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## STAE report shows

# There are no security conditions for holding voter registration in Mocímboa da Praia

STAE is proposing that the registration be held within the municipal perimeter, where security conditions are acceptable – but the costs of air transport services are unsustainable: about 140 million meticaís (2.2 million dollars). The Government is facing a liquidity crisis. The CNE is not functioning fully for lack of funds. It is only holding meetings. Last week some members threatened not to go to the meeting because of a lack of fuel.

The report of the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE), sent last Monday (27 March) to the office of the Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (CNE), concludes: “there are no security conditions outside the radius of the municipality”. The report notes that the district has recorded the gradual return of the population, but they are all concentrated in the municipal territory.

As a solution, STAE proposes that voter registration be held only in the municipal territory and not in the entire district. Mocimboa da Praia would be the only district where registration would be held only in the municipal area. Even so, STAE is suggesting other measures: greater protection and security on the perimeter of the registration posts; the allocation of two or more members of the defence and security forces to each brigade; an increase in the number of brigades from four (in 2018) to nine in 2023; and the allocation of aircraft.

The report analyses the security situation, not only in Mocímboa da Praia, but also in all districts with municipalities, where the voter registration will take place, namely Mueda, Montepuez, Chiure, Pemba city, Ibo and Balama (the latter two are new municipalities). In all these districts, with the exception of Pemba, STAE is proposing three fundamental measures: greater protection and security on the perimeter of the registration posts; the placing of two or more members of the defence and security forces in each voter registration brigade; and also doubling the number of registration brigades in comparison with the 2018 registration. The protective measures include strengthening the security for members of the electoral bodies and election agents.

For the districts of Mocímboa, Mueda, Montepuez and Chiure the introduction is required of aircraft with the capacity to transport 1,500 kilos (1.5 tonnes) of cargo, 225 hours of operation and 20 hours of positioning, including fuel. The cost of using the aircraft is 138 million meticaís (slightly more than 2 million dollars). But the State is facing a series of liquidity crises, which is why the CNE is only partly functional. There is no money for travel or for allowances. Last week some members of the CNE threatened not to go to the meeting for lack of fuel.

All the aircraft will be based in Pemba, the only place in Cabo Delgado which offers better conditions of security and logistics.

The aircraft will be used, not only to transport electoral materials, but also for supervision, technical assistance and collecting the brigades.

The question of Mocímboa da Praia is politically sensitive and requires a decision by the National Elections Commission. But the truth is that there are no conditions for holding elections in Mocímboa da Praia.

## CNE could decide by Friday whether or not to exclude Mocímboa

According to sources in the electoral bodies, the CNE could decide, at this week's meeting, whether or not to exclude the Mocímboa da Praia municipality from this year's municipal elections. The decision is extremely urgent, since voter registration begins in two weeks' time.

During the week, the members of the CNE should undertake political consultations with the leaderships of their parties over the decision to be taken about Mocímboa da Praia. Renamo is in favour of excluding it, on the grounds, not only that the conditions do not exist, but that it would be difficult to hold transparent, free and fair elections. Furthermore, the political parties and national and international observers could have difficulties in monitoring elections in Mocímboa da Praia because of lack of security.

Renamo also knows that, in the current context of Mocímboa da Praia, elections will not be to its benefit. On the contrary, they would benefit Frelimo which controls the army. The army could be a key player in deciding the winner in Mocímboa, just as has happened in all the elections when, in contexts of peace, the defence and security forces play a fundamental role in electoral manipulation.


So far, the decision of the Frelimo members on the CNE is in favour of holding the elections in Mocímboa da Praia.

At last Thursday's meeting, the CNE approved the registration posts to be installed in Mocímboa da Praia. The approval of the registration posts does not necessarily mean that Mocímboa da Praia cannot be excluded from the elections.

## Delivery of registration material concluded

The final flight carrying voter registration material landed at Maputo International Airport on Sunday, 26 March. The plane was carrying the rest of the material that will be used from 20 April to 3 June.

Much the electoral material is already in the provincial capitals to be distributed to the districts.

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