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Many Zambézia polling stations without ballot papers on voting day

By mid-afternoon today (9 October), voting materials kits had still not been transported to 51 polling stations in **Gilé** district, Zambezia Provincial Elections Commission (CPE) admitted; at least two polling stations opened in late afternoon. In **Maganja da Costa**, only three of the nine polling stations were operational, and the others lacked voting materials. At the end of the afternoon, the STAE district director in Maganja da Costa told the polling station staff and the few voters who were still waiting for the start of voting to go home, and that any further information would be communicated through the media. He admitted he had not received any response from the provincial election bodies.

The Zambézia Provincial Elections Commission decided to share the voting material from the polling stations with few registered voters with those stations that still have no voting material. The Commission itself regarded this as a “palliative solution”, bearing in mind that each polling station has a register with about 800 voters. The representatives of the opposition on the Provincial Commission opposed the decision. For Renamo, the material has disappeared, and a palliative solution might be legitimising fraud.

Some polling stations did not open this morning in **Quelimane** due to a lack of ballot papers. Ballot papers were missing at polling stations in the Unidade Popular EPC, Sagrada Família, the Sampene EPC and the Eduardo Mondlane Secondary School.

In **Mecanhelas**, Niassa, MMVs had still not gone to five polling stations by early morning. The STAE district director alleged lack of transport, but guaranteed that by 08.00 they would be at the polling stations; at least two opened by 08.00, according to observers.

Many polling stations opened late

Our correspondents report many polling stations opened late, usually at 07.30 or 08.00 rather than 07.00. The main problems with late opening and general disorganisation of polling stations were in Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Zambézia. Materials arrived late at a few Maputo city polling stations, delaying opening to 09.00. There were disturbances in the queues at some polling stations that opened late.

Opening queue lengths varied, for 6 to 450, with an average of about 75 people.

Nampula seemed the province with fewest problems, and Zambézia with the most.

Ballot box stuffing from the start

In the first hours of voting today (9 October) in districts of Nampula and Zambezia provinces voters were seen with more than one ballot paper and with ballot papers marked in advance. Sometimes connivance of polling stations staff was clear. For example, in **Maganja da Costa**, a voter was caught putting two ballot papers, marked for Frelimo, into the ballot box. This was at polling station 04 in the Muediua voting assembly. When the polling station chair was questioned, he said that the staff member (MMV) who distributed the ballot papers may have made “a mistake” in handing the voter more than one ballot paper. But it was the chair who gave out the two ballot papers, and the voter had marked both ballot papers, which shows that this was a deliberate act. Giving voters more than one ballot paper is one of the ways of corrupting the election results.

In **Nacala-Porto**, a woman was caught at the polling station with ballot papers marked in advance in favour of Frelimo. She was carrying the ballot papers in a capulana (printed fabric used by Mozambican women) that she was wearing. This led to disturbances and the police had to remove the woman, supposedly taking her to the police station.

In **Mecanhelas** district, Niassa province, two individuals were caught with ballot papers marked in advance for Frelimo.

In the Mueredze EPC, in **Muanza** district, Sofala province, a citizen was caught with several ballot papers marked in advance in favour of Frelimo

In **Tambara**, Manica, Frelimo members are being obliged to make videos in the polling booths, to share in a WhatsApp group, to show how they voted.

During the afternoon, in **Maganja da Costa**, the chair of polling station 04 at Landinho was caught introducing ballot papers marked in advance. He is a teacher named Filomena Cristóvão.

In the Charre Basic School in **Mutarara**, the Podemos district delegate declared that a man appearing about 70 years old and a woman of almost 38 years were carrying large rucksacks containing large numbers of ballot papers marked in advance in favour of Frelimo. Locally, men are passing through the yard carrying briefcases.

In the voting assembly at the Malua 2 School, a teacher was caught who voted at four separate polling stations. He was passing himself off as an observer, and was detected by a Podemos monitor. Police took the man to a police station.

Registered but names not on the voters' lists

In the Cristo é Vida school, in Matabue neighbourhood, **Nacala-Porto**, many registered voters could not vote because their names are not on the voter rolls. The polling station chairpersons told these people to go to STAE.

At polling station 01, in the Luvila voting centre, **Muembe** district, Niassa, some voters with voter cards found that their names are not on the voter rolls.

In Alto Molócué voters were unable to locate their polling stations, and some of those who did find the right polling station discovered that their names were not in the voter rolls. Many had to go home without voting. This was particularly the case in all the polling stations in the Pista Velha Primary School, where there had been problems last year with improper registration.

Polling station chairs block Podemos monitors

In Maputo province, chairs of some polling stations are refusing to recognise the credentials issued by the election management bodies in favour of the opposition parties, preventing them from observing the elections.

In the Salesian Professional Training Centre in **Matola**, the Podemos monitor was stopped from inspecting the voting at polling station No. 020598-01. The monitor has a credential issued by the Maputo Provincial Elections Commission. The chair claimed, falsely, that only monitors for parties represented in parliament could be present.

In **Matutuine** district, in the Ponta de Ouro EPC, entry was denied to the Podemos monitors because there were supposed errors in filling out their credentials. But the monitors say that the credentials for Frelimo also contain errors, but these were accepted.

In **Zambézia**, Renamo complains that a large number of its monitors have not been granted credentials, particularly in Gilé, Mopeia, Morrumbala, Luabo and Chinde districts.


Observers were illegally denied entry to some polling stations in **Gaza**, **Inhambane** and **Zambézia**. Observers were barred from two polling stations in **Maputo city**.

Polling stations without electricity, or with lightbulbs removed

In many polling stations in various districts there are classrooms without electricity. For these polling stations, the count will be held by torchlight. What is strange is that the lack of electricity also happens in cities such as **Quelimane**.

Most of the classrooms in the Quelimane EPC, where voting is taking place have not had electricity since yesterday (8 October). Likewise, the 25th September School has no light bulbs in some rooms. Polling station officers reported the fact yesterday to STAE.

In the Vicente Calichelo EPC, in **Sanga**, in Niassa, none of the rooms where voting took place have light bulbs. Torches are being used to start counting the ballot papers.

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