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CNE confirms Frelimo landslide

Mozambique's National Elections Commission (CNE) on 27 October announced the official results of the general and provincial elections held on 15 October, confirming the forecasts of an overwhelming victory for incumbent President Filipe Nyusi and the ruling Frelimo Party.

President Nyusi won 73 per cent of the presidential vote to just 22 per cent for his main rival, Ossufo Momade, leader of Renamo.

The full result of the presidential election, read out by CNE chairperson Abdul Carimo at a public ceremony in Maputo was:

Filipe Nyusi (Frelimo)	4,507,549	(73 per cent)
Ossufo Momade (Renamo)	1,361,284	(21.88 per cent)
Daviz Simango (MDM)	270,615	(4.38 per cent)
Mario Albino (AMUSI)	45,260	(0.73 per cent)

In the parliamentary election, Frelimo took almost 71 per cent of the vote, and Renamo 23 per cent. The result was:

Frelimo	4,195,072	(70.78 per cent)
Renamo	1,346,009	(22.71 per cent)
MDM	251,347	(4.24 per cent)

The remaining 2.27 per cent of the votes were scattered among 23 minor parties. Of these, AMUSI did best, because of its base in Nampula, and took 0.45 per cent of the vote. Most of the others scored less than 0.1 per cent of the vote.

The result of the parliamentary election is that Frelimo has increased its number of seats in the Mozambican parliament from 144 to 184, giving it the two-thirds majority that it would need to amend the country's constitution. Renamo's parliamentary group is slashed from 89 to 60 members, while the MDM has suffered disastrous losses. The size of its parliamentary group is cut from 17 to just six. The prediction that AMUSI might win a seat in Nampula proved ill-founded. When the CNE distributed the seats using the d'Hondt formula for proportional representation, AMUSI fell short.

In the provincial assembly elections, Frelimo won in all ten provinces, with majorities ranging from 60.33 per cent in Nampula to 95.02 per cent in Gaza.

Under the legislation on provincial assemblies passed earlier this year, the person who heads the list of the winning party automatically becomes the provincial governor. Thus all ten provincial governors will be from Frelimo.

Renamo had demanded, as part of the price of the peace accord it signed with the government, a change in the provincial system so that, instead of the governors being

appointed by the President, they would be directly elected. Renamo believed it stood a good chance of winning several provinces, and at the early stages of negotiations with the government the then Renamo leader, the late Afonso Dhlakama, demanded the right to appoint six governors.

But Renamo's obsession with provincial governors has backfired. As in the past, all the governors are from Frelimo, but now they will be able to claim some democratic legitimacy.

Frelimo's victory is total. Not only did it win in all the 11 provincial constituencies, but also in all the 154 districts. In only two districts, according to the official figures, was there even a close contest. In the northern port city of Nacala, Frelimo won 49.14 per cent in the provincial assembly election, to 48.29 per cent for Renamo. And in Angonia district, in Tete, Frelimo won 47.96 per cent and Renamo 47.05 per cent.

Carimo put the turnout at the elections at 50.74 per cent, rather lower than the 52 or 53 per cent predicted earlier. In the largest constituencies, turnout was even lower – at 42.91 per cent in Nampula and 42.86 per cent in Zambezia. The highest turnout was in Gaza, with 63.59 per cent.

Both Renamo and the MDM have dismissed the results as entirely fraudulent, and both parties were absent from the announcement ceremony.

CNE confirms illicit acts

CNE chairperson Abdul Carimo on 29 October admitted that the general and provincial elections held on 15 October were marred by "many illicit acts". He was speaking to reporters after delivering the records of the elections to the Constitutional Council, Mozambique's highest body in terms of constitutional and electoral law.

The Constitutional Council has the power to validate and proclaim the results, after considering any appeals against the results lodged by the contending parties. The Council's decision is final.

The Constitution states that the first sitting of the new parliament must take 20 days after the Council has validated and proclaimed the results. There is no fixed deadline for the Council to complete its work.

The previous general elections were held on 15 October 2014, and the Council did not validate the results until 29 December.

President inaugurates Beira fishing port

President Filipe Nyusi on 28 October inaugurated a new fishing port in the central city of Beira, capital of Sofala province, which was financed by a loan from the Chinese government of US\$120 million.

Speaking immediately after the inauguration, President Nyusi said this is a valuable facility resulting from the efforts undertaken to ensure the development of the Mozambican fishing industry. “We believe that the conditions have been strengthened so that the value chain in fisheries can evolve and provide added value to our economy”, he declared.

