

Mozambique News Agency

AIM Reports

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Frelimo winning narrowly in Manica

Mozambique's ruling Frelimo Party and its presidential candidate, Filipe Nyusi, are ahead by a narrow margin in the count of votes from Wednesday's general election in the central province of Manica.

The results, announced on Thursday morning in the provincial capital, Chimoio, by the Manica branch of the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE), are as follows, but only cover a minority of the polling stations.

Presidential election (data from 418 of the province's 1,104 polling stations - 37.86 per cent) Filipe Nyusi (Frelimo) – 66,122 Afonso Dhlakama (Renamo) – 58,800 Daviz Simango (MDM) – 4,533

Parliamentary election (data from 95 polling stations – 8.61 per cent) Frelimo – 12, 638 Renamo – 10,986 MDM – 1.079

Radio Mozambique reported that, as expected, Nyusi is winning handsomely in his home district of Mueda, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

In nine of the 25 Mueda polling stations, Nyusi won 3,790 votes. Daviz Simango came second with 125 votes, while Dhlakama picked up only 90 votes.

Also in Mueda, in the parliamentary election, the Radio's sample of polling stations gave Frelimo 5,543 votes to 285 for the MDM and 100 for Renamo.

Dhlakama leads in Angonia

Renamo's Afonso Dhlakama has established a substantial lead in the first general election results from Angonia district, in the western province of Tete, on the border with Malawi.

Radio Mozambique reported that in 23 out of Angonia's 277 polling stations Dhlakama had won 5,005 votes. Frelimo's Filipe Nyusi, came second with 2,915 votes, and the third candidate, Daviz Simango of the MDM took only 292 votes.

From these same polling stations, in the parliamentary election Renamo won 4,384 votes to 2,290 for Frelimo and 413 for the MDM.

At five polling stations in Mutarara district, also in Tete, Nyusi was ahead with 983 votes followed by Dhlakama with 832. Simango trailed badly, with only 43 votes.

In the parliamentary election in Mutarara, the situation was reversed – in those five stations, Renamo won 739 votes to 725 for Frelimo and 49 for the MDM.

In Barue district, in the central province of Manica, the radio reported a narrow victory for Dhlakama in 72 of the district's 111 polling stations. Dhlakama won 12,513 votes to 11,889 votes for Nyusi. Simango took just 626 votes. The radio did not report parliamentary results from Barue.

The results in so far from the northernmost province of Niassa show a substantial win for Frelimo. In 26 polling stations in Cuamba district, Nyusi won 2,780 votes to 1,518 for Dhlakama and 677 for Simango.

In the parliamentary election, in these stations, the Radio reported 2,056 votes for Frelimo, 1,272 for Renamo and 726 for the MDM.

In 22 polling stations in Marrupa district, also in Niassa, Nyusi won 3,335 votes, followed by Dhlakama with 993 and Simango with 276. In the parliamentary ballot, Frelimo took 2,946 votes, Renamo 629 and the MDM 297.

Initial results from Maputo and Nampula

Initial results from a handful of polling stations show that Filipe Nyusi is winning the presidential election in Maputo city, but his rival, Afonso Dhlakama, is ahead in the northern city of Nampula.

In 11 Maputo city polling stations, Nyusi won 3,346 votes. Daviz Simango, leader and presidential candidate of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) was second with 978 votes, while 918 votes were cast for Dhlakama.

Data from 10 Nampula polling stations put Dhlakama in the lead with 1,941 votes, following by Nyusi with 1,515. Simango trailed with 252 votes.

So far, AIM only has the parliamentary results for five Maputo city polling stations. These put Frelimo in the lead with 1,279 votes, followed by MDM with 790. Renamo came third in these stations with 418 votes.

There were 24 other parties on the Maputo parliamentary ballot paper. In these stations only one of them, ALIMO (Independent Alliance of Mozambique) won a vote. All the others won no votes at all. These minor parties all took money from the

state for their election campaigns – yet in most cases there was no sign that they did any campaigning at all.

Results have trickled in very slowly because the counting procedures are more complex, hence lengthier, than for the 2009 elections. Security procedures are elaborate, and thus time consuming.

