

REPORT ON THE OBSERVATION OF THE 2023 VOTER REGISTRATION

Members:



Map of Observed Municipalities



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEMI – “More Integrity” Electoral Consortium

CNE – National Elections Commission

STAE – Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat

OMR – Optical Mark Recognition

QR - Quick Response

PVC – Permanent Voter Card

CDE – District Elections Commission

AFIS – Automated Fingerprint Identification System

CPE – Provincial Elections Commission

PRM – Mozambique Republic Police

EPC – Complete Primary School

FRELIMO – Mozambique Liberation Front

RENAMO – Mozambique National Resistance

MDM – Mozambique Democratic Movement

AMUSI – Action Party of the United Movement for All-Round Salvation

INE - National Statistics Institute

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an assessment of the 2023 voter registration in Mozambique, undertaken by the “More Integrity” Electoral Consortium” (CEMI). This assessment is based on analysing the framework that governs voter registration and its methodology and technology. It is also based on direct observation of the voter registration operations over 45 days in 27 municipalities, done by a team of 68 observers. The report also analyses, in a preliminary manner, the data produced by the registration.

Among the various dimensions of the observation, attention was paid to the operation and level of preparation of the registration brigades, compliance with the opening hours of the registration posts, the availability and functioning of the equipment and material, the efficiency of the process, the issuing of voter cards, the accessibility of the registration posts to people with disabilities, the participation of women and young people, access to information, the exercise of freedom of expression and of the press, and the coverage of the registration by the mass media, among others.

Observation on the ground took place in the municipalities of Cuamba and Insaca, in Niassa province; Montepuez, Mocimboa da Praia, Pemba and Chiúre, in Cabo Delgado province; Nampula, Mozambique Island, Nacala-Port, Angoche and Malema, in Nampula province; Quelimane, Mocuba, Gurúè, Alto Molócue and Morrumbala, in Zambézia province; Moatize, in Tete province; Guro, in Manica province; Beira and Marromeu, in Sofala province; Massinga, in Inhambane province; Chókwè, Mandlakazi and Massingir, in Gaza province; Matola and Matola-Rio, in Maputo province, and Maputo City. As for the structure, in addition to the present introduction, this report includes the presentation of the historical antecedents of the 2023 voter registration (chapter 2), the assessment of the 2023 voter registration (chapter 3) and the conclusions and recommendations arising from the assessment (chapter 4).

2. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF THE 2023 VOTER REGISTRATION

Enrolling citizens in the voter rolls through the voter registration of 2023 was the sixth exercise of its kind in Mozambique, since the introduction of multi-party elections in 1994. Throughout around 30 years of voter registration in Mozambique, the procedure has undergone alterations in its legal framework, its methodology, and its technology, notably:

- **Temporal validity:** The legislation that regulated voter registration from 1993 to 2002 first established voter registration of indeterminate temporal scope, with the possibility of regular updating (1993) and later, permanent registration with annual updating (1997/1999/2002), although the law of 1999 imposed holding registration from scratch for the general elections of that year. However, as from 2007, the temporal scope of the registration came to be a single electoral cycle, with updating in election years. Thus, the municipal elections of 1998 and 2003 and the general elections of 2004 were the only ones held without registration from

scratch. For the 2003/2004 cycle, the 1999 registration was used, incorporating into the existing voter rolls the registration of those not registered previously, altering the registration of those who had changed address or lost their cards, and removing the names of deceased voters. However, the inability to remove effectively the deceased voters led to a highly inflated voter roll in 2004, which analysts estimate may have contained a million voters too many. This inability to update effectively the voters roll led to the decision to hold voter registration from scratch every electoral cycle.

- **Number of registration phases:** As a result of the change in temporal scope, from 1993 to 2004, voter registration, which had been held in a single phase, passed to two phases – one in the year of municipal elections and the other in the year of the general elections – as from 2007.
- **Area covered by the registration in a municipal election year:** after the introduction of registration from scratch for each electoral cycle in two phases, in 2008 registration in the year of the municipal elections covered only the municipal territories, but as from 2013, it was extended to the district territories that contain municipalities.
- **Technology:** The registration for the first general elections in 1994 was manual. Between 1999 and 2004, it used OMR (Optical Mark Recognition) technology, and, as from 2008, digital technology with mixed capture of biometric and alphanumeric data.
- **Voter card:** At the end of the individual voter registration, each citizen registered receives a voter card which proves his/her registration and eligibility to vote, and is the main means of identification for voting. Before the 2023 registration, the voter card was made of paper with a plastic covering, but changed to PVC material in 2023. Between 1994 and 1999, the card was filled out manually, but was digitalised as from 2007. The cards issued between 1994 and 2007 contained the name of the voter, date and place of birth, type and number of identification document, date and place of registration and the voter’s photograph, fingerprints and signature. In 2013, the residential address and sex were added. As from 2018, the fingerprints were no longer included on the voter card, except in the case of those who are unable to sign, and it came to have a QR code. The QR code of 2018/2019 only contained the registration number, but that of 2023 also contains the type and number of identification document and the voter’s complete name.

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE 2023 VOTER REGISTRATION

The aspects of the 2023 voter registration that will be assessed in this chapter are the following: the legal framework of voter registration (3.1), voter registration management and methodology (3.2), voter registration technology (3.3), voter registration operations (3.4), public display of the voter rolls (3.5), voter registration data (3.6) and coverage of the voter registration by the mass media (3.7).

3.1. Legal framework of voter registration

The first voter registration, in 1994, was governed by Law 4/93, which regulated the entire electoral process, but as from 1997, voter registration came to be governed by its own law, Law 5/97. Law 8/2014 is the fifth registration law to take effect.

The law that establishes the legal framework for voter registration defines who is eligible and not eligible for registration on the voter rolls, the temporal and territorial scope, the methods, responsibilities and operations, and electoral disputes and offences.

The law also establishes the period for updating the voter registration, indicating that this takes place in the six months subsequent to fixing the date of the elections. The specific dates are fixed by a decree of the Council of Ministers, on the proposal of the National Elections Commission - CNE. Since the date of the elections has been fixed 18 months in advance, updating the voter registration should take place between mid-April and mid-October of the year prior to holding the elections – a provision which has never been respected since this law has been in force. This is an article which dates from the time when the date of the elections was not fixed so far in advance, and with the introduction of the provision that elections must be set 18 months in advance this article did not undergo the necessary amendment.

Voter registration is obligatory for all Mozambican citizens over 18 years of age or who reach their 18th birthday by the date of the elections. However, the law does not lay down any penalty for those who do not register.

Motives for preventing voter registration or for cancelling registration on the voter roll are: a document proving the permanent incapacity of the voter by reason of insanity, the death of the voter, or an alteration in his/her eligibility to vote. The law determines that the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE) shall request from the civil registry offices information on citizens over 18 years of age who have died in the immediately preceding registration period. The law also states that the courts and psychiatric establishments should send to STAE every month information on citizens over the age of 18 serving definitive jail sentences or decisions which imply loss of the right to vote for citizens over 18 years of age, hospitalised by reason of insanity, but who have not been barred from voting by a definitive court sentence.

Articles 30 to 33 of Law No. 8/2014 offer the procedural support for restricting the right to vote based on insanity or psychic anomaly which results in a ban based on a definitive jail sentence or, if there is no sentence, when the person is hospitalised in a psychiatric establishment, or even through a certificate issued by a Medical Board, as envisaged in articles 11 and 13 of Law No. 7/2018, of 3 August, on the election of office holders of municipalities. This regime is inconsistent with the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, ratified in 2012, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, concerning the rights of people with disabilities in Africa, ratified in 2022. Both these instruments reject the possibility of restricting the right to vote based on the real or apparent limitation of mental capacities. Taking into account that the right to vote is a fundamental right, it is also questionable to what extent the restriction of electoral capacity based on a merely administrative decision on hospitalisation or even one based on a medical diagnosis can sustain restrictions on this right.

Article 30 of law 8/2014 seems to infer that those who have received any definitive prison sentence do not enjoy the right to vote, which is not backed in the definition of who is not eligible to vote in the rest of the electoral legislation, which only bans those who are under an interdict.

Although prisoners, except when specifically deprived of their political rights, as an accessory or autonomous penalty, enjoy the right to vote, there is no provision in the electoral legislation, including in the law on registration, for creating specific conditions for prisoners to be registered and later to exercise the right to vote, as was done, for example, with regard to registration and voting abroad.

Citizens resident in Mozambique are registered at the registration post closest to their habitual residence, except for soldiers, members of the police and students in boarding premises, who are registered at the registration post closest to their respective units. The registration of citizens as voters at the registration post closest to where they live is a good principle, because it means that on voting day the voter does not have to travel long distances in order to vote, since the registration posts are transformed into polling stations. However, the law is not clear as to whether registration at the registration post closest to the voter's home is a legal obligation or merely a preference/suggestion. If it is an obligation, the law does not indicate how residence is proved since, for example, the address on the voter's identity card may be out-of-date. This omission about methods that prove one's address may prevent citizens from registering at the post closest to their current residence or, on the other hand, may allow citizens to register outside their areas of residence.

As for people with disabilities, there are cases where the registration post closest to the voter's home is not the most accessible, and is sometimes completely inaccessible to people with limited mobility. In these cases, the inflexible application of the rule of proximity to the home is very damaging people with disabilities, who could otherwise register at a post that is further away, but more accessible. During the 2023 voter

registration, there were people with disabilities who, because the nearest post was not accessible, tried to register at more accessible posts, but were not allowed to do so.

When the geographical dispersion of the potential voters so demands, the law allows the establishment of temporary registration posts, operated by mobile brigades with a radius of territorial coverage of approximately five kilometres, which means in principle that no potential voter should have to travel more than five kilometres from his/her home in order to register. This is a good principle, which contributes towards the inclusion of citizens who live in areas of low population density, particularly in rural zones. However, for this inclusion to be effective, it is necessary that the citizens at whom this measure is aimed should have timely and precise information about the calendar for the operation of these temporary posts.

The law allows a multiplicity of means to prove identity for the registration. Preferentially, an identity card (or its receipt stub) or a passport is presented, but when the citizen does not possess these documents, he/she may be identified by any other document that carries an up-to-date photograph, a signature or fingerprint, or also by a birth certificate or personal record card. Alternative documents generally used for identification are a driving licence, a work card, a student or military card, and a demobilisation booklet. The citizen's identity may also be recognised by the registration brigade itself, by eye-witness evidence of two citizens registered at the same registration post, or by religious or traditional leaders, as long as their reliability cannot be questioned. The acceptance of multiple ways of proving one's identity is a positive aspect, given the poor access of citizens to identity cards and to other formal means of identification. However, the discretionary power of the registration brigade and even of traditional leaders to recognise identity (including age and place of residence) can be easily abused to allow the registration, for example, of individuals from outside the area covered by the registration post.

The registration of a citizen on the voter roll implies his/her right to vote and is proved by the voter card issued to each person registered. The voter card carries the name of the voter, his/her number, date and place of birth, address of habitual residence, signature or fingerprint, photograph, place and date of registration and, when applicable, the type and number of identification document.

During the registration period, any voter who notes an anomaly or irregularity in his/her registration is obliged to require the correction of the registration and, if necessary, replacement of his/her voter card. Voters may also transfer their registration because of a change of address. In the event of the loss or theft of the voter card, citizens should inform STAE so that it issues a new voter card with the indication that this is the second card. The law envisages the public display and inspection of the provisional voter rolls for a period of four days as from the second day after the end of the registration period in the same places where the registration occurred. During the period of public display, the registered voters or the political parties may present complaints in writing or verbally to the

registration brigade concerning omissions from the list or incorrect registrations. The complaints should be solved within three days. The complainants have the right to appeal against the decisions to the district/city STAE. Appeals against the decisions of the district/city STAE are addressed to the District/City Elections Commission, and later to the Provincial Elections Commission, the CNE and the Constitutional Council, in that order. A maximum of five days is allowed for the appeal bodies to take decisions. The voter rolls cannot be altered in the 30 days prior to the election.