President Nyusi said the new fishing port will provide an abundance of good quality produce, which would allow an increase in the consumption of fish to the levels recommended by the World Health Organisation plus an increase in the amount of fisheries produce exported.

The outgoing Chinese ambassador, Su Jian, who witnessed the inauguration, noted that Sofala was a priority province in the cooperation between Mozambique and China. In addition to the fishing port, Sofala had benefitted from Chinese investment in the rehabilitation of Beira Central Hospital, and in the reconstruction of the highway that runs from Beira to the Zimbabwean border.

With the rebuilding of the fishing port, its quay is 377 metres long, and 16 industrial fishing boats can dock there simultaneously. Previously, the quay was 188 metres long and could only accommodate eight vessels. On the quay, there are also six cold stores, which can hold 500 tonnes of produce, an ice factory that can make 60 tonnes of ice a day, and a processing room that can handle 50 tonnes of fisheries produce a day.

The original fishing port was severely damaged by cyclone Eline in 2000. Reconstruction and expansion of the fishing quay began in 2016. A second major cyclone, Idai, hit Beira in March this year, but the damage done to the port has now been completely repaired.

Illegal fishing costs \$60 million annually

Mozambique is losing an estimated US\$60 million a year because of illegal fishing, mainly practised by foreign vessels operating in Mozambican territorial waters.

The National Director of Operations in the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Leonid Chimarizene, gave this figure on 4 November during a debate in Maputo on the fight against illegal fishing, organised by the Civil Society Forum for the Marine and Coastal Area (FOSCAMC). He said that the Mozambican maritime authorities, operating from the ports of Maputo, Beira and Nacala, have been stepping up inspection via satellite of the country’s waters, and have been forming partnerships in the southern African region to combat illegal fishing.

Chimarizene said the government is working continually to improve inspection techniques to deal with offenders who are using ever more sophisticated means to defraud the State. By the end of the first quarter of 2020, he added, the government will introduce monitoring of the Mozambique Channel by drones. This will make it possible to accompany inspection activity in real-time along the entire 2,700 kilometres of the Mozambican coastline.

Chimarizene said that most of the illegal vessels disguise their origin, which makes it difficult to identify them. He

pledged that any foreign vessel found fishing illegally will be confiscated in favour of the Mozambican State. Mozambicans fishing illegally will receive heavy fines in order to discourage them.

“In the last four years, we have confiscated four foreign fishing boats”, he continued. “We have converted one into an inspection vessel, we have sold one, and we are still thinking about what to do with the other two”.

Army bombards insurgent positions

The Defence Ministry has announced further successes with artillery barrages against positions of Islamist terrorist groups in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

A release from the Ministry says that hideouts of the insurgents were bombarded on 31 October in the Gaza region, south of the Messalo River in the Cabo Delgado district of Muidumbe, and on 1 November at Marere, at the mouth of the Messalo, in Mocimboa da Praia district.

The release gave no figure for casualties on either side but said that some of the insurgents had been “neutralised”, while others had fled. It added that there had been further artillery attacks on insurgent positions near the Messalo, in Muidumbe. This operation “inflicted considerable losses on the insurgents and many of them are now on the run”.

Nonetheless, terrorist attacks are continuing. According to a report in the newssheet “Mediafax”, on 2 November the insurgents attacked a truck travelling between Mumu and Intowe, via Mocimboa da Praia. Four of those travelling in the truck were killed in this ambush. In addition, on 1 November, terrorists attacked the village of Mbau and burnt down several houses.

Thousands face hunger in Dombe

About 3,000 people in the Dombe administrative post, in the central province of Manica, are facing hunger because of lost crops planted when Cyclone Idai struck central Mozambique on 14 March. Extensive areas planted with grain and vegetables were devastated, plunging hundreds of households into food insecurity.

The head of the Dombe administrative post, Tomas Razao, told AIM that intervention by the government and its partners is urgent to alleviate the suffering of the population. In the Mabaia area, he said, people are surviving on wild roots and seasonal fruits. The cyclone came on top of a period of drought, and the combined effect has led to food shortages.

Razao said the local government is seeking public-private partnerships to solve the problem of food insecurity in Dombe. “The population is committed to the 2019-2020 agricultural campaign in which we are hoping for good production”, he said. “We are providing seeds, while we wait for the rains to start. On the other hand, with the support of partners, we are promoting various actions such as Food for Work”. But this initiative, he added, does not cover everyone in Dombe facing food insecurity.

“The people are committed to seeking solutions”, he said. “One of the alternatives is to bank on short cycle, drought-resistant crops. Some are producing in the low-lying areas on the banks of the main rivers in Dombe and have begun to bring in some harvests”.

