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Court orders house arrest and suspension from office of mayor of Nacala

Nacala mayor, Raul Novinte, the mayor's head of information, Arlindo Chissale, and eight other Renamo members are charged with “incitement to collective disobedience and public instigation to commit a crime”, relating to Renamo's campaign to boycott the rerun of elections on Sunday 10 December.

The Nacala court, saying it was acting on a request from the Attorney General's office, imposed a 30 day house arrest on Novinte and Chissale and prohibited Novinte from carrying out his functions as mayor.

The prosecutors claim the mayor was the “moral author” of the Renamo demonstrations in Nacala, and is thus responsible for the damage caused during these protests, including a fire at one of the schools where voting was to take place. At the time of the fire, Novinte was in Maputo negotiating the central Renamo leadership.

Quelimane mayor Manuel de Araujo, who has been re-elected, went to Nacala Sunday (17 December) to express his solidarity. He said that under the law, the court did not have the right to suspend the mayor. He was sure the decision would already have been overturned if the suspended mayor had been a member of the ruling Frelimo Party.

“I am critical of the leadership of my party for its silence”, he told AIM. “I think the party should have taken a clear and more daring position towards this case of injustice against an elected mayor”.

There is some discontent within Renamo about the relatively passive response of Renamo President Ossufo Momade to the widespread electoral fraud. In the election Renamo gained significant support in urban areas. A younger group based in the municipalities is taking the lead including Novinte, de Araujo and mayoral candidates Venancio Mondlane in Maputo and Antonio Muchanga in Matola. Renamo should have a Congress in January, and if it takes place Momade would be challenged by the new push from the cities.

Policeman who murdered fish seller in Marromeu was arrested, released by his comrades, and arrested again

Silva José Manhusse from Beira is the policeman who is charged with shooting dead the young trader Tito Joao at the Marromeu Fish Market last week (Tuesday 12 December). The murder occurred during the Renamo demonstration contesting the result of the repeat municipal election in Marromeu.

The Marromeu District Attorney. Dulce Macuacua, ordered the detention on Tuesday night (12 December) at 20.27. But, to her surprise, on Wednesday (13 December) she learned that his colleagues had released him on Tuesday night. He was seen by members of the public driving a motorbike along the streets of Marromeu.

The indignant district attorney went to visit the police cells and found that Silva Manhusse was indeed no longer there. She ordered that he be re-arrested and circulated photos of Manhusse to assist in the search for the alleged killer of Tito João. He was re-arrested and returned to the cells of the District Command. He was to be transferred to the central prison in Beira, the top security jail in Sofala province.

At the same time, the attorney's office announced that it will open a case file holding responsible the Ministry of the Interior or the author of the release of Silva Manhusse without any court order.

And on the night of the brutal murder, the public went to the home of Silva Manhusse, intent on burning down his house. Police officers were stationed to prevent furious members of the public from destroying the house, but his fence was vandalized.

Following Frelimo instructions does not always pay

Juidinaldo da Costa Reffel was director of the Namarrói, Zambézia, Secondary School, but had political ambitions. Through a circular of 12 September, STAE-Central instructed the district branches of STAE (Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat) to launch local public tenders to select district directors where these did not exist. Namarrói was one of the districts without a STAE director, and Juidinaldo da Costa stood unopposed - on the specific indication of Frelimo.

Also on the instructions of Frelimo in Zambézia, the Quelimane district STAE recruited Reffel to be chair of a polling station at the Coalane EPC, in the city of Quelimane, 345 km from Namarrói.

He abandoned his school in order to carry out a political party mission of chairing a polling station with a clear purpose: to manipulate the election results in favour of Frelimo.

In the early morning of 12 October, Reffel was the protagonist in a scene worthy of an action movie. He refused to sign the *édita* and minutes of the polling station where he was chair at Coalane EPC. He kept the documents with him, which obliged supporters of the opposition to grab him and assault him when he tried to run away, still in possession of the documents.

And he was apparently rewarded. On 23 November, a month after the elections, Juidinaldo da Costa Reffel became aware that he would take office in Ile as director of the Namarrói district branch of STAE. The ceremony took place on 29 November, and he would begin his new duties on 1 December.

What he did not know was that Frelimo was not protecting him. His 12 October actions would prevent him from occupying the post for which he had fought so hard. The Provincial Attorney General's Office had opened two criminal cases against him for electoral crimes.


On the day when he should have begun his duties as STAE district director in Namarrói (1 December), the STAE provincial director in Zambézia received a notification from the Zambézia Provincial Attorney General’s Office requesting that Juidinaldo da Costa Reffel be relieved of the duties to which he had been appointed just two days earlier.

On the same day, Reffel wrote a letter resigning from the post of Namarrói district STAE director. He alleged that his resignation request was due to “professional reasons”, without mentioning that his removal was at the request of the Provincial Attorney’s Office.

In prior elections Frelimo has increasingly used education to supply the electoral work force, both campaigners and directors and officials in management posts in distant districts and localities.

But teachers have turned their backs on the government after the failed wage reform which led to the collapse of their finances. Furthermore, the government owes teachers overtime pay. Many teachers had threatened that they would retaliate in the municipal elections. In previous elections teachers assigned by Frelimo to polling station staffs have been the main protagonists of fraud. But Frelimo no longer trusts teachers. This led Frelimo to instruct STAE to avoid placing teachers in key positions in the polling stations. For this reason, it sought directors and others in education managerial positions to be sent to distant districts.

One such was Juidinaldo da Costa Reffel, a loyal servant of Frelimo. He naturally expects a reward. Instead he could receive prison terms (usually converted into fines). Will Frelimo ensure he keeps his original job and is still on the way up?

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