The legal framework for the voter registration is clearly defined and sufficiently consistent with international standards, although holding registration from scratch for each election cycle is a deviation from best international practice. Eligibility and the criteria for disqualification from registration are clearly defined and generally reasonable. There are no legal provisions which might create obstacles to the registration of specific groups, such as minorities, women and girls, needy people, people with special educational needs or displaced people, except with regard to the eligibility of people who are mentally ill.

The law recognises the challenging terrain of the country in envisaging the establishment of mobile registration brigades to complement the fixed registration brigades in areas with scattered settlements.

The law contains provisions so that the voter registration is transparent. The political parties have the right to collaborate with the CNE in the registration as well as to inspect the registration. The law also grants national and international bodies the right to observe all electoral activities, including voter registration.

The approach of voter registration from scratch may seem adequate for Mozambique, given the lack of a fully developed (inclusive and precise) national civil registry. New registration in each electoral cycle may guarantee a very precise and updated voter roll, and the number of deceased voters included on the roll is limited to voters who have died in the period between the close of registration and the election. However, registration from scratch in each cycle is extremely expensive. It represents an enormous logistical and administrative effort for the electoral administration, which makes it unsustainable in the medium and long term.

3.2. Management and methodology of voter registration

Voter registration is undertaken by STAE, under the supervision of the CNE. STAE, through its district directorates, sets up voter registration brigades stationed at the registration posts. The law allows legally constituted political parties to collaborate with the administration in identifying the places where voter registration posts will be installed.

In preparing the 2023 voter registration, and, as was the practice in the past, the electoral administration held a pilot registration, from 1 to 20 February, in nine districts in the provinces of Maputo (Matutuíne, Magude and Moamba), Manica (Mossurize, Vandúzi and Macate) and Nampula (Meconta, Mogovolas and Murrupula), to test how operational was the equipment and the computerised voter registration system. Specifically, the objectives of the pilot registration were:

- To test the performance of the physical equipment;
- To test the performance, consistency and integrity of the registration software;
- To assess the autonomy of the internal batteries of the equipment;
- To assess the capacity of outside sources of electricity (solar panels and external batteries).

The 18 brigades involved in the pilot registration registered about 42,000 citizens in 20 days, an average of 116 citizens a day. The registrations and the voter cards issued during the pilot registration, held in districts that would not be covered by the regular 2023 registration, were merely for testing and have no validity for electoral purposes.

In its assessment of the pilot registration, published on 13 March, more than a month before the start of the regular registration, the CNE indicated that in the software difficulties were identified in taking photographs of elderly people, while in the hardware there were stoppages in the printing of voter cards arising from dirt in the channels of the respective printers. The CNE noted that the manufacturer of the printers recommends cleaning after the printing of 400 cards. Hence it recommended that there should be a significant reserve of cleaning kits for the card printers during the regular registration.

The 2023 voter registration, initially set for 20 February to 5 April, but postponed because of logistical delays arising from budgetary constraints, took place from 20 April to 3 June, a length of 45 days. Although directed at the municipal elections of 2023 in 65 municipalities, the registration took place in the

entire territory of the districts which contain municipalities – that is, 62 districts plus Maputo City. The only exception was Mocímboa da Praia, where, for reasons of security, the registration only took place in the municipal territory. 3,192 registration brigades were formed, responsible for operating 4,292 registration posts. Some posts, the number of which was not publicly specified, were temporary and were operated by mobile brigades.

More than half of the 4,292 registration posts and of the 3,192 brigades were located outside of the municipal zones, to register citizens who are not going to vote in 2023. Since these same posts, with their respective brigades, will operate fully again next year, for the registration aimed at the 2024 general and provincial elections, making them operational in 2023 was unnecessary and represented an equally unnecessary substantial financial cost – at least 5,000 brigade members were recruited, trained and placed on the terrain for about 50 days to operate these posts outside the municipalities.

The distribution of the registration posts on the ground obeyed various criteria, including the forecast number of citizens to be registered, hence the importance of realistic forecasts, and the territorial distribution of this population, since the law states that no citizen should be more than 5 kilometres from a registration post. This means that two population groups of the same size, but with a different territorial distribution, can be served by a different number of registration posts, given that there is no limit to the number of citizens that each post can register.

Observing the number of posts per province and per target population, one notes that the national average is 2,300 citizens per post. There is a great variation in this ratio between the various provinces. Maputo city, and Sofala and Nampula provinces have a very high ratio, with more than 3,000 citizens per post, while Gaza and Inhambane provinces have a very low ratio, with slightly more than 1,000 citizens per post. It is difficult to assess the justice of this distribution without better knowledge and a more profound and detailed analysis of all the variables involved.

Table 1: Territorial Distribution of the Registration Posts and Brigades

Territorial Distribution of Registration Posts and Brigades				
Provincias	Brigades	Posts	Forecast no. of voters	Forecast/Posts
Niassa	227	397	680 254	1 713
Cabo Delgado	242	369	696 842	1 888
Nampula	371	456	1 474 465	3 233
Zambézia	416	533	1 429 873	2 683
Tete	299	427	861 843	2 018
Manica	253	272	732 063	2 691
Sofala	236	247	943 211	3 819
Inhambane	237	386	530 076	1 373
Gaza	306	464	517 020	1 114
Maputo Province	409	544	1 283 336	2 359
Maputo City	196	197	728 946	3 700
TOTAL	3 192	4 292	9 921 625	2 312

However, there is another indicator which can be analysed, which is the number of citizens to be registered per day by each brigade and by each kit. The larger the number of citizens to be registered by a brigade and its respective kit, the more pressure and wear and tear there will be on the team and its equipment, increasing the likelihood of errors and breakdowns. The average national forecast of citizens to be registered per

day per brigade was 69. However, provinces such as Sofala, Nampula and Maputo had a forecast of almost 90 citizens per brigade per day, while Gaza had only 38. Since it is known, for example, that the voter card printer should be cleaned after every 400 cards printed, on average a printer in Nampula would have to be cleaned every 4 days, while in Gaza it would have to be cleaned every 10 days.

Table 2: Forecast of voters to be registered by Registration Brigade

Province	Forecast	Brigade	Total forecast per brigade	Daily forecast per brigade
Maputo City	728 946	196	3 719	83
Maputo Province	1 283 336	409	3 138	70
Gaza	517 020	306	1 690	38
Inhambane	530 076	237	2 237	50
Sofala	943 211	236	3 997	89
Manica	732 063	253	2 894	64
Tete	861 843	299	2 882	64
Zambezia	1 429 873	416	3 437	76
Nampula	1 474 465	371	3 974	88
Cabo Delgado	740 538	242	3 060	68
Niassa	680 254	227	2 997	67
Total	9 921 625	3 192	3 108	69

At the end of the registration, the national average of citizens per brigade per day fell from 69 to 61, but the imbalances between the provinces remained. For example, while each brigade and its kit registered an average of 78 voters a day in

Nampula, in Gaza it registered only half that number. Hence the pressure and the wear and tear on the brigades in Nampula and their kits was twice that in Gaza.

Table 3: Voters registered by registration brigade

Province	Registrations	Brigades	Registrations per brigade	Daily registrations per brigade
Maputo C ity	635 287	196	3 241	72
Maputo Province	1 096 281	409	2 680	60
Gaza	538 115	306	1 759	39
Inhambane	423 932	237	1 789	40
Sofala	808 162	236	3 424	76
Manica	698 781	253	2 762	61
Tete	729 962	299	2 441	54
Zambezia	1 267 473	416	3 047	68
Nampula	1 295 924	371	3 493	78
Cabo Delgado	759 601	242	3 139	70
Niassa	470 287	227	2 072	46
Total	8 723 805	3 192	2 733	61

During the 2023 voter registration, each brigade consisted of three members. One was the supervisor, one was an interviewer, and one was responsible for inputting the data. The brigades were formed of Mozambicans over 18 years of age, recruited by STAE, through a public tender, based on their respective curriculum, and selected by a jury consisting of the STAE district or city director, and the deputy district or city directors of STAE. They decided by consensus and, in the absence of consensus, by vote. There were recurrent criticisms that those recruited came from the Provincial and District Youth Councils and from the OJM.

STAE made forecasts of voter registration for each province,

district and municipality. These forecasts were based on the projections of the National Statistics Institute (INE) for the population of voting age in 2023, which were in turn based on the General Population Census of 2017. The provincial and district forecasts, sent by STAE-Central to all its provincial directorates on 22 February 2023, were never formally published by the electoral administration.

In the 62 districts plus Maputo city, according to the INE projections adopted by STAE, in 2023 there are 9,877,929 citizens of voting age. For the 65 municipalities, this number is 5,243,437.

Table 4: Forecast of Voters to be Registered by District and by Municipality

Forecast of voters to be registered - 2023		
Province	District Forecast	Municipal Forecast
Niassa	680 254	270 050
Cabo Delgado	696 842	317 270
Nampula	1 474 465	808 091
Zambézia	1 429 873	357 211
Tete	861 843	347 736
Manica	732 063	376 254
Sofala	943 211	553 668
Inhambane	530 076	224 214
Gaza	517 020	186 130
Maputo Province	1 283 336	1 073 867
Maputo C ity	728 946	728 946
TOTAL	9 877 929	5 243 437

The forecasts used by STAE are not disaggregated by gender, by age group or by disability. Nonetheless, based on the INE projections, it is possible to break down the figures: of the

9,877,929 citizens of voting age, 53.2% are women, 58.4% are young (18 to 35 years old) and 2.7% are people with disabilities.

Table 5: Forecast of voters to be registered by Gender by Province

Forecast of citizens of voting age by gender - 2023					
	Forecast	Women	%	Men	%
Niassa	680 254	359 310	52,8%	320 944	47,2%
Cabo Delgado	696 842	366 746	52,6%	330 096	47,4%
Nampula	1 474 465	770 333	52,2%	704 132	47,8%
Zambézia	1 429 873	768 415	53,7%	661 458	46,3%
Tete	861 843	444 946	51,6%	416 897	48,4%
Manica	732 063	385 509	52,7%	346 554	47,3%
Sofala	943 211	488 667	51,8%	454 544	48,2%
Inhambane	530 076	297 984	56,2%	232 092	43,8%
Gaza	517 020	299 833	58,0%	217 187	42,0%
Maputo Province	1 283 336	689 130	53,7%	594 206	46,3%
Maputo City	728 946	381 011	52,3%	347 935	47,7%
TOTAL	9 877 929	5 251 884	53,2%	4 626 045	46,8%

Table 6: Forecast of Young Voters to be registered by Province

Forecast of citizens of voting age between 18 and 35 years old (youths) - 2023			
Province	Total Forecast	Forecast 18 - 35	
Niassa	680 254	416 276	61,2%
Cabo Delgado	696 842	389 169	55,8%
Nampula	1 474 465	876 351	59,4%
Zambézia	1 429 873	867 427	60,7%
Tete	861 843	532 319	61,8%
Manica	732 063	460 107	62,9%
Sofala	943 211	586 612	62,2%
Inhambane	530 076	270 959	51,1%
Gaza	517 020	278 676	53,9%
Maputo Province	1 298 450	709 986	54,7%
Maputo City	728 946	391 721	53,7%
TOTAL	9 893 043	5 779 603	58,4%

The conflict in Cabo Delgado, which has caused the displacement of a large number of citizens within the province and into neighbouring provinces, posed a great challenge to the electoral authorities, both in terms of holding registration operations in the areas directly affected by the conflict, particularly in the district of Mocímboa da Praia, and in registering the displaced people, who, by definition, could not be registered at the posts closest to their normal residence.

With regard to the registration operations in the district of Mocímboa da Praia, the electoral administration decided, prudently, to hold them only within the perimeter of the Mocímboa da Praia municipality. The electoral administration also decided, in a pragmatic and inclusive manner, that the displaced people could register at the registration posts of the areas where they were living in the registration period.

3.3. Voter Registration Technology

The voter registration was held by using mobile digital biometric registration kits, to meet the legal requirement which states that the voter rolls must be drawn up by electronic means. The computerised equipment was used from the collection of data on the ground, to the storage and cleaning of the data, and the compilation of the definitive voter rolls.

The registration kits used in 2023 were a combination of kits from the 2018/2019 cycle, submitted to an updating, and new kits acquired in 2022/2023. There is no public information on the number of each type of kit.