Dombe was the part of Manica most hit by cyclone Idai. 70,000 people live here, and most of them are farmers.

Faita Water Distribution Centre inaugurated

President Filipe Nyusi pledged on 2 November in the northern port city of Nacala that the government will continue to build facilities that will provide the public with abundant good quality drinking water.

The President was speaking at a rally after inaugurating the Faita Water Distribution Centre, which provides water to Nacala and the surrounding area.

“Investment in water resource facilities and management is a priority for our government”, said President Nyusi. “Resources, in this case, water, must be made available to accompany the growth of Nacala city. Our government regards water supply as one of the people’s main rights, and a factor in poverty alleviation”.

President Nyusi added “our people are ceasing to walk long distances to fetch water. These gains are contributing to stimulate production, to create wealth, and to generate a balanced and inclusive environment, favouring living together in an environment of peace and harmony”.

The President added that he will shortly be inaugurating other water supply systems across the country.

The Faita Water Distribution Centre cost US\$7.4 million financed jointly by the government and the World Bank. With the inauguration of this new facility, at least 145,000 out of the 288,000 inhabitants of Nacala now have access to clean drinking water. The distribution system has been operational for several weeks and produces 16,020 cubic metres of water a day, pumped through a distribution network that runs for 225 kilometres. It provides water for at least 18 hours a day throughout the city. In all, there are 7,500 home connections to the system, and 96 public standpipes in the peripheral neighbourhoods of Nacala.

Renamo dissidents admit responsibility for attacks

The self-styled “Renamo Military Junta” has admitted responsibility for the spate of armed attacks in the central provinces of Manica and Sofala in recent weeks.

Speaking by phone with the Beira office of the daily paper “Noticias”, the leader of the Junta, Mariano Nhongo (who has awarded himself the rank of general), boasted that he had given the order for the attacks. He said that his main target was the police – although civilian vehicles have also been targeted. In the last week of October, there were four attacks in Sofala, and five people were killed, including two policemen. Asked why the recent attacks had targeted civilians, as well as the police, Nhongo said “I prefer not to talk about this”.

The “Military Junta” is a breakaway from the main opposition party, Renamo, led by Ossufo Momade, whom Nhongo regards as “a traitor”. When “Noticias” asked about his current relations with Momade, Nhongo replied, “I don’t want to talk with him, I don’t even want to know anything about him, because he has completely ruined our party”. But Nhongo was willing to talk with President Filipe Nyusi. But President Nyusi has already made it clear that he regards Momade as the leader of Renamo. Momade was elected at a Renamo congress in January.

It was Momade who signed the peace agreement with President Nyusi on 6 August, and commentators doubt that the President would negotiate a second agreement due to a split inside Renamo.

Russian company plans assembly plant in Mozambique

The Russian company Kamaz, which manufactures heavy and light vehicles for military and civilian purposes, is interested in setting up an assembly plant in Mozambique. According to President Filipe Nyusi, speaking to the reporters who accompanied him to the Russia-Africa summit, such a plant would sell vehicles to the entire market of the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region. Before the end of this year, he added, a team from Kamaz will visit Maputo.

Another major Russian company interested in doing business in Mozambique is Alrosa, a world leader in the mining, processing and marketing of diamonds. Once the presence of diamonds in the Mozambican subsoil is established, Alrosa hopes to set up a processing plant.

President Nyusi made a positive assessment of Mozambique’s participation in the summit, held over two days in the Black Sea city of Sochi because it had re-launched cooperation between Mozambique and Russia. He said that the cooperation platform opened between Russia and African countries shows that the African continent is gaining in maturity to identify “the right partners” in its development.

President Nyusi met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom he discussed the Mozambican elections and the security situation in the country.

Tourism in Mozambique growing

Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosario said on 31 November that tourism to Mozambique is gradually increasing and that in 2018 tourism earned the country US\$241.8 million, compared with US\$196 million in 2015.

Speaking in Maputo, at the opening of the seventh edition of the Mozambique International Tourism Fair (known as Fikani), Rosario said that, as a result of the reforms being implemented by the government in the sector, the number of international tourist arrivals has been increasing significantly. According to the government’s figures, 2.8 million tourists entered the country in 2018, compared with 1.6 million in 2015. The number of jobs in the hotel industry, restaurants, travel agencies and other activities linked to tourism has risen from 58,000 in 2015 to 64,600 in 2018.

The Prime Minister added that “our country has been winning prizes in international fairs and has merited reference as a tourist destination of choice, in specialist magazines in this area”.