The polling station staff first count the number of names ticked off the electoral register. Then the presidential ballot box is opened, and the votes are counted, but not examined. Then that ballot box is resealed, and the number of papers in the second ballot box, for the parliamentary election, is counted. For everywhere outside of Maputo the procedure is repeated for a third ballot box, for the provincial assembly elections.

The staff must also count how many ballot papers are unused, and must spoil them all. Only when these procedures are complete, are the seals on the presidential election ballot box broken again and the votes examined one by one, and sorted into piles by candidates. Every vote is read out twice, and shown to all the other people in the room – monitors from the political parties, observers and journalists.

AIM observed one Maputo polling station, with only 398 names on its register, which closed promptly at 18.00. Even so, by the time the AIM reporter left, at 20.00 the count of the presidential ballot papers had only just started.

It is easy to see how a count at a larger polling station, with three ballot papers rather than two, and with poor lighting conditions, could drag on until after midnight, even if none of the votes are contested.

Nyusi ahead in Marromeu

With general election results available from 45 of the 94 polling stations in Marromeu district, on the south bank of the Zambezi, in the central province of Sofala Radio Mozambique reported on Thursday morning that Filipe Nyusi is in the lead.

The radio reported that Nyusi had won 6,687 votes, followed by Afonso Dhlakama with 5,012 votes. The third candidate, Daviz Simango only won 466 votes.

But in the parliamentary ballot, the situation was reversed, with Renamo in the lead. From its sample of the Marromeu polling stations, Renamo won 3,281 votes to 2,188 for Frelimo and 375 for the MDM.

In Maringue district, also in Sofala, and once Renamo's military headquarters, the independent television station STV reported that Dhlakama was in the lead in three polling stations. He had 1,124 votes, but Nyusi was close behind with 1,046. Here Simango only picked up 48 votes.

STV also reported that from five polling stations in Moatize district, in the western province of Tete, Dhlakama was ahead with 797 votes. Nyusi was second with 772 votes, with 146 votes for Simango.

In neither Maringue nor Moatize were parliamentary results yet available.

Polling station chairperson arrested

The chairperson of a polling station at Domue, in Angonia district, in the western Mozambican province of Tete, has been arrested on suspicion of electoral fraud, reports the "Mozambican Political Process Bulletin", published by the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), and the anti-corruption NGO CIP (Centre for Public Integrity)

The chairperson, named as Jeremias Atanasio, was found with ballot papers on his person, already marked in favour of the ruling Frelimo Party.

The Bulletin also reports that in Chidenguele, in the southern province of Gaza, "observers saw members of an unknown observer group pick up ballot papers from the main table (with the obvious agreement of the polling station staff) and put them into a slot under the booth where voters mark their ballot papers".

The observer who spotted this found that these ballot papers were marked for Frelimo – he took photos of them which the Bulletin published. The Bulletin notes "the idea appears to be that when a Frelimo member who had been warned in advance went to that booth and marked and folded their ballot papers, they would take extra ballot papers from the slot, thus putting more than one paper in the ballot box".

In Dondo, in the central province of Sofala, the bulletin says that a reporter from the weekly paper "Zambeze" was attacked and had his camera confiscated "after he took pictures showing polling station staff marking ballot papers for Frelimo and of a teacher putting the extra votes into the ballot boxes".

CIP and several other civil society bodies issued a joint statement claiming that 'in Quelimane city four clandestine ballot boxes were found in a police car registration PRM 00313. Local people say that the ballot boxes were given to two people who left in cars with registrations ACU 173 MC e ADJ 481 MC'.

But it is one thing to smuggle pre-marked ballot papers into a polling station and slip them into the ballot boxes, and quite another to introduce a whole new ballot box into a station. The ballot boxes are bulky, and they bear numbered seals. Switching a ballot box in the middle of voting could not be done without everyone in the polling station noticing, including staff members appointed by opposition parties.

The two main opposition parties, Renamo and the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), have the right to appoint a staff member in every polling station, and can also send a poll monitor to watch over the voting.

For the fraud that these civil society bodies are suggesting to work there would have to be no opposition personnel present – which seems most unlikely in the MDM stronghold of Quelimane.