The kits contained:

- A laptop. It hosts the voter registration software, as well as the drivers to manage the peripheral equipment described below;
- A fingerprint scanner. This takes images of all ten fingers;
- A digital camera – to take high resolution photographs of faces;
- A screen for digital signatures. This is used both to capture the digital signature, and as a screen to display the data for control by the citizen while his/her biographical data are being taken;
- Two printers. One to print the registration bulletin, and one to print the Voter Card in PVC;
- Power sources: An external battery, integrated into the kit case, which would allow about eight hours of continual use. The battery system was recharged using electricity, solar power kits or generators. The solar power kits include panels, charger/inverter and a battery.

The kits contain voter registration biometric software, which carries out the registration in stages:

- i. Capture of digital fingerprints: the digital fingerprints captured can be compared with those registered in the kit, to avoid multiple registrations. The software was programmed so that capturing all ten fingerprints is not obligatory, to accommodate certain categories of people, whose fingerprints are difficult to capture.
- ii. Capture of the photo: The software automatically cuts the photo to the format of the identification document.
- iii. Capture of personal data: This is done through alphanumeric inputs. A series of fields was defined as obligatory in the software, and so an operator cannot rescue a registration without capturing the details of these fields, which include the voter's name, the number of the identity card or alternative form of identification, date and place of birth, residential address and details of the registration post.
- iv. Capture of the signature: The last item to be captured is the signature, unless the citizen does not know how to or cannot sign.
- v. Printing the Registration Bulletin.
- vi. Printing the Voter Card.

The voter registration technology was sufficiently robust and met the requirements of the electoral administration, except when it came to taking photographs of elderly people or of albinos.

One limitation noted is the lack of an Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), to avoid duplicate registrations. Since investment has been made in biometric registration kits, implementation of an AFIS would be the next natural step for using to the full the fingerprints registered in the kits to better eliminate multiple registrations from the voter roll.

3.4. Voter registration operations

The voter registration took place without interruption during 45 days, from 08.00 to 16.00, between 20 April and 16 May. Daily opening hours were extended to 07.00 to 17.00 from 17 May to 1 June; from 07.00 to 22.00 on 2 June, and from 07.00 to 24.00 on 3 June.

In the 45 days of voter registration, the 68 observers of the "More Integrity" Electoral Consortium observed about 62,000 registrations of citizens in the voter rolls, through 4,200 visits made to 918 registration posts, in 27 municipalities – that is, in at least 50% of the posts in the municipalities. The findings reported here are valid only for the posts visited by our observation teams. These findings refer to the following aspects: accreditation and access of the observers to the registration posts (3.4.1), operating conditions and environment of functioning and efficiency (3.4.2), eligibility for registration (3.4.3), inclusivity (3.4.4), inspection and complaints by the political party monitors (3.4.5), security (3.4.6), access to information (3.4.7) and irregular and illicit behaviour (3.4.8).

3.4.1. Accreditation and access of observers to the registration posts

On 20 April, at the time when voter registration began, only 18 of the 68 observers had been accredited by the respective Provincial Elections Commissions (CPEs), because of delays by the electoral authorities in processing the requests. The accreditation of the observers was only concluded on 27 April, which damaged observation in the initial phase of the registration.

During the 45 days of registration, in general the observers had free access to the registration posts visited and the information necessary for doing their work, with some exceptions in which the registration brigades prevented access by the observers, or limited the time they could remain at the posts, or refused to provide information. These exceptions occurred in only 1.4% of the visits made.

On 3 June, the last day of the registration, the only case of detention of observers during the registration period took place. Two observers, in Ancoche municipality, Nampula province, were detained by the Mozambican police (PRM) at the "EPC Mussorir" voter registration post, at 21.15 because they took photographs of the room where the post operated, and which, less than 3 hours from closing time, had no brigade members, while music was playing loudly, although there was a queue of several citizens waiting to be registered.

On arrival at the Post, the observers were informed that the brigade members were at dinner, and they contacted the police agent at the post to begin observation activities. However, a group of unknown citizens accused the observers of committing a crime, because they had taken photographs. The police agent decided to detain the observers, and confiscate their working equipment.

The observers were held in the Angoche PRM District Command for about two hours, from 21.32 to 23.38. They were only released, with their working material, after an intervention by the provincial coordinator of the Consortium with the STAE district director and the Angoche PRM district commander. Taking photographs at the registration posts is not forbidden by law.

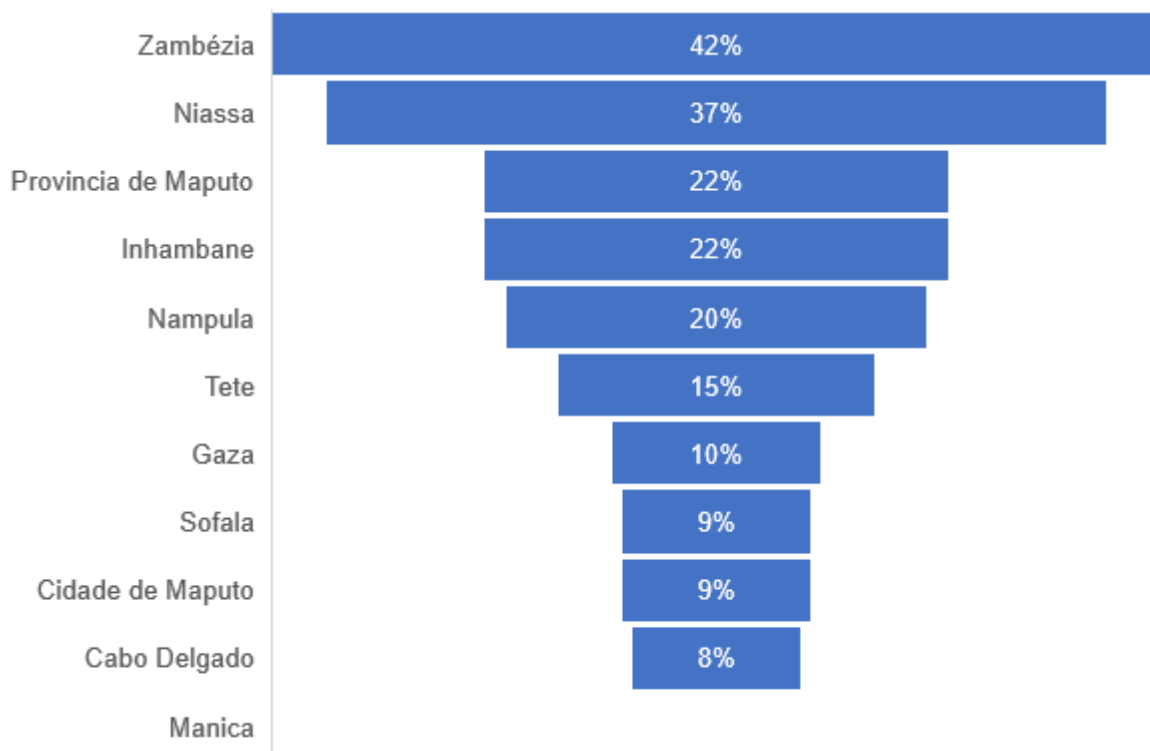
3.4.2. Operating conditions and environment of functioning and efficiency

The observation teams noted that the great majority (90%) of the posts visited had basic operating conditions, although about 10% were regarded as too small, or vulnerable to bad weather.

Although during the overwhelming majority of visits made by the observers (99,9%) they found the registration posts open, in about 20% of the visits, they found posts with equipment out of order or with lack of material. In more than half of these cases (56%) the voter card printer had broken down. In some cases, these interruptions in operation lasted for a few hours, but in others they dragged on for several days, which led many voters to give up, with an impact on the levels of registration in the municipalities where this problem was most acute such as, for example, Nampula municipality.

It should be mentioned that the CNE report on the pilot registration had already indicated that dirt in the channels of the printers led to interruption in the printing of voter cards in that period. The report thus warned of the need for a sufficient number of printer cleaning kits, to ensure that the printers were cleaned after printing each group of 400 cards, as recommended by the manufacturer of the equipment.

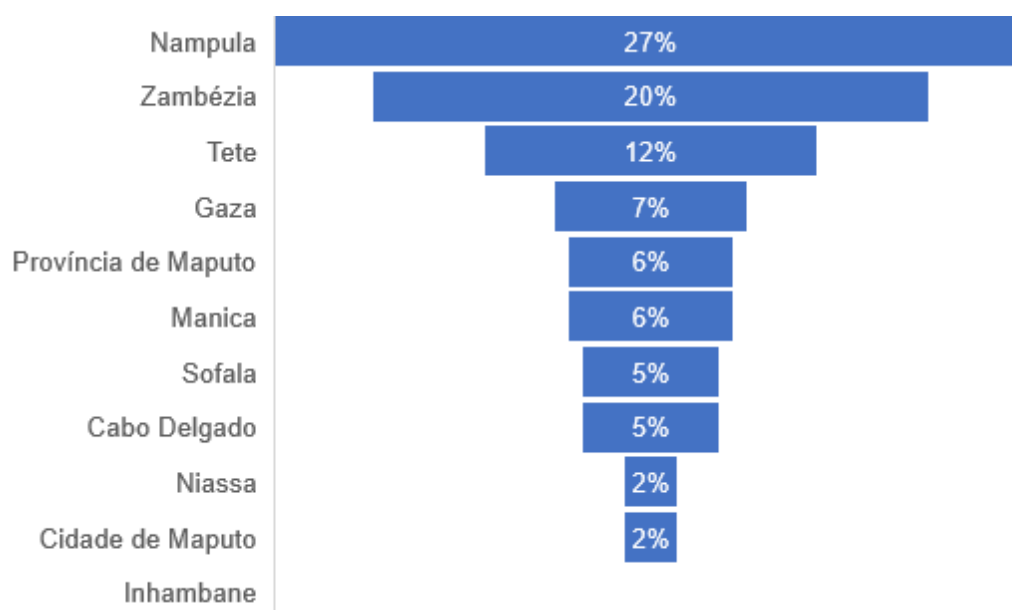
Graph 1: Visits in each province with operations interrupted because of equipment breakdowns or lack of material



Failure to observe this procedure of cleaning after each 400 printings was perhaps one of the causes of these interruptions which meant that 11% of the citizens registered during the

visits by the observers did not receive their cards on the day of their registration.

Graph 2: People registered and observed in each province who did not receive their card on the same day



A further defect identified during the pilot registration and specifically noted in the CNE's assessment report, as a defect in the software, was the difficulty in taking photographs of elderly people. However, although this problem was known at least a month before the registration began, the difficulty in taking photographs of elderly voters persisted during at least the first 30 days of the registration, and caused serious upsets for citizens of this age group, many of whom had to repeat their registration for several consecutive days, until they managed to obtain the photograph. Difficulties also occurred in taking photos of albino voters.

In general, the brigades at the posts visited had a reasonable mastery of how to operate the equipment and manage the registration procedure. Of all the brigades observed, only 3% were regarded as having a weak mastery. However, this number was much higher in the first two weeks of the registration (about 10%), but declined as the brigade members gained more experience and became familiar with the equipment and the procedure. About two thirds of the cases of poor mastery of the equipment concerned inputting data into the computer

In the registration posts visited by the observation teams, the average time taken to register each citizen was 7 minutes, and this average remained unchanged throughout the six weeks of the registration.

Of the almost 1,000 visits made to registration posts at the daily closing time, half of them still had queues of citizens waiting to register. In about two thirds of these cases, tickets were distributed to guarantee priority in attendance the following day.

3.4.3. Eligibility for registration

During the visits to registration posts, the observation teams witnessed about 1,500 cases (equivalent to only 2% of all the citizens registered during the visits to the posts) of citizens who were denied registration.

The main reasons why they were excluded from registration were: they did not have acceptable forms of identification (34%); they did not live in the area covered by the post (20%); they were not residents of the municipality (19%); and they were minors (5%).

3.4.4. Inclusivity

About 17% of the posts visited were physically inaccessible to people with disabilities, above all because they were located in high places without access ramps, or were surrounded by uneven terrain.

