

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

Report no.571, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018



## Parties urged to wage a peaceful election campaign

The Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (CNE), Abdul Carimo, on 24 September urged political parties standing in the municipal elections on 10 October to behave in a peaceful manner and “avoid confrontation or violence”.

The official election campaign runs from 25 September until midnight on 7 October. No campaigning is allowed in the final 48 hours before the election, which is a quiet period in which the voters are supposed to make up their minds.

In an exhortation to the nation on the eve of the start of the campaign, Carimo stressed that the parties and their candidates should “respect the ethical principles of the campaign as laid down in the law and in codes of conduct”.

The parties, he added, should take advantage of this moment “to call for peace, harmony and mutual respect, increasingly consolidating the main spirit of decentralisation, which is peaceful cohabitation”.

He hoped that the candidates and their supporters would raise the awareness of voters “about the true objectives of decentralisation, thus ensuring a massive turnout at the ballot boxes, which is a demonstration of full citizenship”.

They should transmit voter education messages so that citizens would be aware of the importance of “the exercise of power through voting”.

Carimo reminded parties and candidates that the law forbids the use of state assets (such as publicly owned vehicles) in the election campaign. Also, out of bounds for campaigning are schools and places of worship.

Candidates must not use children in their campaigns, he warned, and must not destroy the propaganda materials of their opponents. These offences, all punishable by law, had been common in previous campaigns.

Carimo urged candidates to collaborate with the local authorities and the police, by providing them in advance with information on their campaign plans, and the routes of their motorcades “to guarantee security and protection of campaign activities”.

### Police at disposal of political parties

The general commander of the police, Bernadino Rafael, on 20 September promised to put the police force at the disposal of the various political forces competing in the municipal elections on 10 October.

Rafael was speaking in the northern city of Nampula, at a meeting with the mayoral candidates and other representatives of the parties standing in this municipality.

Rafael stressed that “the objective of the police is that the elections should take place without any alteration in public order and security”. He added that the police will be present at all polling stations to ensure compliance with the law during the voting.

Rafael praised the civic behaviour of the Nampula electorate during the two rounds of the mayoral by-election held in the city earlier this year. He also urged political parties to denounce any illicit behaviour by individual members of the police, whose actions “stain the good name of the force”.

In response, to Rafael’s appeal, the mayoral candidate of the ruling Frelimo Party, Amisse Cololo, asked all the other candidates to commit themselves to the civic education of their supporters, and to “teach them to obey the law”.

Ossufo Alane, representing the candidate of Renamo, and current mayor, Paulo Vahanle, who was absent for reasons of health, argued that the police should only intervene “when necessary”.

The mayoral candidate of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), Fernando Bismarque, shared the Renamo misgivings about the police. He said that the attitudes of the police during previous elections led to suspicions about their real intentions. “The police should guarantee that the elections take place normally, and leave politics to the politicians”, he urged.

## Comiche uncomfortable with exclusion of candidates

The Frelimo mayoral candidate for Maputo has regretted the disqualification of two of his opponents, Venancio Mondlane and Samora Machel Junior (Samito).

Mondlane polled well in the last municipal elections in 2013 when he took 40 per cent of the vote in Maputo. At that time he was the mayoral candidate of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM).

About three months ago, Mondlane defected from the MDM to Renamo, which immediately made him head of its list (and hence mayoral candidate) in Maputo.

As for Machel, he had hoped to be the Frelimo candidate. But he claimed the inner-party election was not transparent and opted to run as the mayoral candidate of AJUDEM (Youth Association for the Development of Mozambique), a civil society grouping regarded as close to Frelimo.

However, the National Elections Commission (CNE) disqualified the entire AJUDEM list because it did not have enough candidates (67) and Mondlane because he had resigned from the Maputo Municipal Assembly in 2014, and people who resign from municipal office may not stand in the next set of elections. Renamo and AJUDEM appealed to the Constitutional Council but without success.

One person not pleased with these developments is Eneas Comiche. On 23 September, speaking to reporters in the Maputo neighbourhood of Chamanculo, he said he did not feel comfortable with the exclusion of Mondlane and Machel. "It would have been good had they participated", he said, "because certainly they were prepared to make their contribution".

Their removal from the stage "brings me no comfort at all", he said. "I don't know what promises they wanted to make in their election manifestos, but I am not comfortable".

