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CNE owes \$54mn to suppliers, who refuse equipment for 9 October

Suppliers of election materials have stopped providing services because of accumulated debts, delaying the organization of the general elections scheduled for 9 October, National Elections Commission (CNE) chair Carlos Matsinhe said Tuesday in Inhambane

The CNE has not paid its suppliers since last year, and the debt has \$54mn (3.4bn meticaís) (equivalent to 54 million US dollars). This includes allowances and expenses not paid to the members of the provincial and district election bodies for municipal elections last year and members of voter registration brigades this year.

Matsinhe said that the suppliers of goods to the election bodies are no longer agreeing to provide any services before the existing debts are paid. Matsinhe gave no details, but *CIP Eleicoes* can reveal six companies contracted to supply electoral equipment, with bids opened 3 August 2023:

- Vision investments - Metallic trunks
- Sotux - Voting booths
- Escopil Holding - Ballot boxes
- Academica - polling station kits and staff training
- Labsoft - App to ascertain election results and manage candidatures
- MHL Auto - Vehicles

In February, the CNE announced that, out of the \$310mn (20bn meticaís) of the overall budget for both last year's municipal elections and the general elections of 9 October, the government had only made available \$100mn (6.5bn meticaís).

Government is clearly desperately short of money. IMF resident representative Alexis Meyer-Cirkel, yesterday told a Maputo meeting that of the total public revenue collected by the government, 73% is used to pay the salaries of state employees and 20% is used to service the public debt. That leaves 7% of income plus aid and loans to fund everything else. And because of ongoing fraud such as registering so many ghost voters, donors are unwilling to fund elections. Matsinhe seems to be hoping for last minute EU and other donor funding, but it seems unlikely.


Electoral laws remain with wrong calendar

President Filipe Nyusi has not yet promulgated the amendments to the electoral legislation that were passed by parliament a month ago, on 30 April. Thus the CNE is insisting on the dates in the old law for submission of candidates, creating serious confusion. CNE sources say they are unaware of the reasons

But parliamentary sources say that the laws cannot be signed until the changes are agreed with the Constitutional Council (CC), which is like walking on eggshells, and also gets caught in the angry dispute between the CC and the Supreme Court (TS).

First the organic law on the CC needs to be revised to allow it to talk to the district courts, which are under the TS, in matters of election disputes. Second the law has to be changed to allow the CC to hire, on a seasonal basis, skilled staff, for a period of no more than six months and which cannot be renewed, by public tender, to support and assist the Constitutional Council during the elections. This is intended to meet the high procedural demand during election periods, from the voter registration to the validation and proclamation of the results.

The amendment to the organic law on the Constitutional Council was approved a week ago, but it has not yet been promulgated.

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