There are four categories of citizens who enjoy priority in voter registration: pregnant women; women carrying babies; people with disabilities; and the elderly. In 14% of the visits made by the observers, at least one of these categories was not being granted priority. The category most affected by the lack of priority was women carrying babies (lack of priority in 19% of the visits), followed by pregnant women and the elderly (13%) and disabled people (7%).

The composition of the registration brigades showed a notable presence of women and young people, and the effort made by the electoral authorities in this area is to be praised. One should also recognise the effort to include people with disabilities in

the brigades, although there is space for greater inclusion. Of all the brigade members found in the visits to the registration posts, 62% were women, 87% were young (between 18 and 35 years of age) and 1.8% were people with disabilities.

However, as regards the monitors from the political parties present during the visits by the observers, the effort at inclusion, at least in terms of gender, was poor. Only 31% of the monitors were women.

3.4.5. Inspection and complaints by the political party monitors

The three political parties represented in parliament had monitors at a significant percentage of the registration posts visited by the observation teams, but there were notable differences between the parties in the level of coverage of the posts. Frelimo had monitors in 90% of the visits, Renamo in 74%, and the MDM, in 54%. Monitors from a fourth party, AMUSI, were observed in several registration posts in Nampula and Zambézia provinces, in about 9% of all the visits made.

The observation teams witnessed relatively few complaints presented by the monitors of the political parties: about 320 complaints in 4,200 visits.

Renamo was the party that presented most complaints (65%), followed by the MDM (18%) and Frelimo (15%).

3.4.6. Security

During the period of operation of the registration posts, the PRM provided good security coverage of the posts visited by the observation teams, and in general it behaved discreetly. The presence of PRM agents was visible in 94% of the visits made, and in 96% of cases, the police presence was described by the observers as discreet.

However, the security of the materials and equipment, and of the data they contained, outside of the period of operation of the registration posts, was not always guaranteed. There were cases of undue access to the materials and equipment and the data they contained at night, and reports of equipment and materials kept in private homes.

There were also cases of thefts at night of equipment from registration posts, because of the negligence or connivance of the PRM agent who was guarding the place.

3.4.7. Access to information

During the voter registration of 2018, STAE published and disseminated, in a broad and systematic way, weekly preliminary data disaggregated by gender, and by province and district. Immediately after the registration period, it published and disseminated the preliminary results, disaggregated in the same way, but also including the municipal level.

Unlike the openness and transparency of 2018, in 2023 preliminary data were shared at irregular intervals, in an ad-hoc and restricted way, and disaggregated only by gender and province. The cumulative preliminary data from the 45 days of registration, compiled on 4 June by STAE, include disaggregation to the municipal level, but without disaggregation by gender at this level. This data was also not widely published. As in previous years, the registration data are still not disaggregated by age group or by disability.

Although the brigades had been instructed to inform those registered of the period for public display and verification of the voter rolls, this information was only systematically provided to registered voters in 19% of the visits made by the observation teams. In almost two thirds of the visits, the brigades gave no information, and in the other 19% this information was shared only occasionally.

In several municipalities, the observer teams reported that the citizens and the local and community authorities had no information about the dates when the temporary registration posts operated by mobile brigades in accordance with a specific calendar, would function. This created situations in which citizens, for lack of knowledge, went to these posts outside of the calendar and found them closed. They did not know when they should return to them.

Cases were observed and registered in which the brigades did not inform citizens without identification documents that they could prove their identity through witnesses. They were thus prevented from registering.

There were several cases where members of the registration brigades, alleging “higher instructions” or lack of specific permission from their superiors, refused to provide information to the observers, in clear violation of the rights of observers and of the obligations of the electoral administration, expressed in the electoral legislation.

Apart from the problems noted in the structuring of information and of the electoral data, and looking at the mechanisms for making information available, one noted that the electoral bodies made very little use of communication spaces. Although the CNE does not have a site on the Internet for making data and its archive immediately available for consultation, it does have a Facebook page (<https://web.facebook.com/CNE.STAE.Mocambique>) with about 14,000 followers. But during the 11 weeks of the voter registration, from the start until the publication of the final data, the CNE only published 13 items on this Facebook page. Of these, ten were about electoral civic education, and three about updating the voter registration data. Considering the characteristics and the communication advantages of social media, the CNE has made very poor use of these platforms, just as it has made a very low investment to guarantee greater reach of its page, from the viewpoint of audiences.

As for providing information of public interest through the mass media, the CNE organised some press conferences: the first, at the launch of the voter registration; the second and the third, to announce the data 10 and 17 days respectively after the start of registration, and the last, to give a balance of the registration. Sporadically, and on the initiative of the media, the CNE provided information at events where it participated, interviews, debate programmes and public meetings, covered by journalists. Considering the relevance and the data of public interest in the possession of the CNE, it was to be expected that more press conferences would be held, or the publication of detailed statements about the weekly state of the registration.

Even with the record of various electoral crimes, and publications made by citizens on social media, the CNE was not pro-active in giving public explanations about the truthfulness of the information. It provided public explanations on just two occasions: on the first, the CNE chairperson reacted to the fact that citizens used social media to report slowness, machine breakdowns and long queues during the registration, and attempted to dissuade them from using these channels to expose problems: on a second occasion, the CNE chairperson intervened in the media to announce the suspension of the Beira district STAE Director, because of the denunciations of the WhatsApp groups he had created to manipulate and compromise the integrity of the registration.

A further aspect to note is the centralism of the production and publication of information. For example, the only accessible channel of the CNE (Facebook) offers data and information on events and actions of the central bodies, without any relevant information on events in the provinces and districts. Furthermore, journalists trained by the CNE and by MISA complained, during the training held, of the fact that the CPEs and CDEs do not agree to provide information about facts that occur locally, and always remit explanations to the central level.

In the second week of the registration, as from 3 May 2023, the electoral administration bodies made the coverage of any activity of the electoral administration dependent on accreditation of journalists by STAE. According to information that circulated on digital social media, and confirmed by MISA from the CNE, “the coverage of events or activities of the electoral bodies will only be allowed for journalists who are duly accredited or carry a credential issued by STAE”. This is a serious violation of press freedom and of the right to information. Under the Constitution and the Press Law, the coverage, for example, of a press conference given by the electoral bodies does not require accreditation by STAE. On the contrary, journalists have the right to free access and to remain in public places where the exercise of their profession is necessary, and they may not be detained, removed or prevented in any way from doing their job in the places where their presence as media professionals may be necessary (Article 27 of Law 18/91 of 10 August, Press Law).

3.4.8. Irregular and illicit behaviour

The irregular and illicit behaviour noted and which will be described here are the following: (i) illegal priorities, (ii) operations outside the normal hours of registration, (iii) posts operating in illegal places, and equipment and material kept in private homes, (iv) mobilisation and transport of citizens from outside the municipal areas to be registered inside the municipal areas; v) illicit refusal to register voters (vi) creation of a WhatsApp group by STAE in Beira to plan and commit electoral crimes, during the registration.

(i) *Illegal priorities*

In all the municipalities observed, except those located in Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo provinces, and in Maputo city, right at the start of the registration, there appeared at the registration posts the so-called “priority lists” of citizens who should be granted priority in the registration. These lists consisted mostly of teachers, and were sent to the registration posts by school directors, branches of the Frelimo Party in the public administration, and neighbourhood secretaries and people chosen by the neighbourhood secretaries because they are linked with the Frelimo Party. None of these categories of citizens have priority in the eyes of the law, and this was accepted by the electoral administration when, a few days after the start of the registration, it publicly ordered that these lists should not be used. However, up until the fifth week of the registration there were still reports of the use of “priority lists”, although more sporadically, particularly in the municipalities in Nampula province, and in Alto Molócue, Gurue and Morumbala, in Zambézia province. Although there were no lists, in Sofala province there were cases of public officials, such as customs staff, who appeared in a group and were given priority.

In municipalities in the centre and north of the country, the observers reported that registration was interrupted as soon as the citizens on the “priority lists” for that day had completed their registration. It was alleged that the machines had broken down. In some registration posts this practice continued for several consecutive days, leading many citizens to give up trying to register.

In addition to illegally prioritising certain citizens, some registration posts in Nampula city demanded that young citizens provide a declaration from the neighbourhood authorities in order to register. This is an illegal demand, since it is not on the list of requirements established by law. This practice was recurrent in several municipalities, particularly during the first week of the registration, but in the case of Nampula city it was observed until at least the third week.

A consequence of the use of “priority lists” is a guarantee that most members and supporters of the Frelimo Party manage to register and citizens whose political tendency is not formal-

ly pro-Frelimo are demobilised. A further consequence is the concentration of formally Frelimo voters in the same registration books, and consequently at the same polling stations, which will allow Frelimo, on voting day, to monitor the process and thus influence the rate of participation of its members and how they vote.

As well as the priority lists, and faced with the delays and the large queues these caused, brigade members, political party monitors and PRM agents, at various registration posts, used their position to give priority to their own relatives and friends, or, in the case of brigade members and police agents, to facilitate the registration of certain citizens in exchange for bribes.

(ii) Operations outside the normal hours of registration

The STAE director in Ribáuè district undertook the illegal registration of citizens in the Lapala Administrative Post on the night of 6 May. About 20 people were registered at around 21.00 in the home of the Frelimo Party First District Secretary, where the STAE district director had transported the necessary material and equipment. As a result, he was sacked and criminal proceedings against him are under way. Also related with this case, a supervisor and a brigade member were removed from their posts.

In Matola municipality, three machines belonging to the registration posts at the Matola C Teacher Training Institute and the Adult Education Training Institute registered voters on the nights of 8, 11 and 12 May, according to the CIP Bulletin, based on complaints submitted by Renamo to the electoral administration.

In several districts, including Gurué, Nacala-Port and Matola, voter cards were printed outside the normal hours of operation of the posts, allegedly due to the large number of cards to be printed because of printer breakdowns, and to avoid interrupting new registrations while the cards are printed in normal working hours. Although well-intended, this is an illegal practice, and the CNE ordered it to be suspended.

(iii) Posts operating in illegal places and equipment and material kept in private homes

The operation of posts in places forbidden by law was denounced – notably in places of worship (Matola – Infulene neighbourhood) and private homes (Mozambique Island).

According to CIP Bulletin 69, of 7 May 2023, and CIP Bulletin 75, of 14 May 2023, following denunciations made by monitors of the opposition political parties, equipment was found in homes believed to be owned by the neighbourhood authorities and by leaders of political parties. For example, equipment from Ndlavela registration brigades was found in the T3 and Bunhica administrative posts in Machava, in private homes supposedly belonging to block chiefs. In the city of Chókwè, in Gaza province, some mobiles stayed overnight in the homes of the locality chiefs.

(iv) Mobilisation and transport of citizens from outside the municipal areas to register within the municipal areas

Monitors from the opposition parties intercepted 50 citizens from outside that municipality – allegedly members of the Frelimo Party from Moamba district – who were being transported to register within Matola municipality. The details can be found in CIP Bulletin no. 72, of 10 May 2023.

In Morrumbala municipality, after the end of the registration, forty teachers were charged, tried and sentenced for registering illegally in that municipality, since they do not live there. Their names were on the “priority lists” delivered to the voter registration brigades by the Frelimo Party. Also charged, tried and sentenced were three supervisors of the registration brigades for illegally registering the teachers. The case is continuing, since the IPAJ delegate, who is assisting the teachers, has submitted an appeal.

In Mopeia district, a woman living there was also sentenced for registering illegally in Morrumbala. All those involved were sentenced to prison terms of three to five months, converted into fines equivalent to three to five times the monthly minimum wage. Each of the teachers, including the citizen from Mopeia, was sentenced to pay three times the minimum wage (27,000 meticaís). The three supervisors were sentenced to pay the equivalent of five times the monthly minimum wage, plus ten per cent (50,000 meticaís).

In Gaza province there was a case involving 2 members of a district commission, who allegedly registered outside of their normal areas of residence. Evidence was collected, through the neighbourhood authorities, to prove where the two lived. It was found that one was regularly registered, but the other was sentenced because he had made a false statement about his residence.