Although they could no longer stand as candidates, he was sure that Mondlane and Machel "will find some way of transmitting their message".

Comiche told residents of Chamanculo that he wanted to renovate the city's sports facilities. "We have to build football fields, and we have to find space for the construction of a multi-use field for sports. We want to comply with this promise in every neighbourhood of the city. Only thus will we be able to occupy our young people".

The Frelimo first secretary in Maputo, Francisco Mabjaia, said he was pleased with the results from Comiche's "pre-campaign", in which the candidate has spoken with various segments of society, including farmers, market sellers, teachers and transport operators. "We feel that Frelimo's agenda really deserves the support of Maputo citizens", he said. "What we hope is that they will confirm this support by voting for Frelimo".

As for Machel, who is the son of the country's first President, Mabjaia said that, although he had headed the AJUDEM list, he is still a member of Frelimo. In line with the duties of a party member, as expressed in the Frelimo statutes, Mabjaia said he assumed that the Frelimo candidates will be able to count on Machel's support on 10 October. But when Machel spoke to the press on 19 September, he was careful not to offer this explicit support. While he urged all citizens to vote, he was careful not to tell them who they should vote for.

## Mozambique regaining trust of partners

President Filipe Nyusi has stated that the country is regaining the trust of its international partners because it is complying with the rules of transparency agreed with them.

President Nyusi was speaking on 23 September in New York, to the Mozambican community resident in the United States and Canada. He told the audience that, with the return of trust, American investment in Mozambique is increasing, thus favouring projects that stimulate the economy.

The President described relations between Mozambique and the United States as "very good", and urged all Mozambicans living in the US to project a good image of the country. It was the task of all Mozambicans living abroad, he added, to "market" the country, and sell its potential, deconstructing the image promoted by disinformation on social media.

Explaining the current stage in talks aimed at restoring a definitive peace to Mozambique, President Nyusi said that every step in the talks has required mutual trust. "We must not start out with distrust", he said. "I trusted in Dhlakama (the late leader of the opposition party Renamo), and that's why we achieved consensus. Democracy is not built with guns. The decentralisation project we approved, and which is now underway, is intended to reduce the space for distrust. We should be hopeful".

In a message addressed to the President, the Mozambican community in the US and Canada thanked the government for sending a civil identification brigade to the US to make it easier for citizens living there to obtain Mozambican identity documents.

President Nyusi is in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly, and on 24 September he met with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, with whom he stressed the importance of dialogue as the main source of relations between countries.

## Terrorism in Cabo Delgado "not a threat to peace"

Defence Minister Salvador M'tumuke on 25 September declared that terrorist attacks in the northern province of Cabo Delgado do not constitute threats to effective peace.

The Minister was responding to the latest attack by armed groups, believed to be Islamic fundamentalists, on 20 September when they raided the village of Piqueue, in Macomia district, killing at least ten people, and wounding 14 others. About 55 houses were burnt, and the local health post was looted and then set on fire.

Speaking to reporters in Maputo during the commemorations of the 54th anniversary of the start of the war for Mozambican independence, M'tumuke said "the attacks by these criminals are not a threat to peace. All the institutions in Cabo Delgado are operating normally".

"These are attitudes and activities by criminals who are trying to destabilise security and the normal circulation of the public", the Minister added. But people were still circulating normally in Cabo Delgado, he said.

This insurgency began with attacks against police premises in Mocimboa da Praia district on 5 October last year and the terrorists, known locally as "Al Shabaab", have also launched raids into the neighbouring districts of Macomia, Palma and Nangade.

## Poachers and illegal loggers jailed in Gaza

The Chigubo district court, in the southern province of Gaza, has, over the past three months, sentenced 14 people to jail terms of between 15 days and 12 years for poaching and illegal logging in the Banhine National Park.

The park authorities say that the court cases are the culmination of efforts by park wardens to combat the criminal destruction of wildlife. According to the Banhine park administrator, Abel Nhabanga, 34 cases have been submitted to the court over the last nine months resulting so far in the 14 convictions. Most of the accused, he said, came from other districts in Gaza and from parts of the neighbouring province of Inhambane.

Wardens detected them inside the park, some as they were hunting animals, and others as they were cutting down trees for firewood and charcoal. They have been tried under the amended conservation law, passed by the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, in 2016. The law increased the penalty for poaching to a maximum of 16 years imprisonment.