Rosario stressed that reforms such as the liberalisation of Mozambican airspace, and the issuing of a “frontier visa” so that tourists can buy their entry visas on arrival, rather than at Mozambican embassies or consulates, “is helping to improve the business environment and facilitate the entry of tourists”.

Before the formal opening ceremony, Rosario visited all the stands of the exhibitors and declared “the quality and diversity of the products and services displayed here are the unequivocal proof that tourism in Mozambique is a strong inducer of linkages with various sectors of activity, with a multiplier effect on job creation and generating income for Mozambicans”.

Chang's future in hands of South African minister

The High Court in South Africa's Gauteng province on 1 November rejected the decision by the former South African justice minister Michael Matsupha to extradite Mozambique's former finance minister, Manuel Chang, back to Maputo, according to the report on the Johannesburg proceedings carried by the independent television station STV.

This decision opens the way to possible extradition of Chang to the United States where he faces charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering, wire fraud and securities fraud.

The High Court decided to put the matter into the hands of Matsupha's successor, Ronald Lamola.

Chang has been in police custody in Johannesburg since 29 December last year, when he was arrested at Johannesburg Airport, on the basis of an international arrest warrant issued by the United States. The US invoked its extradition treaty with South Africa.

Chang is wanted in both Mozambique and the US on charges arising from the scandal of Mozambique's "hidden loans" As Finance Minister in the government headed by President Armando Guebuza, Chang signed the illegal loan guarantees, in 2013 and 2014, which allowed three fraudulent companies to borrow over two billion US dollars from the banks Credit Suisse and VTB of Russia.

On 21 May, his last day in office, Matsupha, who had been appointed by President Jacob Zuma, decided to extradite Chang to Mozambique. But the new Minister sought to overturn Matsupha's decision, describing it as irrational and unlawful.

Lawyers for Chang and for the Mozambican government tried to persuade the High Court in Johannesburg that Matsupha took the right decision and that Chang should indeed be returned to Mozambique.

Lamola has now won this battle, and Matsupha's decision has been quashed. This does not guarantee that Chang will be sent to the US. The decision lies in Lamola's hands, and there remain avenues of appeal.

Acting as a Friend of the Court, a prominent South African NGO, the Helen Suzman Foundation told the judges that Lamola was correct to seek a review because South Africa is constitutionally obliged to ensure the effective prosecution of corruption even if the offence occurs outside of its borders.

The lawyer for the Mozambican government, Sami Modiba, said after the ruling "we will study the judgement itself. We will consult with our client, the Republic of Mozambique, and then we will make a decision on the way forward."

President launches agricultural year

President Filipe Nyusi declared on 28 October that the main goal of the 2019/2020 agricultural campaign is to consolidate all the stages and targets defined in the previous years of his first period of governance (2015-2019), looking forward to diversified, sustainable and competitive agriculture.

Speaking at the ceremony launching the campaign in Metuchira, in the central province of Sofala, President Nyusi said the task of the present season is to consolidate previous gains in the drive for diversified agriculture.

Thousands of people attended the ceremony, including farmers, traders, and providers of agricultural services. Prizes were awarded to people who had made an outstanding contribution to agriculture this year.

Summarising the 2018/2019 agricultural year, President Nyusi said there had been a decline in grain production because of the combined impact of drought in the southern provinces, and two devastating cyclones, Idai and Kenneth, in central and northern Mozambique. As a result, grain production fell from 3.2 million tonnes in the 2017/2018 agricultural year to 2.6 million tonnes, a fall of almost 19 per cent.

As an improvement in organisation, President Nyusi mentioned the reintroduction of the agricultural marketing card, intended to draw up a register of economic agents involved in marketing and provide a statistical record of marketing data. He also announced the creation of a rotating marketing fund with the value of 500 million meticais (about US\$8 million).

The President said that several products had been gaining ground in export markets. Thus from January to September this year, Mozambique had exported 168,000 tonnes of sugar, to the value of US\$53 million. The main markets were Europe, the United States, and central Africa (Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi). "All this is thanks to our economic diplomacy", said President Nyusi. "We also exported a variety of fruit to Europe and Japan. We also have crops such as sesame, soya and macadamia nuts which are being tested in China. What seems a dream is now being implemented".

President Nyusi recalled that, two years earlier, when he had launched the 2017/2018 agricultural campaign, he had said that agriculture contributes to reducing the cost of living, by making food available on the market, thus lowering inflation and stabilising the economy. "That's exactly what happened", he said. "Our economy grew, and inflation fell significantly. To a great extent, this is because of the positive performance of the agricultural sector".

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