(v) Illicit refusal to register voters

According to “Integrity Magazine” of 9 August 2023, in Quelimane, the supervisor of the brigade stationed at the Samora Machel EPC was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 meticaís, for illegally refusing to register voters. This is one of 10 cases which have reached their conclusion in Zambézia, related with the 2023 voter registration. In all, 25 cases were initiated in that province for alleged electoral crimes committed during the registration. 12 people were acquitted for insufficient evidence. Three criminal cases are under way, of which two are in court, and one is at the stage of preparatory investigation.

(vi) Creation of a WhatsApp group in STAE in Beira to plan and commit electoral crimes during the registration

The existence of a WhatsApp group, allegedly set up by the STAE District Director in Beira was denounced, with evidence, in the media. Its purpose was to plan and implement acts to facilitate the registration of Frelimo members and create difficulties for the registration of other voters whose loyalty to Frelimo

could not be guaranteed. Members of the CNE demanded the dismissal of this District Director, and the Chairperson of the CNE signed a decision to this effect, but STAE claimed that the decision must be preceded by an investigation as part of a disciplinary hearing. Eventually disciplinary proceedings were initiated, and the case was also remitted to the District Attorney's Office for possible criminal proceedings.

3.5. Public display of the voter rolls

The period of public display of the voter rolls ran from 5 to 8 June, for eventual complaints by registered voters and by the political parties. During this period, the voters could request correction of data and the issuing of a new voter card with the corrected data. To this end, it was necessary that the voter rolls were printed and available for consultation, and that the computers used to register voters and their respective printers were available and in working order.

During this period, the observation teams made about 540 visits to permanent registration posts. In 14% of the cases, the observers found the posts closed, without any brigade member present.

Of the 460 visits in which the posts were open, in 24 (5%) there were no voter rolls available for consultation, because it was impossible to print them.

In more than half the visits to posts that were open and where the voter rolls were on display, registered voters appeared to request correction of their data. A total of 458 requests for correction were observed.

However, in about 12% of the visits, the posts did not have their equipment available or it was out of order, and so it was not possible to correct the data and reprint the cards on the spot.

3.6. Voter registration data

As mentioned above, unlike what happened in 2018, in 2023 the electoral administration made forecasts of the number of voters to be registered in each province, district and municipality, based scrupulously on the projections made by the National Statistics Institute (INE) for the population of voting age in 2023, based on the General Population Census of 2017. Although they might contain some defects, the data and projections of the INE are based on demographic science and are the backbone of official statistics in Mozambique. As such, any significant discrepancy between the INE projections and the voter registration data in a particular territorial unit should be carefully analysed. Otherwise, if this is not done, and the cause of the discrepancy is not found, the credibility of one or both could be seriously compromised.

On 10 July 2023, through its decision no. 20/CNE/2023, the CNE approved the results of the 2023 voter registration, and the number of assembly members to be elected in each municipality. These results are disaggregated by province, district and municipality, but, unlike the data of 2018 and the provisional data compiled by STAE on 4 June, they are not disaggregated by gender. Table 9 below presents the disaggregation by gender based on the data of 4 June.

A total of 8,723,805 people were registered (implementation rate of 88.3% - compared with 89%, in 2018). Of these, 4,817,702 (implementation rate of 91.4%, compared with 90.3%, in 2018) were registered in the 65 municipalities and will be eligible to vote in the municipal elections of 11 October 2023. All the 8,723,805 citizens registered in 2023 are enrolled to vote in the general and provincial elections of 2024.

Table 7: Registration at District Level Aggregated by Province

Registration at district level				
Province	Forecast	Implementation		
Niassa	680.254	470.287	69,1%	
Cabo Delgado	696.842	759.601	109%	
Nampula	1.474.465	1.295.924	87,9%	
Zambézia	1.429.873	1.267.473	88,6%	
Tete	861.843	729.962	84,7%	
Manica	732.063	698.781	95,5%	
Sofala	943.211	808.162	85,7%	
Inhambane	530.076	423.932	80%	
Gaza	517.020	538.115	104,1%	
Maputo Provincia		1.096.281	85,4%	
Maputo City	728.946	635.287	87,2%	
TOTAL	9.877.929	8.723.805	88,3%	

Table 8: Data from registration at Municipal Level Aggregated by Province

Registration at municipal level				
Province	Forecast	Implementation		
Niassa	270.050	182.181	67,5%	
Cabo Delgado	317.270	368.617	116,2%	
Nampula	808.091	694.605	86%	
Zambézia	357.211	406.405	113,8%	
Tete	347.736	288.855	83,1%	
Manica	376.254	351.375	93,4%	
Sofala	553.668	483.548	87,3%	
Inhambane	224.214	220.048	98,1%	
Gaza	212.245	241.222	113,7%	
Maputo Province	1.073.867	945.559	88,1%	
Maputo City	728.946	635.287	87,2%	
TOTAL	5.269.730	4817.702	90,6%	

Table 9: Percentage of Women and Men Registered at District level, by Province

Registration at district level – disaggregation by gender (data of 4 June)			
Province	Women	Men	
Niassa	52,9%	47,1%	
Cabo Delgado	51,3%	48,7%	
Nampula	51,9%	48,1%	
Zambézia	53,3%	46,7%	
Tete	52,7%	47,3%	
Manica	53,2%	46,8%	
Sofala	53,4%	46,6%	
Inhambane	60,5%	39,5%	
Gaza	62,5%	37,5%	
Maputo Provincia	53,7%	46,3%	
Maputo City	51,9%	48,1%	
TOTAL	53,7%	46,3%	

The numbers disaggregated by district show that 21 districts (about a third of the geographical units covered by the registration) surpassed their forecasts. Only the provinces of Sofala and Inhambane have no district that did not exceed 100%. The numbers disaggregated by municipality show that 40 of the 65 municipalities (61.5% of the municipalities) exceeded their forecasts to varying degrees (from 100.3% to 196.4%). These 40 municipalities are in all the provinces.

The total number of people registered above the forecasts in these 40 municipalities is about 257,000. About 60,000 are in six municipalities in Zambézia; about 53,000 in six municipalities in Cabo Delgado; almost 33,000 in five municipalities in Gaza;

a further 25,000 in three municipalities in Maputo province, more than 20,000 in five municipalities in Nampula, another 20,000 in three municipalities in Inhambane and a little more than 18,000 in four municipalities in Tete.

On the other hand, in 25 municipalities in all the provinces, the registration fell short of the forecast, by a total of 709,000 people. More than 153,000 are from three municipalities in Maputo province; 134,000 in three municipalities in Nampula; almost 94,000 in Maputo city; 93,000 in three municipalities in Niassa; 81,000 in four municipalities in Sofala; 77,000 in Tete city, and 36,000 in two municipalities in Manica.

Table 10: Levels of registration above and below the forecasts by municipality

Municipalities with registration above the forecast			
Malema	196,3%		Nampula
Ibo	194,5%		CD
Maganja da Costa	171,6%		Zambézia
Bilene	164,7%		Gaza
Massingir	163,4%		Gaza
Mueda	157,3%		CD
Homoíne	153,9%		Inhambane
Gurué	149,2%		Zambézia
Chiúre	143,6%		CD
Metangula	142,5%		Niassa
Vilankulo	142,5%		Inhambane
Milange	137,9%		Zambézia
Chibuto	134,5%		Gaza
Chókwe	132,8%		Gaza
Moatize	132,2%		Tete
Mandlakazi	128,5%		Gaza
Nhamatanda	128,1%		Sofala
Guro	127,3%		Sofala
Mocuba	124,5%		Zambézia
Quissico	120,0%		Inhambane
Gorongosa	118,0%		Sofala
Ulongué	117,4%		Tete
Boane	116,9%		Maputo P
Marracuene	114,2%		Maputo P
Gondola	113,5%		Manica
Pemba	112,8%		CD
Balama	111,6%		CD
Insaca	109,5%		Niassa
Mossuril	109,2%		Nampula
Nhamayabué	106,2%		Tete
Manica	106%		Manica
Alto Molocue	105,0%		Zambézia
Chitima	104,8%		Tete
Morrumbala	104,5%		Zambézia

Monapo	103,5%	Nampula
Catandica	103,2%	Manica
Montepuez	103,1%	CD
Ilha de Moçambique	100,9%	Nampula
Ribaué	100,7%	Nampula
Manhiça	100,4%	Maputo P
Municipalities with registration below the forecast		
Lichinga	53,4%	Niassa
Mandimba	65,1%	Niassa
Tete	69,9%	Tete
Cuamba	70,3%	Niassa
Nampula	77,4%	Nampula
Matola	81,3%	Maputo P
Maxixe	81,3%	Inhambane
Beira	81,4%	Sofala
Nacala-Porto	83,4%	Nampula
Angoche	84,3%	Nampula
Chimoio	85,4%	Manica
Inhambane	86,5%	Inhambane
Maputo City	87,2%	Maputo C
Namaacha	87,8%	Maputo P
Caia	88,4%	Sofala
Marromeu	92,0%	Sofala
Quelimane	92,4%	Zambézia
Macia	92,9%	Gaza
Matola Rio	93,0%	Maputo P
Mocímboa da Praia	94,1%	CD
Dondo	94,6%	Sofala
Xai-Xai	98,1%	Gaza
Marrupa	98,2%	Niassa
Sussundenga	98,8%	Manica
Massinga	99,8%	Inhambane

Several factors may have contributed to levels of voter registration above and below the forecasts:

There are parts of the country where, in recent years, migratory flows between districts have occurred, for socio-economic or security reasons, such as, for example, in Cabo Delgado. The

INE projections necessarily could not predict these migratory flows. Hence, the number of registrations could diverge significantly from the INE projections. The following cases may illustrate this scenario:

Table 11: Excess registrations potentially due to inter-district migratory flows

District (municipality)	District registration	Municipal registration	Registration in the non-municipal area
Cabo Delgado (103%)			
Pemba	112,8%	112,8%	-
Chiúre	106,6%	143,6%	98,7%
Montepuez	110,3%	103,2%	116,6%
Mueda	109%	157,3%	90%
Ibo	192,9%	194,5%	191,8%
Balama	104,9%	111,6%	103,2%
Tete (85,8%)			
Moatize	110,8%	132,2%	104%
Cahora Bassa (Chitima)	98,3%	104,8%	96,7%
Inhambane (66,7%)			
Vilankulo	91,3%	142,5%	70,8%
Maputo Province (72%)			
Marracuene	107,3%	114%	91,2%

The great increases in the number of registrations in the municipalities of Cabo Delgado ensured that 4 out of the 5 municipalities that already existed in 2018 saw the number of places in their municipal assemblies increase by 32 seats. 14 of these are in just one municipality: Mueda. These were the largest increases anywhere in the country, at the level both of provinces and of municipalities.

When comparing the levels of registration within the municipi-

palities with the levels in the non-municipal areas of the same districts, one notes in several districts that the registration within the respective municipalities greatly surpassed the forecasts, but registration in the non-municipal areas was at very low levels. This may mean that people living outside the municipalities registered inside them. Many of the municipalities in Zambézia and Inhambane seem to show this phenomenon. The following cases may illustrate this phenomenon:

Table 12: Excess of municipal registrations potentially due to registration of people from non-municipal

District (municipality)	Municipal registration	Registration in the non-municipal area
Niassa		
Mecanhelas (Insaca)	109,5%	66,2%
Zambézia		
Gurué	149,2%	63,5%
Milange	137,9%	63,6%
Morrumbala	104,5%	83,8%
Tete		
Angónia (Ulongué)	117,4%	78,1%
Mutarara (Nhamayabue)	106,2%	73,5%
Sofala		
Nhamatanda	128%	79,9%
Inhambane		
Massinga	99,8%	68,3%
Vilankulo	142,5%	70,8%
Zavala (Quissico)	120%	67,6%
Homoíne	153,9%	57,2%
Gaza		
Chibuto	134,5%	80%
Maputo Province		
Manhiça	100,3%	63,2%
Boane (Boane/Matola-Rio)	116,9% / 93%	62,8%

Still comparing the levels of registration inside the municipalities and registration in the non-municipal areas of the same districts, we find two atypical cases, in which the level of registration within the municipality is not only very low, compared with the municipal average, but is also much lower than the level of registration in the non-municipal area, where there will be no municipal election, and hence the incentive for registration should be less. These are the cases of the Lichinga and Nampula municipalities.

