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[In parliament tomorrow](#)

Renamo will agree impossible time limit for submitting candidates

Renamo yesterday accepted Frelimo's proposals for changed registration dates, including cutting the period to submit candidates to just 20 days, and will vote in favour at the special AR session tomorrow. This works against Renamo as well as small parties. Every candidate must submit 5 documents including a criminal register certificate and authenticated copies of the identity card and voters registration card.

Because there is often bureaucratic obstruction to obtaining these documents, current laws allow two months for candidates for national parliament (AR, Assembly of the Republic) and three months for provincial assembly (AP). Frelimo's proposal is to cut this to just 20 days. This is a problem even for Renamo, because all candidates lists must have enough people to fill all available seats plus at least 3 extra. This will be very hard to complete in strongly Frelimo districts, where notaries who authenticate documents and the police who supply criminal records certificates drag their feet for opposition parties.

The law changes are required to correct law changes in April last year which would force registration in the rains this year. Necessary changes are to allow registration to be delayed until 15 March. But the messy set of electoral laws means several laws need to be changed in several places. One date is when the CNE announces how many candidates there are for each constituency (province for AR and district for AP). This information is needed by parties to know how many candidates they need. The second date is the deadline for submitting candidates and all their documents.

Moving the registration out of the rain requires cutting the calendar, and Frelimo has chosen to take most days out of the period for candidate submission -- cutting two and three months to just 20 days. And Renamo will agree tomorrow.

The political battle in two parliamentary commissions yesterday was to Frelimo's new proposal to expand tomorrow's special AR session to include a broader debate on the electoral law. Renamo said two days was not enough to debate the whole package of laws and threatened a boycott. In the end, Frelimo backed down on a full debate, which will instead occur in February. And Renamo accepted a revised calendar which will cause it problems.

In the two committee sessions which ran all day yesterday the only agreed proposals were editorial. The 4th commission on Public Administration and Local Power (Comissão da Administração Pública e Poder Local - 4a Comissão) only proposed changing a single word - in one article replacing the

number "9" with the word "nine". The 1st commission on Constitutional Matters, Human Rights, and Legality proposes deleting a reference to one article in one of three laws cited in the preamble.

Major revision of electoral package won't take place until February


Only the proposal to amend the laws to allow the National Electoral Commission to propose another date for the start of voter registration to the Council of Ministers will be approved tomorrow. Voter registration will be postponed from 1 February to take place from 15 March and end on 28 April.

Frelimo submitted a larger proposal for a one-off revision of the electoral legislation, and Renamo and MDM benches also submitted their proposals for revising the legislation. The opposition demanded that only the change to the census date be approved tomorrow and that other aspects of the law be postponed until the February session.

Agreement was reached that there would be a major debate on revising electoral laws in February, and that only the dates would be approved tomorrow. But that meant Renamo accepted the change of dates package as submitted by Frelimo, with its cut to only 20 days for each candidate to collect the five necessary documents.

"Since Frelimo has understood that due to the shortage of time, there is no way to accommodate our proposals, we also think that the other articles proposed by Frelimo that don't have to do with voter registration should also be postponed until February," an opposition parliamentary source told *CIP Eleições*.

It remains to be seen if Frelimo outsmarted Renamo to accept the 20 days.

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