The district court also confiscated the vehicles, motor-bikes and bicycles used by the poachers and loggers. The poachers' guns were also seized and handed over to the police, while the court ordered the destruction of their traps.

"The increase in the number of cases of people convicted for poaching in the Banhine National Park shows awareness on the part of the bodies of the administration of justice of the need to conserve biodiversity", said Nhabanga.

He added that the park has held campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity, which have involved local communities, members of the police, prosecutors and judges.

## Government approves water management plan

The Mozambican government on 18 September approved a National Water Resource Management Plan for the next 20 years that will cost an estimated US\$428 billion.

Announcing the plan at the end of the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), the government spokesperson, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Ana Comoana, said the plan envisages the sustainable use of the river basins which Mozambique shares with other member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Comoana said the plan will be financed through the Mozambican state budget and aid from the country's foreign cooperation partners. "The objective of the plan is to assess current and future demand for water", she continued, adding that it would prioritise the construction of water storage infrastructures. Comoana did not say where these might be, but the government has previously stated that among its top priorities are new dams at Mpanda Nkua, on the Zambezi River, about 60 kilometres downstream from the existing Cahora Bassa dam, and at Mapai, in the Limpopo basin in the southern province of Gaza.

The plan would promote integrated management of water resources, taking into account the specific nature of each river basin. There would be a portfolio of short, medium and long-term projects for the sustainable and efficient exploitation of water resources.

## President inaugurates tourism complex

President Filipe Nyusi on 19 September inaugurated the JAT Centre, a tourist and commercial complex in Maputo, which cost about US\$130 million to build.

The complex includes a supermarket, a four-star hotel with 172 rooms (known as the "Malia Maputo Sky Hotel"), 84 apartments, 156 shops, a gymnasium, offices, and a car park with space for 1,800 vehicles.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, President Nyusi said the complex is an initiative which will add value to the tourism sector, increase the offer of tourism services and diversify the accommodation offered.

"This is an example of how the Mozambican private sector is backing the government's project of selecting tourism as one of the pillars for development, to make Mozambique a preferred tourist destination at world level", he declared.

For his part, the chairperson of the JAT Group, Joao Brito, noted that the area of 130,000 square metres on which the complex has been built was once a swamp. The inauguration ceremony marked the 20th anniversary of the start of the JAT Group's operations in Maputo.

He stressed that the Group, which employs hundreds of people, also undertakes "social responsibility actions, notably in health, education, and support for needed children and for the elderly".

## President pledges continued expansion of financial services

President Filipe Nyusi on 17 September urged managers of the country's largest commercial bank, the Millennium-BIM (International Bank of Mozambique), to continue taking financial services into rural areas.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a BIM branch in the coastal district of Mossuril, as part of a working visit to the northern province of Nampula. This is the first branch of any commercial bank in the district, and it means that Mossuril will no longer depend on banking services provided in neighbouring districts (Nacala, Monapo or Mozambique Island).

The inauguration of the Mossuril bank was part of the government project "One District, One Bank", intended to implement the "National Financial Inclusion Strategy" for the period 2016-2022.

The aim is to ensure that all districts in the country have at least one bank branch and that by 2022 more than half the population have a point of access to financial services within five kilometres of their workplace or residence. Also, by that year, 35 per cent of the adult population should have a bank account in a formal financial institution.

President Nyusi told the Mossuril crowd that the inauguration of the new branch sends the message that the government is committed to expanding financial services throughout the country, especially in rural areas. "It is further evidence that the government places rural development at the heart of its governance actions since over 70 per cent of our people live in the countryside", he added.

The President pledged that the government will strengthen banking supervision, to minimise the contagious effect of international crises on the Mozambican financial system.

## Floodgates to be installed at Corumana

The reservoir behind the Corumana dam, on the Sabie River, in Maputo province, will almost double its capacity by December 2019, according to Mozambique's Minister of Public Works, Joao Machatine.

The dam was built with Italian cooperation between 1983 and 1989 but because of the danger posed from attacks by apartheid-backed rebels it was never finished. In particular, the floodgates initially planned were never installed – so that when the dam started operating in 1990, the water storage capacity was much lower than planned.

The apartheid war against Mozambique ended in 1992 but the dam was not completed. However, the World Bank is now prepared to finance the installation of the floodgates.