One possible explanation is that citizens who faced great difficulties in registering in the areas where they live (because of

constant equipment breakdowns, long queues, priority lists, demands for extra documentation, etc.) may have given up trying to register, or might have ended up registering in nearby registration posts, but outside the municipal perimeter.

A further explanation concerns the large number of displaced people from Cabo Delgado province who are living on the periphery of these two municipalities and may thus have inflated the levels of registration in these peripheral zones.

Table 13: Low level of municipal registrations potentially because of registration in non-municipal

District (municipality)	Municipal registration	Registration in the non-municipal area
Niassa		
Lichinga	53,4%	123,9%
Nampula		
Nampula	77,4%	98,5%

Of the seven municipalities which registered fewer voters in 2023 than in 2018, Lichinga and Nampula are those which suffered the largest and most significant losses:

Table 14: Municipalities where the number of registered voters declined

Municipality	Increase of population of voting age (2018-2023)	Registered 2018	Registered 2023	Difference 2023-2018
Lichinga	+12.498	99.751	72.614	-27.137
Cuamba	+3.423	58.055	49.941	-8.114
Mocímboa da Praia	-1.979	34.339	30.438	-3.327
Nampula	+68.848	342.463	326.989	-15.474
Angoche	-8.029	48.181	44.294	-3.887
Xai-Xai	+19.345	92.265	89.191	-3.074
Chókwè	-3.583	46.970	41.211	-5.579
Bilene	-560	8.246	8.200	-46

For the Nampula municipality, one consequence of the decline in the number of registered voters was the loss of one seat in the municipal assembly, which now has 50 rather than 51 members. This is the only municipality where the number of assembly seats has fallen.

There are several districts where the levels of registration, in both the municipal and the non-municipal areas, exceeded the forecasts or the provincial average without any obvious

justification: there was no “displacement” of registrations from the non-municipal to the municipal area and there are no zones of obvious and significant socio-economic or security migration. The two most plausible explanations are the “displacement” of registrations from outside the district to inside the district or artificial inflation of the voter roll. These data require a deeper investigation to determine their integrity and reliability.

Table 15: Excess of registrations apparently without any plausible explanation

	District Registration	Municipal Registration	Registration in Non-Municipal Area
Niassa			
Lago (Metangula)	110,6%	142,5%	104,7%
Nampula			
Malema	108,3%	196,3%	93,0%
Mossuril	102,3%	109,2%	101,1%
Zambézia			
Alto Molocué	100,6%	105,0%	99,6%
Maganja da Costa	127,9%	171,6%	119,9%
Mocuba	101,7%	124,5%	91,5%
Manica			
Bárue (Catandica)	106,9%	103,2%	108,3%
Gondola	100,6%	113,5%	95,6%
Sussundenga	104,1%	98,8%	105,4%
Gaza			
Chókwè	107,9%	132,8%	100,0%
Mandlakazi	129,6%	128,5%	130,0%
Massingir	112,8%	163,4%	93,4%

The data from Gaza province rouse particular interest because of the questions raised about the integrity and reliability of the 2018 and 2019 registration data in that province.

In 2018, for the 5 districts in Gaza where voter registration was held, STAE made forecasts that were not based on the INE projections of the population of voting age. The STAE forecasts were about 42,000 voters higher than the INE projections, and even

so, almost 90,000 voters more than the STAE forecasts and almost 129,000 more than the INE projections, were registered.

Table 16: Excess registration in Gaza in 2018

Distritos	INE	STAE	STAE - INE	Registered	Excess vs. INE	Excesso v. STAE
Xai-Xai	77 097	75 192	- 1 905	97 644	20 547	22 452
Chibuto	110 261	113 978	3 717	136 823	26 562	22 845
Chókwè	112 848	109 504	- 3 344	147 966	35 118	38 462
Mandlakazi	67 589	89 740	22 151	95 723	28 134	5 983
Macia	72 667	93 848	21 181	91 126	18 59	- 2 722
Total	440 462	482 262	41 800	569 282	128 820	89 742

In 2023, for the same 5 districts, STAE has adopted the INE projections as its forecasts. This means that, despite the passage of 5 years, with the respective population increase, the forecasts for 2023 showed an increase of only 3% in comparison with those of

2018. This year, in 2 of these districts (Chókwè and Mandlakazi), STAE has again recorded more registrations than the forecast, in the order of 32,000 voters. In 2018, the excess registration was reported in all the districts except Macia.

The excess registrations in these 5 districts in 2018 was on such a scale that in 2023, even while exceeding the forecasts for this year, 53,000 fewer voters were registered than 5 years ago.

In 2018, also at the level of the 6 Gaza municipalities, the registrations greatly exceeded the forecasts drawn up by STAE itself – by almost 58,000 voters. This year in all the same 6 municipalities, the forecasts were also exceeded, but by only 26,000 voters. Once again, because of the scale of the excess registra-

tions in the municipalities in 2018, this year the total number of registered voters in the 6 municipalities is less than it was 5 years go, by slightly more than 2,000 voters.

An additional comparison between 2018 and 2023 in Gaza province shows that, while in 2018 the municipal excess was 45% of the provincial excess, in 2023 the municipal excess was 81%. In districts such as Macia and Chibuto, this seems to have happened with the registration in the municipalities of people living in the non-municipal areas, while in Chókwè and Mandlakazi, where there were excess registrations in both the municipal and the non-municipal areas, people from outside the districts may have been registered.

Table 14: Levels of registration in Gaza districts in 2023

	Municipal Registration	Registration in non-municipal areas
Xai-Xai	98,1%	-
Bilene	154,7%	87,5%
Macia	92,9%	
Chibuto	134,5%	80%
Chókwè	132,8%	100%
Mandlakazi	128,5%	130%

3.7. Coverage of the voter registration by the mass media

Traditionally, analysis of the coverage of elections by the media is centred on the phases of the election campaign and the voting, since these are the periods when there is a strong dispute for spaces to guarantee privileged coverage of the candidates and political parties. However, the “More Integrity” Consortium decided to make a sample-based analysis of coverage of the voter registration, based on the main national newspapers since, even in this phase, the media plays an important role in access to information, in strengthening civic education, in guaranteeing transparency, and in the construction of public perceptions about the quality and integrity of the registration, strengthening and complementing the action of election observation.

In the framework of the methodologies for analysing electoral coverage, analysis of the registration phase was limited to a restricted group of print media, national in scope, and to a small number of variables. In this context, the report presents the scale of the coverage (3.7.1), the type of information produced (3.7.2) and the thematic orientation of the electoral coverage (3.7.3).

3.7.1. Scale of the coverage

As shown in table 15 below, the analysis was made of eight newspapers, four of them daily (Notícias, O País, Diário de Moçambique and Carta de Moçambique) and four weeklies (Magazine Independente, Domingo, Savana and Canal de Moçambique), covering the period from 20 April to 8 June 2023.

The Consortium’s content analysis team selected all the articles published about the voter registration, regardless of the journalistic genre. The content analysis of the articles concerned four fundamental dimensions: (i) the total number of articles published, (ii) the news genres (which makes it possible to measure the information or opinion trend of the material published), (iii) the sources of information (which allows us to see the actors who most provided information or were privileged in the news coverage) and (iv) the orientation of the coverage (taking into account how the papers framed and valued the materials produced).

Table 15 – Distribution of the coverage of the 2023 voter registration, by the newspapers analysed

Type of Publication	Ord	Name of newspaper	Articles published
Daily papers	1	Notícias	91
	2	O País	37
	3	Diário de Moçambique	25
	4	Carta de Moçambique	19
		Sub-total de artigos	172
Weekly papers	5	Magazine Independente	12
	6	Domingo	7
	7	Savana	4
	8	Canal de Moçambique	13
		Sub-total de artigos	36
		Total de Artigos Publicados	208

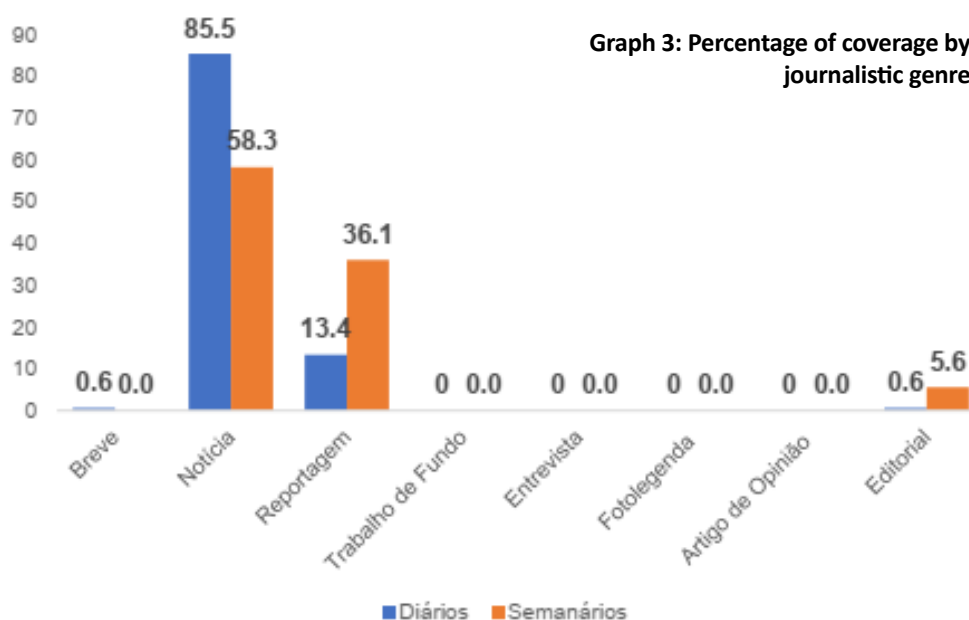
As table 15 shows, a total of 208 articles were published, 172 of them in the daily papers and 36 in the weeklies.

The data from the table show that the level of coverage, particularly in the dailies and in some weeklies, was very low, compared with what might have been expected: if we consider that, throughout the voter registration period, the daily papers published at least 55 editions, and the weeklies at least 11 editions, then some daily papers published, on average, less than one article a day. These are the dailies O País, Diário de Moçambique and Carta de Moçambique. There were days on which these papers did not publish any news about the voter registration. Only one daily paper, Notícias, and two weeklies, Canal de Moçambique and Magazine Independente, published at least one article on the subject per edition.

An important factor that can help us understand this poor coverage is the low level of preparation of journalists about elections and the low value given to the matter on their agenda.

3.7.2. Type of information produced: genres and sources of information

From the point of view of journalistic genres, the analysis was made jointly between the weeklies and between the dailies. Based on what Graph 3 below shows, two major genres were analysed: information (short pieces, news, reports, in depth work, photo-captions and interviews) and opinion (opinion pieces and editorials). In this last category, only four types of articles, in both the weeklies and the dailies were produced. The most dominant types were news items, with 85.5% in the dailies and 58.3% in the weeklies, followed by the reports, with 13.4% in the dailies and 36.1% in the weeklies, then the in-depth works, only produced in the dailies, with 13.4% of the total coverage, and finally the editorials, with 5.6% of the total number of articles.

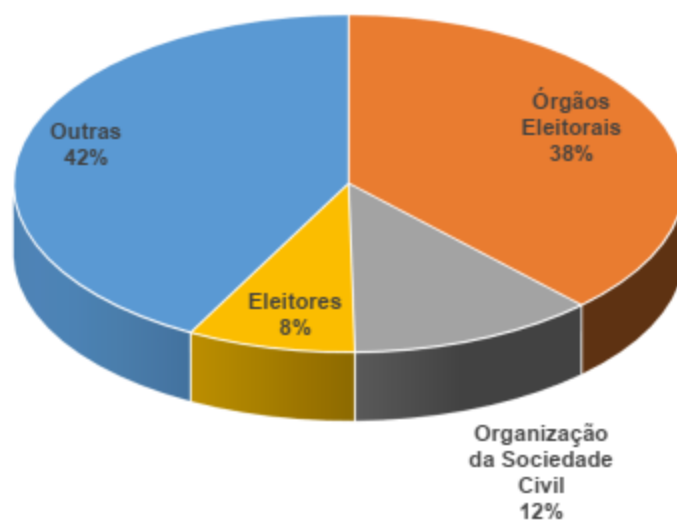


However, many of the articles are short news pieces which, originally, may have been based on press releases and information received directly in the newsroom. This means that this part of the coverage made by the papers was based on information received from outside bodies and not from information that the papers proactively sought and produced. There are few pieces which seek to explain and analyse the events of the voter registration. For example, of the 91 articles published by Notícias, 90 were news item and only one was a report; O País published 37 articles, of which 30 were news items, one was a short, and six were reports. This was the daily that carried most reports. The same trend was noted in the weeklies, where Canal de Moçambique, Magazine and Domingo, even though they are weeklies, published more articles classified as news items, with few reports, in-depth pieces and opinion articles. Only two papers pro-

duced opinion articles, namely Diário de Moçambique (with one opinion article) and Canal de Moçambique, which published two editorials. Canal de Moçambique was the paper with the largest number of reports, carrying a total of eight reports, out of 13 articles published.

