



EISA DEMOCRACY SEMINAR SERIES

“An Analysis of the State of Play in the 2014 Elections in Mozambique”

For a country that would logically draw significant international interest due to its economic potential and highly contested elections, the 2014 Mozambican electoral process has received little attention by international analysts and media.

The Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) will hold a seminar on 25 September 2014 at its head office in Johannesburg, South Africa, to analyse the state of play in the 15 October 2014 general elections in Mozambique. Participants for the seminar will be drawn from the academia, media, civil society organisations, and the diplomatic corps.

Background:

The people of Mozambique will go to the polls on 15 October 2014 in the fifth multi-party general elections since the end of the civil war in 1992. After 20 years of relative peace and stability, under four consecutive Frelimo governments, these elections take place in the midst of a political/military crisis between the Government of Mozambique and its ruling party, Frelimo, and the main opposition party and former rebel movement, Renamo. The recent agreements between the Government and Renamo, including an amnesty law and a calendar for the disarmament of Renamo’s “residual armed forces” and their integration into the country’s security forces (the Armed forces and the Police), after extensive revisions of the electoral legislation that seemingly benefits mostly the opposition, are only temporary measures to allow the electoral process to take place, and have not resolved the structural problems that led to the renewal of the conflict. Furthermore, the deadline for Renamo’s full “demobilisation, disarmament and integration” is well beyond the deadline for the announcement of election results. In other words, Renamo goes into the elections as an armed party, in what many see as an insurance policy against an unfavourable election outcome.

Another significant element of the upcoming elections is the passing of the baton within the ruling Frelimo party. Not only is the baton being passed on to a new candidate (the current President has reached his two-term limit), but also from one generation of political actors to another (the Frelimo candidate for the 2014 elections for the first time is not a veteran of the liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism). Some would also argue that there has been a pass from one region to another (the Frelimo candidate for the 2014 elections would be the first from the northern region since the country’s independence in 1975). The Frelimo candidate, Filipe Nyusi is not a well-known personality and does not have a strong party or governmental career, having spent most of his professional life at the National Railways Company, with a six-year stint as Defence Minister, before becoming the Frelimo presidential candidate. Additionally, his selection as presidential candidate was far from consensual within the party.

A third important factor in these elections is the “new kid on the block” - the MDM party, created in 2009, on the eve of the fourth general elections. In 2009, MDM was allowed to compete only in 4 of the country’s 11 parliamentary constituencies and won 4% of the vote, which gave it 8 seats in Parliament (out of 250). Its leader won 8.5% of the presidential vote. Four years later, in the municipal elections and in the absence of Renamo (which boycotted the 2013 municipal

elections), MDM won 38% of the national urban vote, including majorities in the second, third, and fourth largest provincial capitals in the country.

The 2014 general elections also take place in a context of huge expectations of an impending economic boom as a result of the exploration of significant reserves of gas and oil in northern Mozambique. Control of state power through government is seen as key to control access to the benefits of mineral resources revenues, and although those revenues will not start flowing into the State coffers in earnest until after 2018, the eyes of politicians will already be on the prize as they compete in this year's elections.

Therefore, two words describe the current pre-election environment: anxiety and uncertainty. There are anxieties and uncertainties in several respects. Whilst many believe that Frelimo may ultimately emerge as the winner in the presidential and legislative elections, other outcomes seem to have become a possibility in many people's minds. The question whether peace and stability will hold after the elections is clearly felt as a "Damocles sword" hanging over the process.

All this calls for a probe of the new dynamics that such a context might produce in the electoral process and in the politics of the country. These are some of the questions framing the current thinking and debate around the electoral process and the future of democracy in Mozambique resulting from those anxieties and uncertainties:

- Will the political-military arrangement between the Government and Renamo hold until after the elections?
- Will Renamo respect the outcome of the elections if it loses, or even worse if it does worse than MDM?
- Has the recent political-military conflict revived Renamo's electoral hopes, or has it alienated even further Renamo's waning electorate?
- How will the Frelimo candidate, a political neophyte, fare in what is seen as a tough presidential race?
- Will MDM overtake Renamo as the main opposition?
- Will Mozambique have the first presidential run-off in its history, between the Frelimo candidate and one of the opposition candidates?
- In the case of a run-off, what are the potential consequences of having it between the Frelimo candidate and the Renamo candidate, versus having it between the Frelimo candidate and the MDM candidate?
- Will the election produce a hung parliament also for the first time in the country's history?
- How well will a highly politicised election management body run the electoral process?
- Will an expressive victory by Frelimo and its candidate, which will clearly put the party in control of future mineral resources revenues, mean the end of the opposition's hopes to come to power for the foreseeable future? In other words, is this the last option for political alternance for a long time to come?

The seminar will have presentation by Miguel de Brito, EISA-Mozambique Country Director and take place under "Chattam House rules".

Date: 25th September 2014
Time: 10:00 – 13:00
Venue: EISA Training Room
14 Park Road, Richmond

RSVP: by 17th September to yvette@eisa.org.za