evidence of their deviant behaviour. We are referring, for example, to the reported cases of presiding officers who refused to sign the *editais* [results sheets]. They will have to explain themselves and be held administratively responsible," the CNE said.

The statement was read out to the press by spokesman Paulo Cuinica. In response to these irregularities, he said "under the terms of the law, the district or city courts have jurisdiction to hear appeals in relation to complaints, protests or counter-protests that are not duly satisfied at the polling station and subsequently at the district or city election commissions."

In practice, as the decisions by courts not to accept complaints in Vilankulo and Chiure showed, this is not the case. The electoral law makes it impossible to challenge the results as posted by district elections commissions (CDEs). The law (14/2018 art 140) says "irregularities in the voting and counting" must first be challenged by a protest to the district elections commission. Their decision on the protest can then be challenged in the district court. However, there is no deadline as to when the CDE must respond. But the law requires that the appeal to that decision must be made within 48 hours of the posting of the original *edital* (results sheet) - not two days after the date of the reply. So if the CDE waits more than two days to reply, then there is no way to challenge or appeal, as the Chiure and Vilankulo district courts confirmed.

The CNE statement also stresses the cascade system. Votes are counted in the polling station, then those totals are added together by the district election commission, and those totals are added together by the Provincial Elections Commission - which is taking place now. Only then are those added together by the National Elections Commission. The CNE

must make a public report of the results in all 65 municipalities by 26 October, and submit that to the Constitutional Council.

Again, reality is different. In practice, this time consuming and unnecessary process is usually not followed. Copies of polling stations results sheets (*editais*) are sent directly to national STAE, which does its own tabulation for the CNE. The tabulations from the province are normally ignored.

Finally, the CNE statement could mean a major increase in transparency. It said the final tabulation process and "analysis of each case" is done "in the presence of party agents and observers." In recent years, they were not allowed to see the actual tabulation and analysis process, and were present only for a formal presentation of the final results. Spokesman Cuinica did not take questions from the press, so it is unclear if this transparency change is real.

Polling station presiding officer found dead in Milange

The lifeless body of Pedro Manguissa was found on the banks of a busy road in the village of Milange. During the recent local elections, the deceased was a polling station chair at an EPC Eduardo Mondlane polling station in Milange. His murder may be linked to the alleged ballot box stuffing that took place during last Wednesday's 11 October elections. Pedro Manguissa was an employee of the National Meteorological Institute in the Milange district.

Manguissa's death is shaking the district, especially those who worked at the polling stations during the 11 October elections. The atmosphere in Milange is one of high tension. Yesterday, the Renamo caravan went to the police to try to negotiate the release of five people detained in connection with the electoral process.

Courts in Guruè and Quelimane reject Renamo's complaint

The District Courts have rejected Renamo's complaints in Guruè and Quelimane. The first claimed lack of evidence and the second that Renamo presented unsigned minutes and notices.

After the results were announced, the Renamo delegation in Guruè submitted an appeal to the Gurué District Court, challenging the results of the District Electoral Commission. In the same letter, the Renamo party asked for a second round of elections to be held in that municipality.

For its part, the Nova Democracia party has also submitted a letter to the Gurué court, in which it points out various irregularities registered during the electoral process and joins Renamo in insisting that a second round of local elections be held in Gurué. The parties consider that "the figures have been manipulated".

During voting day, the municipality of Guruè was full of police officers from various branches: Protection Police, Rapid Intervention Unit, National Criminal Investigation Service and State Information and Security Services.

In the city of Quelimane, the Judicial Court dismissed Renamo's appeal on the grounds that Renamo submitted unauthenticated copies and the court doubts that the copies of the notices are from this electoral process.

Kampfumo and Chamanculo courts under pressure to favour Frelimo


The district courts of Kampfumo and Chamanculo in Maputo city are under political pressure to decide opposition appeals in favour of Frelimo. According to the newspaper *Canal de Moçambique*, the judges of these two courts have asked the district election commissions for *editias* proving that Frelimo won in order to compare them with the *editias* that Renamo presented, which give it victory. The deadline has passed and all indications are that the *editias* don't match the published results.

The courts are about to decide whether or not to annul the election, and there is enormous pressure from the Frelimo party. A cancellation of the election in Maputo would undermine the credibility of the whole process and a rerun would have higher punitive costs for the Frelimo party.

Renamo demonstrates in several municipalities

Today (Tuesday 17 October) there were demonstrations organised by Renamo to contest the election results. In Maputo, the march of thousands of Renamo sympathisers began shortly after 11am at the Xiquelene Market and travelled along Vladimir Lenin Avenue. However, on arrival at Praça da OMM, the parade was met by agents of the Rapid Intervention Unit, who used tear gas to stop it continuing on Av Lenine toward the downtown (*baixa*) area. The marchers simply changed their route, and the singing and dancing party members continued to the Renamo headquarters in Polana.

In all the provinces there were street demonstrations led by opposition sympathisers, particularly Renamo.

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