As for sources of information, the analysis was only done for the daily papers. According to the data shown in Graph 4 below, apart from the category of “other sources”, with 42%, the electoral bodies were the source of information for 38% of the material published, followed by civil society organisations which were the source for 12% of the material published and, finally, the category of voters/citizens, with 8%.

Graph 4: Dominant sources of information



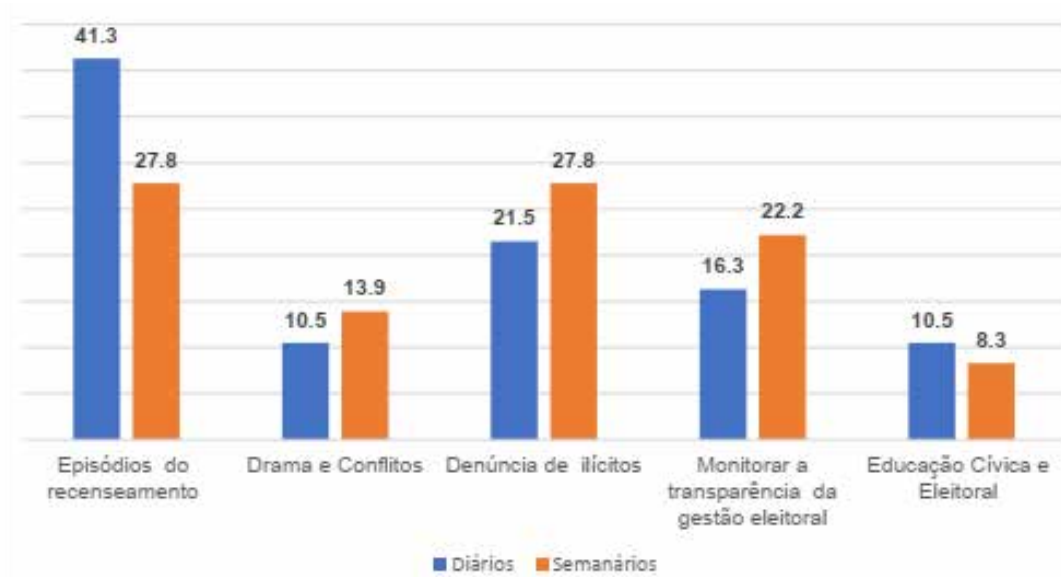
The low use of citizens as a source of information shows the trend of the papers to prioritise official sources and to place a low value on public voices. The fact that there is a small number of reports and of in-depth articles may also justify the low use of voices of citizens in the articles.

voter registration. These functions were distributed into five categories, under which journalistic coverage can be guided thematically: (i) episodes of registration; (ii) drama and conflicts; (iii) denunciations of illicit behaviour, (iv) monitoring the transparency of electoral management, and (v) electoral civic education.

3.7.3. Thematic orientation of the coverage

In this variable, it is intended to understand the type of thematic orientation offered by the papers, taking into account the various hypothetical functions that journalism can take on during

Graph 5: Thematic orientation of the coverage



(English translation: registration episodes; drama and conflicts; denunciations of illicit behaviour; monitoring the transparency of electoral management; electoral civic education)

As Graph 5 shows, episodic coverage dominated, based on day-to-day events of the voter registration, followed by reporting on illicit behaviour, and a low focus on coverage that promotes the electoral civic education of citizens. In particular, the weeklies had coverage that was more dispersed between the categories of episodic (27.8%), denunciation of electoral offences (27.8%), monitoring the transparency of electoral management (22.2%),

dramatic coverage focused on conflicts (13.9%) and civic education (8.3%). In general, it can be noted that the weeklies had a greater thematic orientation on critical questions of the registration, seeking to comply with their duties as watchdogs, in comparison with the dailies, which had relatively low percentages in the categories of denouncing electoral offences (21.5%) and monitoring the transparency of electoral management (16.3%). One explanation for this fact has to do with the space of time and period of publication that the weeklies have in comparison with the dailies.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations to be presented refer to the following aspects of voter registration: (i) legal framework, (ii) management and methodology, (iii) technology, (iv) operations, (v) public display of the voter rolls, (vi) registration data, and (vii) coverage of the registration by the mass media.

(i) Legal framework

The legal framework for voter registration is clearly defined and is sufficiently consistent with international standards. The notable exception here is the validity of the voter registration for just one electoral cycle, which forces the holding of voter registration from scratch every five years. This makes the process unsustainable from the financial and logistical point of view, when the international trend is for permanent voter registration, with regular or permanent updating, above all through links with the civil registry.

Recommendation 1:

Adopt the principle of permanent voter registration with regular, annual updating, with greater intensity in election years, and create effective mechanisms for the regular removal of deceased voters;

Eligibility and the criteria for disqualification from registration are clearly defined and generally reasonable. There are no legal provisions which can form an obstacle to the registration of specific groups, such as minorities, women, particularly young women, poor people, people with special educational needs, the rural population, or displaced people. The notable exception here is the eligibility of people with mental disabilities. Articles 30 to 33 of Law no. 8/2014 restrict the right to vote based on insanity or a psychic anomaly which results in a ban by a definitive court sentence or, without a sentence, when the person is hospitalised in a psychiatric establishment, or declared as suffering from a mental disability by a certificate issued by the Medical Board. This is not consistent with the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, ratified in 2012, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, concerning the rights of people with disabilities in Africa, ratified in 2022. Both these instruments reject the possibility of restricting the right to vote based on the real or apparent limitation of mental capacities. Taking into account that the right to vote is a fundamental right, it is also questionable to what extent the restriction of electoral capacity based on a merely administrative decision on hospitalisation or even one based on a medical diagnosis can sustain restrictions on this right.

Recommendation 2:

Remove from the law the ineligibility of people with mental disabilities to vote and to register as voters;

The law contains provisions for the voter registration to be transparent and open to complaints and corrections. The political parties have the right to collaborate with the CNE in the registration as well as to inspect the registration. The law also grants national and international bodies the right to observe all electoral activities, including voter registration.

The law also establishes the period for updating the voter registration, indicating that this takes place in the six months subsequent to fixing the date of the elections. Since the date of the elections has been fixed 18 months in advance, updating the voter registration should take place between mid-April and mid-October of the year prior to holding the elections – which has never been respected since this law has been in force, including with regard to the 2023 voter registration.

Recommendation 3:

Eliminate this provision from the law;

The law allows a multiplicity of means to prove identity for the registration. The acceptance of multiple ways of proving one's identity is a positive aspect, given the poor access of citizens to identity cards and to other formal means of identification. However, the discretionary power of the registration brigades and even of traditional leaders to recognise identity (including age and place of residence) can be easily abused to allow the registration, for example, of individuals from outside the area covered by the registration post.

Also concerning place of residence, the law states that citizens resident in Mozambique are registered at the registration post closest to their habitual residence. However, the law is not clear as to whether registration at the registration post closest to the voter's home is a legal obligation or merely a preference/suggestion. If it is an obligation, the law does not indicate how residence is proved.

It should be noted that, according to the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Council, it is not illegal to be registered as a voter in a neighbourhood different from the habitual place of residence, as long as it is a neighbourhood in the same municipality. Thus it is assumed that there is no illegality. For example : "... there is no provision which states that a citizen registered in one neighbourhood and living in another, in the same municipality does not have the right to vote ..." (decision no. 03/CC/2003, of 17 November).

Recommendation 4:

Make it clear in the law whether registration at the registration post closest to one's residence is a legal obligation or not;

Recommendation 5:

Add to the criteria for exception to the obligatory nature of registering at the registration post closest to one's residence the existence of barriers of accessibility for people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Recommendation 6:

Find ways to ascertain in an unequivocal and objective way the residential address of citizens who present themselves at the registration posts to prevent the registration inside the municipality of people who do not live there.

Although prisoners, except when specifically deprived of their political rights, enjoy the right to vote, there is no provision in the electoral legislation for creating specific conditions for prisoners to be registered and later to exercise the right to vote, as was done, for example, with regard to registration and voting abroad.

Recommendation 7:

Find mechanisms to ensure the registration of prisoners in possession of their political rights;

(ii) Management and methodology

The electoral administration has the good practice of, in preparation for the voter registration, holding a pilot registration to test whether the equipment and the computer system for registering voters are operational. In its assessment of the 2023 pilot registration, the CNE indicated that difficulties were identified in taking photographs of elderly people and that printing the voter cards became paralysed because of dirt in the printers. The CNE also noted that, in relation to this latter constraint, the manufacturer of the printers recommends that they be cleaned after the printing of 400 cards and recommended a significant reserve of cleaning kits for the card printers during the regular registration. However, these two problems – particularly the interruption of the printing of cards – persisted during much of the regular registration, creating major problems of an accumulation of cards to be printed.

Recommendation 8:

Guarantee correction of the serious problems identified during the pilot registration, if necessary by holding later exercises of re-testing the equipment, though on a lesser scale, before the start of the regular registration;

Although directed at the municipal elections in the 65 municipalities, the 2023 registration took place in the entire territory of the districts which contain municipalities. The only exception was Mocímboa da Praia, where, for reasons of security, the registration only took place in the municipal territory.

More than half of the registration brigades were located outside of the municipal zones, to register citizens who are not going to vote in 2023. Since these same posts, with their respective brigades, will operate fully again next year, for the registration aimed at the 2024 general and provincial elections, making them operational in 2023 was unnecessary and represented an equally unnecessary substantial financial cost.

Recommendation 9:

While the permanent registration of voters is not adopted, in the years of municipal elections, hold voter registration only in the municipal territories;

The distribution of the registration posts on the ground, although obeying various criteria, and not just the number of potential voters to be registered, showed great disparities between the provinces, in the ratio of citizens to be registered by post and by brigade.

The larger the number of citizens to be registered by a brigade and its respective kit, the more pressure and wear and tear there will be on the team and its equipment, increasing the likelihood of errors and breakdowns. There were provinces where, at the start of the registration, the forecast was for almost 90 citizens per brigade per day, while in others it was only half that number. At the end of the registration and looking at the real numbers, the imbalances between the provinces remained at the same level.

Recommendation 10:

Adopt a rational and transparent formula for an equitable territorial allocation of registration posts and brigades so as to ensure a more balanced ratio of voters per brigade, and publicly divulge the application of this formula;

Because of the scattered population, and the legal requirement that no voter should be more than 5 kms from a registration post, a number of temporary posts were established, operated by mobile brigades. However, there was no specific public information about the number, location and calendar for operation of these posts in each district, which made registration difficult for the voters covered by these posts.

Recommendation 11:

Before the start of the registration, publish the map of the voter registration posts, and identify clearly which will be temporary and their calendar for operation;

Unlike what happened in 2018, in 2023 STAE made forecasts of the number of voters to be registered in each province, district and municipality, based scrupulously on the population projections made by the National Statistics Institute (INE) for the population of voting age in 2023. However, these forecasts were not published by the electoral administration prior to the start of the registration.

Recommendation 12:

Publish, before the start of the voter registration, the forecasts for the number of voters to be registered, based on the data from the INE, disaggregated to municipal level, and by gender and age group;

In a pragmatic and inclusive manner, the electoral administration decided that citizens displaced by the conflict in Cabo Delgado could be registered at the posts where they were residing at the time of registration.