Speaking at a ceremony on 16 September to lay the first stone for the floodgates, Machatine said the government had been negotiating for several years with various partners for funding to complete the dam. The matter became urgent with the crisis in water supply for the Greater Maputo region over the last three years.

The Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area draws most of its water from the reservoir behind the Pequenos Libombos dam, on the Umbeluzi River. The reservoir fell to dangerously low levels in both 2017 and 2018, obliging the authorities to introduce forms of water rationing.

Corumana is an obvious alternative – but only if its storage capacity can be greatly increased. Currently, the Corumana reservoir can hold 720 million cubic metres of water. According to Machatine, that will rise to 1.24 billion cubic metres once the floodgates have been installed.

The work is scheduled to take 15 months and will cost US\$25 million, financed by the World Bank.

The increased water storage will permit an increase in the irrigated area in the Incomati valley from 25,000 to 36,000 hectares, which will allow more food to be produced in Maputo province. Other expected benefits are containing the saline intrusion into the Incomati estuary and increasing the reliability of the small power station at Corumana, which can generate 16.2 megawatts of electricity.

## Vehicle assembly plant “left nothing but debt”

A flagship project of the previous government has collapsed leaving nothing but debts, according to Minister of Industry and Trade, Ragendra de Sousa.

The vehicle assembly plant Matchedje Motors was inaugurated by the former President Armando Guebuza in 2014.

The factory was a partnership between the Mozambican state and the Chinese company China Tong Jian Investment. With a total investment of about US\$150 million, the factory was built in the southern city of Matola.

The first vehicle rolled off the assembly line on 25 September. The following year, 2015, Transport Minister Carlos Mesquita signed an agreement with Matchedje

Motors, to acquire buses to improve urban public transport.

However, just three years after the inauguration, Matchedje Motors stopped assembling vehicles, and switched to becoming nothing more than a workshop, simply repairing cars and buses, mostly those owned by the Maputo and Matola municipal bus companies. All the assembly lines were closed.

The company blamed the lack of skilled labour, the depreciation of the Mozambican currency, the metical, in 2016-17, and the fact that it is much cheaper to buy a used car imported from Japan than one assembled in Maputo.

Today, the premises are used to convert the carcasses of ruined buses into school classrooms.

Cited in the paper “O Pais”, Ragendra de Sousa said that Matchedje Motors “only left debts for the Mozambican state”. But, apart from a couple of items in the press, there has been no explanation to the public of the collapse of a project that initially boasted it would be assembling half a million vehicles a year, for domestic sales and for export, by 2020.

## Inhambane jetty re-inaugurated

Transport Minister Carlos Mesquita on 12 September re-inaugurated the jetty in the southern city of Inhambane which will allow ferries to cross the bay of Inhambane to the town of Maxixe at any time of day or night.

The jetties on both the Maxixe and Inhambane sides of the crossing were seriously damaged by Cyclone Dineo which struck Inhambane province in February 2017.

The Maxixe jetty was rebuilt first and was re-inaugurated by President Filipe Nyusi in June this year.

Although temporary jetties, made of local materials, were hastily erected after the cyclone, the two large ferry boats, owned by the company Transmaritima, that usually carry passengers between the two cities could not moor at them. These two boats, the “Magaluti” and the “Baia de Inhambane” had been paralysed since the cyclone, and so passengers came to depend on small, unsafe vessels to make the crossing.

The repair of the Inhambane jetty was financed by the South Africa petrochemical company, Sasol, and cost 35 million meticals (US\$584,000). Sasol operates the Pande and Temane natural gas fields in the northern part of Inhambane province.

Mesquita said the Inhambane jetty has been completely rebuilt. This marked “the end of difficult moments experienced by the residents of the two cities, due to the suspension of night services across the bay due to the lack of safety”.

Mesquita added that he wanted to see Transmaritima operate a regular ferry service. He called on the company to take its two large ferries into dock for any necessary repairs and then draw up plans to ensure continuity in the transport of people and vehicles across the bay, avoiding congestion at either side.

Mozambique News Agency, c/o 26 Withdean Crescent, Brighton BN1 6WH, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 7941890630 - mozambique-news@geo2.poptel.org.uk

Subscription Rates (20 issues)	Individuals	Institutions
UK	£15.00	£25.00
Europe	£25.00	£40.00
Rest of the World	£30.00	£50.00

Overseas subscribers are requested to pay in sterling. If payment is made in another currency, add the equivalent of £6.00 to cover bank charges.