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## CNE members block appointment of Grachane

Members of the CNE have blocked José Grachane, on the grounds that they would not be able to share a working environment with someone who fought against them, and who still has an appeal awaiting a decision from the Administrative Tribunal (TA).

Some CNE members say that the appointment of Grachane by Frelimo, following the attempts to impose a General Director of STAE, is clear evidence that the Party wants the STAE leadership not to be independent, but to be controlled by Frelimo.

Everything indicates that Frelimo will give up insisting on Grachane, but by Friday the party had not yet gone to collect the note rejecting Grachane by the members of the CNE. We have learnt that the President of Frelimo, Filipe Nyusi, was put on the sidelines of these changes, and did not like the fact that he was not consulted.

Grachane should have been presented at Thursday's plenary session, but this was not possible because his appointment was blocked during the meeting. Levieque had already bid farewell to his colleagues.

## The arguments of the CNE members

To support their argument that the conditions do not exist to work alongside him, the members of the National Elections Commission (CNE) recalled some of Grachane's arguments in his letter contesting the results of the election of Loló Correia to the post of General Director of the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE). In that letter, José Grachane wrote the following: "Without wishing to diminish the qualities of the other candidates, the petitioner (himself) has been a member of the public administration for 28 years, in the information systems career, with a master's degree. He has been a member of the CNE for more than 10 years. He has complete mastery of the electoral legislation, and coordinated the Electoral Organisation and Operations Commission. He has full knowledge of how the electoral bodies operate, as well as of the treatment of election data. In its assessment, the jury should at least value these aspects."

He added: "Hence, the petitioner believes that it is on the basis of the score from assessing these aspects that the jury should examine the winning candidate (in this case Loló Correia)".

For the CNE members, this argument of Grachane shows that he thinks he has a better profile than the current general director. Thus, including him as the Second Assistant General Director of STAE would undermine the working environment, not only with the members of the CNE, but also with the general director of STAE ([link to Grachane's letter](#)).

Furthermore, the CNE members allege that the appointment of Grachane by Frelimo is clear evidence that he ran for the post of general director of STAE as “a political expedient of the ruling party” and not as an independent, as is required.

The CNE members also argue that they see no reason for replacing the assistant director, Agostinho Lavieque, on the eve of elections. They point out that Agostinho Lavieque never faced any disciplinary proceedings and never displayed any bad behaviour. Nonetheless, the CNE members are willing to accept the appointment of a new assistant general director of STAE by Frelimo, as long as it is not José Grachane.

The position of the National Elections Commission shows that this body has been seeking to obtain greater credibility by rejecting political interference.

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## **Air transport will add further costs of 320 million meticaais (\$5 million) for the CNE**

Voter registration will begin on 20 April, if the Government accepts the additional cost of 320 million meticaais for air transport to bring equipment and material from Hong Kong and from France, as proposed by the CNE.

The Artes Gráficas – Lexton consortium presented last week in Maputo the proposal for transporting the election material by air (option B) and not by sea ([see details in Bulletin 5](#)). The initial proposal envisaged transporting the material in three aircraft, but this could prove very expensive for the State: 448 million meticaais, the equivalent of 7 million dollars. The State might not be willing to pay these sums. The consortium had to renegotiate with the company that will transport the equipment to Maputo. Hence, an agreement was reached that it would be possible to transport the material in two aircraft, at a total cost of 320 million meticaais (5 million dollars).

The two aircraft will carry 200 tonnes of equipment for the voter registration from Hong Kong and from France. The transport of this equipment involved refitting these planes, and an additional cost, already included in the budget, with fees for the use of airspace with “potentially explosive” material ([see Bulletin 13](#)).


The pilot registration will not be affected because the material for this has already been produced and, in principle, it will arrive in Maputo in January.

## **Electoral timetable adjusted**

At the same session the CNE approved the readjusted electoral timetable, in line with the proposal to amend the Election Law, already passed by the Council of Ministers, to be submitted to parliament for discussion and approval.

The proposal envisages altering articles 18, 54 and 132 of Law No. 7/2018, of 3 August, as altered and republished by Law No. 14/2018, of 18 December, which establishes the legal framework for municipal office holders (see Bulletin 14). Essentially, the proposal seeks to reduce the period for presenting candidates’ nomination papers, currently fixed at 120 days; it will also shorten the period for publishing the definitive map of the places where the polling stations will operate, and the period for delivering to the candidates the electoral registers in electronic format – currently the law fixes this deadline at up to 45 days before the elections. Likewise, the time for divulging the number of full and candidate assembly members to be elected in each municipality, currently set at 180 days, will be reduced.

We do not yet have details of the new deadlines fixed by the proposal.

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