(iii) Technology

The voter registration was held by using mobile digital biometric registration kits, to meet the legal requirement which states that the voter rolls must be drawn up by electronic means. The registration kits used in 2023 were a combination of kits from the 2018/2019 cycle, submitted to an updating, and new kits acquired in 2022/2023. The voter registration technology was sufficiently robust and met the requirements of the electoral administration, except when it came to taking photographs of elderly people or of albinos.

Recommendation 13:

See Recommendation 8;

One limitation noted is the lack of an Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), to avoid duplicate registrations. Since investment has been made in biometric registration kits, implementation of an AFIS would be the next natural step for using to the full the fingerprints registered in the kits to better eliminate multiple registrations from the voter roll.

Recommendation 14:

Consider the acquisition and use of AFIS software;

(iv) Operations

The voter registration operations for which conclusion and recommendations will be presented refer to the following aspects:

a) accreditation and access of observers; b) operating conditions and environment of functioning and efficiency; c) eligibility; d) inclusivity; e) inspection and complaints; f) security; g) access to information and h) irregular and illicit behaviour.

a) Accreditation and access of observers

Only 18 of the 68 observers of the Consortium were accredited before the start of the registration, because of delays by the electoral authorities in processing their requests even though these had been submitted on time. The accreditation of the observers was only concluded a week after the start of the registration.

Recommendation 15:

Encourage the Provincial Elections Commissions to be speedier and more efficient in processing requests from observers for accreditation;

in general the observers had free access to the registration posts and the information necessary for doing their work, with some exceptions in which the registration brigades prevented access by the observers, or limited the time they could remain at the posts, or refused to provide information.. The most serious case of interference in the work of the observers was the illegal detention of two observers in Angoche municipality, on 3 June.

Recommendation 16:

Improve the training of election agents on the rights of observers and the duty of election agents to provide information about aspects of the electoral process, under their remit.

b) Operating conditions and environment of functioning and efficiency

The great majority of the posts visited enjoyed basic conditions for functioning and, in general, the brigades had a reasonable mastery of how to operate the equipment and manage the registration procedure. This mastery improved as the brigade members gained more experience and became familiar with the equipment and the procedure.

Although during the overwhelming majority of visits made by the observers (99,9%) they found the registration posts open, in about 20% of the visits, they found posts with equipment out of order or with lack of material. In more than half of these cases (56%) the voter card printer had broken down. These interruptions were more frequent in some provinces.

Failure to observe the procedure of cleaning the printers after each 400 printings may have been one of the causes of these interruptions which meant that 11% of the citizens registered during the visits by the observers did not receive their cards on the day of their registration.

Recommendation 17:

See recommendation 8;

A further defect identified during the pilot registration and specifically noted in the CNE's assessment report, as a defect in the software, was the difficulty in taking photographs of elderly people. However, although this problem was known at least a month before the registration began, the difficulty in taking photographs of elderly voters persisted during at least the first 30 days of the registration. Difficulties also occurred in taking photos of albino voters.

Recommendation 18:

See recommendation 7 and guarantee that during the period of pilot registration, albinos are also registered, in order to test the ability to photograph this group of people.

In the registration posts visited by the observation teams, the average time taken to process each citizen was 7 minutes, and this average remained unchanged throughout the six weeks of the registration. This can be regarded as acceptable, although it could be improved: in 2018, the average time taken to register at the posts was 5 minutes.

c) Eligibility

During the visits to registration posts, registration was denied to about 2% of those observed. The main reasons why they were excluded from registration was use of the wrong post, and lack of acceptable forms of identification. However, other findings and analyses presented in this report point to the likelihood that many citizens managed to register without meeting the requirement of living in the municipality.

Recommendation 19:

See recommendation 4;

d) Inclusivity

A significant number (17%) of the posts visited were physically inaccessible to people with disabilities, and in a significant number of the visits (14%) at least one of the categories of citizens with the right to priority in attendance did not have this right respected. The category most affected by the lack of priority was women carrying babies, followed by pregnant women and the elderly.

Recommendation 20:

Improve physical access to the places where registration posts operate, and which will also function as polling stations;

Recommendation 21:

Improve the training of electoral agents about the rights of people who enjoy priority in attendance;

The electoral administration made a noteworthy effort, and is to be praised for guaranteeing a notable presence of women and young people in the registration brigades. One should also recognise the effort to include people with disabilities in the brigades, although there is space for greater inclusion. However, as regards the monitors from the political parties present during the visits by the observers, the effort at inclusion, at least in terms of gender, was poor. Only 31% of the monitors were women.

Recommendation 22:

Improve the participation of women as monitors of the political parties;

e) Inspection and complaints

At almost all the posts visited by the observers, there was a monitor from at least one of the political parties represented in parliament, but there were notable differences between the parties in the level of coverage of the posts. Frelimo had monitors in 90% of the visits, Renamo in 74%, and the MDM, in 54%. In general, the monitors were free to present the complaints they thought it necessary to make.

f) Security

The PRM provided good security coverage of the registration posts visited by the observation teams, and in general their presence and behaviour was discreet. However, the security of the materials and equipment, and of the data they contained, outside of the period of operation of the registration posts, was not always guaranteed. There were cases of undue access to the materials and equipment and the data they contained at night, and reports of equipment and materials kept in private homes. There were also cases of thefts at night of equipment from registration posts, because of the negligence or connivance of the PRM agent who was guarding the place.

Recommendation 23:

Improve the security procedures for the equipment and materials during the period when the registration posts are not operating;

g) Access to Information

Unlike the openness and transparency with which information about the voter registration was divulged and shared with the public in 2018, in 2023 this information was not shared with the regularity, and detail of previous years. In addition, the data are still not disaggregated by age group.

Recommendation 24:

Before the start of the voter registration, publish and divulge widely the forecasts of the numbers of voters to be registered, based on the data from the INE, disaggregated to municipal level and by gender and age group. During the registration, and after its conclusion, publish and divulge broadly the provisional and final data of the number of voters registered, disaggregated to municipal level and by gender and age group.

Information was only given systematically to registered voters about the public display and verification of the voter rolls in 19% of the visits made by the observation teams.

Recommendation 25:

Improve the training of election agents about the need to provide this information systematically;

In several municipalities, the citizens and the local and community authorities had no information about the dates when the temporary registration posts operated by mobile brigades would function. This created situations in which citizens went to these posts outside of the calendar and found them closed. They did not know when they should return to them.

Recommendation 26:

See recommendation 11;

The electoral administration has no active site on the internet and it only made three posts on its Facebook page, linked to the registration, in the eleven weeks between the start of registration and the publication of the final data.

Recommendation 27:

Activate the Internet site of the electoral administration and feed it regularly;

Recommendation 28:

Strengthen the communication offices of the CNE and STAE, endowing them with the resources to collect information and make it available more regularly and in useful time, exploiting better the advantages of digital platforms;

Several journalists complained at the centralism of the production and publication of information by the electoral administration, arguing that the CPEs and CDEs do not agree to provide information about facts that occur locally, and always refer explanations to the central level.

Recommendation 29:

Decentralise the mechanisms for providing information to journalists, so as to guarantee that information is divulged locally, to the local media.

The decision of the electoral administration bodies, as from 3 May 2023 to make the coverage of any activity of the electoral administration dependent on accreditation of journalists by STAE is a serious violation of press freedom and of the right to information, because journalists have the right to free access and to remain in public places where the exercise of their profession is necessary.

Recommendation 30:

Guarantee free access to journalists to the activities of the electoral administration in terms of the law;

h) Irregular and illicit behaviour

During the 45 days of the voter registration, countless illicit acts and irregularities, detailed in the section on findings in this report, were observed, denounced and reported by observers, journalists, political party monitors and electoral staff and agents.

This irregular and illicit behaviour included the use of illegal lists of priorities for registration, the registration of voters and printing of voter cards outside of the registration posts and of the normal hours of operation, posts operating in illegal places, equipment and material kept in private homes, transport of citizens from outside the municipal areas to be registered inside the municipal areas, illegal registration of these citizens, illicit refusal to register voters, and conspiracy to commit electoral offences.

The nature, duration, extent and location of some of these illicit acts point to an organised and premeditated effort, and not just sporadic, isolated and opportunist acts, to influence unduly the registration and its results.

Several criminal and administrative proceedings were begun against the presumed authors of these illicit acts. Some of these proceedings ended in sentences or acquittals, while others are still under way.

Recommendation 31:

Strengthen the mechanisms to inspect and control the behaviour of the brigades, and speedier invention in reaction to denunciations of illicit acts and irregularities;

(v) Public display of the voter rolls

The public display of the voter rolls also suffered from the technical problems that affected the registration. About 25% of the posts visited during the period of public display had not opened, or were unable to print the voter rolls, or to correct the data and reprint cards, because of equipment malfunctions.

Recommendation 32:

Guarantee that all the equipment is present and operational in the registration posts, during the period of public display of the voter rolls;

(vi) Registration data

The level of implementation of the voter registration of 2023, at both district and municipal levels, was on a par with the levels of 2018 (88.3% vs 89% and 91.4% vs 90.3%, respectively). The number of voters eligible to vote in the municipal elections of 11 October 2023 is 4,817,702.

The final data from the registration published by the CNE on 10 July 2023 are disaggregated by province, district and municipality, but, unlike the data of 2018 and the provisional data compiled by STAE on 4 June, they are not disaggregated by gender or by age group. However, based on the data of 4 June, it is possible to estimate that women constitute about 53.7% of the registered voters. Taking into account that, according to the INE, women are 53.2% of the population of voting age, the electoral register adequately reflects the gender distribution of the population of voting age.

Recommendation 33:

Republication by the CNE of the final data from the registration, with disaggregation of the data by gender and age group down to municipal level;

In 40 of the 65 municipalities, the forecasts were surpassed to various degrees (from 100.3% to 196.4%). It is thus estimated that, in comparison with the forecasts, an excess of 257,000 voters were registered – about 5% of all those registered. Most of these cases are in Zambézia, Cabo Delgado and Gaza provinces. On the other hand, in the remaining 25 municipalities, where the number registered was lower than forecast, it is estimated that a total of 709,000 eligible citizens were not registered. Most of these cases are in Maputo, Nampula, Niassa and Sofala provinces, and in Maputo City.

In several districts the excess number of registrations compared to the population projections can be explained by migratory flows between districts that have occurred in recent years, for socio-economic or security reasons such as, for example, in Cabo Delgado province. In other districts, one notes that the registration inside the municipal areas greatly exceeded the forecasts, but the registration in the non-municipal areas was very low. In these cases, it is apparent that people from outside the municipalities were registered inside the municipalities.

Recommendation 34:

See recommendation 6;

There are several districts where the levels of registration, in both the municipal and the non-municipal areas, exceeded the forecasts or the provincial average without any obvious justification: there was no “displacement” of registrations from the non-municipal to the municipal area and there are no zones of obvious and significant socio-economic or security migration. The two most plausible explanations are the illegal registration of citizens from outside the district or artificial inflation of the number of people registered in these districts. One argument that has been advanced to justify these numbers is that the data from the INE are out of phase with the demographic reality of these areas. Without a plausible explanation for these and other discrepancies, there is a very high risk that the data, both from the INE and from the voter registration will be discredited.

Recommendation 35:

Hold a technical dialogue between the INE and STAE to analyse all the discrepancies and inform the public about the conclusions of this dialogue;

Recommendation 36: Adopt the principle and practice of an independent audit of the registration and of the voter roll;

(vii) Coverage of the registration by the mass media

The analysis of the coverage of the voter registration by the mass media did not intend to be exhaustive, but illustrative. Only newspapers were analysed, four dailies and four weeklies, covering the period from 20 April to 8 June 2023.

The level of coverage, particularly in the dailies, was far below what might have been expected, with an average of less than one article a day. Many of the articles published were news items, and there were few texts which sought to explain and analyse the events of the voter registration. Much of the coverage was based on information received from outside bodies, and not from information that the papers proactively sought and produced. Above all, official sources were used, and due space and value was not given to the voices of citizens.

Recommendation 37:

The media should guarantee a better placing on their agenda of questions of the registration. They should offer more information on the process and give more space to the voices of citizens, and participate more actively in monitoring the process.

