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## Observers demand extending voter registration and an end to irregularities and clandestine registration

Registration irregularities and equipment breakdowns mean the deadline for registration must be extended. Electoral management bodies must clean up the irregularities, and must block illegal and clandestine registration, to guarantee that the voter registration is credible, the “Mais Integridade” (“More Integrity”) Consortium told a press conference Tuesday (16 May). The Consortium is the only official observation of the registration process. ([Full Consortium statement](#))

Consortium chair Edson Cortez, director of the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP), expressed his concern at the constant breakdowns of the “Mobile ID” computers and the printers, including rejection by the machines of certain people, notably the elderly. In several municipalities, according to the Consortium, this situation, together

Equipment problems combined with the slowness in attending to citizens, is causing voters to give up in some municipalities, Cortez noted..

The Consortium is also worried by cases of voter cards issued with various defects, such as stains and photographs that are out of focus, without the slightest quality. On voting day this might lead to the disqualification of voters.

At a press conference, held in Maputo yesterday (16 May), Edson Cortez said the consortium does not understand how problems are occurring in handling the machines, when beforehand there was a pilot registration, a period which should have served to detect and correct such anomalies. Furthermore, during the pilot registration no case was reported of machines which did not recognise the faces of albino and elderly voters, which causes doubt about these episodes.

“We are also concerned at the repeated and illicit use of ‘priority lists’, which ensure that particular people do not go into the registration queues, while others wait for many hours.

Other constraints, in the current registration, include significant numbers of posts that are not accessible to disabled people; a low number of posts at which voters are informed of the period during which the voter rolls will be available for inspection; as well as cases of registration brigades or electoral bodies which try to prevent access by our observers to the registration posts”, said Cortez.

“Mais Integridade” recommends that the electoral administration strengthen measures to put an end to the various irregularities which are threatening the transparency and integrity of the registration. According to the consortium, it cannot be in the interests of the electoral bodies to have another problematic electoral cycle, which in no way contributes to the strengthening of democracy and the pacification of the country. It therefore demands that all those involved in the irregularities be speedily held accountable for their acts, in an exemplary manner.

At the same time, it adds, the electoral bodies must block any possibility of clandestine registration, whether because those being registered live outside the municipal areas, or because it is done at dead of night. The electoral bodies should strengthen implementation of the instructions concerning the illicit use of “lists of priorities”; they should speed up the response to requests for technical assistance from the brigades in cases where equipment breaks down or is out of order; they should pay attention to the issuing of voter cards, where there is an increasing number of problems; they should continue to instruct the brigades to respect the rules of priority for pregnant women and women carrying babies, the elderly and the disabled; and they should strengthen the instruction given to brigades to inform voters of the period when the voter rolls will be on public display for purposes of verification.



The “Mais Integridade” electoral consortium consists of the Episcopal Justice and Peace Commission (**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 the Disabled (**FAMOD**).

## Prioritising state employees

# Potential voters have spent two weeks without managing to register in Alto Molócuè

One of many waiting voters at the Pista Velha registration post in Alto Molócuè, Zambézia, who agreed to tape our conversation, said that for the past two weeks he has joined the queue to register, but without success. On most days he and others arrive at the registration post at 03.00 in the morning, but the registration post closes the following day, and they have still not been able to register. Alto Molócuè is a key battle ground, where Frelimo only won the municipality five years ago by changing the results in secret.

“I have been trying to register here at Pista Velha for two weeks, but we have never managed to register”, our interviewee said, adding “they always tell us to mark a place in the queue very early. I come here at 03.00 in the morning, and I mark my place in the queue, but what happens is that those who register are not us. They bring people from outside”. He cited as an example the students and teachers of the Alto Molócuè Health Institute, who are given priority to register.

“But not us. Now I ask if this registration is only for students, teachers and other public employees? And we, who are members of the public, can't we register? I don't know what is happening here in Alto Molócuè”, he declared.

He said that every day they are enlisted under the promise that “we will be the first to be registered, first thing in the morning”, but when the registration begins other people are called, who were never in the queues.

## Letters from teachers and students confirm pressure in Alto Molócuè

Two letters shown to us attributed to teachers and students confirm that there is pressure on civil servants to register in the Pista Velha registration post and to deliver their voter cards to the Frelimo Party.

According to one letter, “We, the teachers as employees of the State apparatus. 'They' , obliged all the nurses, police and other functionaries to register and to deliver our cards obligatorily to the Frelimo Party or to the Party branches before 30 April at the latest [a deadline now passed]. And they instructed all the local leaders of the Caiaia and Nacuaca localities to register at the Murapue post by 30 April to facilitate compilation of the first and second registration books which will make up the first polling stations. This is to facilitate control of the Frelimo members”.

The same letter shows that the entire game is guided from “G15 – Branch, G30 – two branches, G45 – (Circle), which facilitates obtaining and controlling the possible data of registered voters who are members of the party, and on voting day will facilitate obtaining the difference between all the voters who will vote and those who will vote in favour ”.

From 20-30 April, it adds, the registration will occur “in a normal manner, but on the other days there will be sabotage, because through the lists the members of Frelimo will all have been registered already.”

For their part, the students in a separate letter denounced: “We Health students at IPCHM (Polytechnic Institute of Health Sciences of Mozambique) - Alto Molócuè and IFP (Teacher Training Institute) – Alto Molócuè, hereby inform the entire people of Alto Molócuè that we are being obliged to register and to present our voter cards at the branches of the Frelimo Party by 30 April. They said that the students from the IFP were to register at the Pedreira EPC and the students from the IPCHM Health Institute at the Pista Velha EPC by 30 April to facilitate compiling the first and second registration books which will make up the first polling station. This is to facilitate control.”

The letter adds that the instruction comes from the branches and circles of the party to facilitate obtaining and controlling data on the voters. And the students say they are being threatened with expulsion from the college, if they do not vote for Frelimo.



Unattended queue at Pista Velha.



Queue-jumping students at Pista Velha being registered first.

## **CNE Chair 'shocked' and 'surprised' by irregularities**

CNE chairperson, Bishop Carlos Matsinhe, told RDP Africa that he is indignant at the level of irregularities that have been reported during this electoral process. According to Matsinhe, the electoral bodies were shocked when they found that voters are being registered in private houses.

Such things, he adds, come as a surprise “to us too, as electoral bodies”.

He said “we were not prepared to discover that registration is being done outside of the approved registration posts. We took a decision that approved the map of the registration posts”.

For the CNE chairperson it is important that the law be followed to the letter to correct irregularities. He recognises that it is the responsibility of the electoral bodies to correct these problems.

He regarded these irregularities as deviations committed by people whom the electoral bodies do not know. He concluded that “We do not know who is giving instructions to the people committing these irregularities.”

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