

Continuing general strike after Mozambique 9 October elections

Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa &
Centre for Women, Peace and Security

Lunch and Learn seminar

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updated with notes 14 Nov 2024

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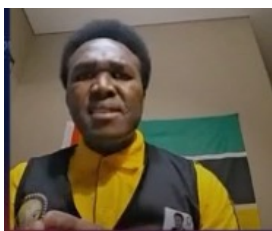


Maputo 7 November

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- 9 Oct Election - extreme fraud
- 19 Oct – 2 opposition election officials gunned down
(? police hit squad ? See note) - Elvino Dias & Paulo Guambe

Post election



- Venâncio Mondlane, Renamo MP 2020-4. Dynamic, pastor, 50-years old but building a youth following.
- 2023 Mondlane most votes for mayor of Maputo – but Frelimo declared winner! Frelimo fears him.
- Stood for president 9 October. His party (CAD) illegally removed, so stood as independent. (see note) Did very well.
- 21 Oct - Venâncio Mondlane leads protest at murder site.
- Mondlane and press tear-gassed. Calls for more demonstrations.
- Building into on-and-off general strike.
- 24 Oct - Election Commission votes 9-7 to approve fraudulent result giving Frelimo huge win.

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Background note

➤ Police hit squad?

Five years ago, just a week before the 2019 national elections, a police hit squad in broad daylight gunned down Anastacio Matalvel, the coordinator of civil society observation in Gaza. His assassins were identified because in their haste to escape they crashed into three other vehicles, killing two of the assailants - who were soon publicly identified as members of the police Special Operations Group (GOE) and Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR – the riot police). The method of the attack, using other cars to block the car of the victim, was used by the killers of Elvino Dias & Paulo Guambe.

Soon after the Dias-Guambe assassination, police arrived and confiscated or smashed the phones of all those present, destroying any video evidence of the murders.

➤ Party

Under normal procedures, the National Elections Commission (CNE) approved CAD (Democratic Alliance Coalition) with other parties to stand in the 2024 elections. All presidential candidates must present 10,000 notarised signatures, whether or not that are standing for a party, which Mondlane did. Mondlane had been expelled from Renamo for standing for party president against Ossufo Momade. Mondlane joined with CAD, and also stood on a CAD list for parliament (standing in both elections is legal). But on 18 July as part of the approval of parliamentary candidates, the CNE retrospectively rejected the CAD list and said it had improperly approved CAD to participate. Key lawyers said the CNE decision was improper and illegal, but was not reversed.

Mondlane then gained the support of PODEMOS (“we can”), a small party with some youth support. Mondlane, CAD supporters, and youth suddenly made PODEMOS important, and it won more seats for parliament than Renamo.

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The Frelimo rhetoric is escalating

- The Frelimo rhetoric became much heavier in the week of the seminar (11-15 Nov 2024). Interior Minister Pascoal Ronda said that “I no longer call them demonstrations; I call these acts subversion and terrorism.” Stopping someone from going to work is terrorism, he said. And he said that when demonstrators want to march to Ponta Vermelha (the formal residence of the President) it means they want to stage a coup.
- The Commander General of the police, Bernardino Rafael, Tuesday 12 November said that the demonstrations are violent acts that are subversive and resemble urban terrorism. He also said there was a clear intention of staging a coup.
- Communications Minister Mateus Magaia said the unprecedented 8-day near total shut down of the internet was because it was being “used to destroy the country”
- Frelimo Political Commission member Alcinda Abreu Wednesday 13 November accused outside interests of trying to topple governments across southern Africa led by liberation movements, including in Mozambique, to gain access to rich natural resources.

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50 killed by police means war has moved from Cabo Delgado to the cities

- The references to “terrorism” refers to the war in Cabo Delgado, where insurgents are called terrorists.
- But the police and army are waging a much more serious war against the demonstrators. In 3 weeks of demonstrations, 50 people have been killed by police gunfire. Yet in Cabo Delgado, in the entire month of October, 21 people died – soldiers, insurgents and civilians. Only a handful of insurgents were killed. Peaceful demonstrators are easy targets.
- Frelimo does appear to be worried about coups and outside forces, but on the streets of its cities, not in Cabo Delgado.
- Protestors seem to accept a long struggle. Mondlane calls for patience and cites Bangladesh and Sri Lanka which needed 7 months of protest to bring change.
- Frelimo seems divided. The Frelimo hard liners say wait til youth get tired and bored. Police tactics support this - keep youth groups apart, not allow big demos to form. Shoot to create fear.
- But others in Frelimo are no longer sure of their base.



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- Civil war in Cabo Delgado because resources given to foreign companies with a big share to Frelimo elite. Resource curse, growing poverty, no future for youth. Corruption means police and army not fit to fight, so EU must fund Rwanda mercenaries.
- Troops moved south to challenge big marches, especially in Maputo. Insurgents attacks increasing in Cabo Delgado.
- Frelimo is losing support from its traditional base. Election turnout was record low. A clear protest. In parts of Gaza – “Frelimo-stan” – under 30%.
- Professionals – doctors and lawyers – turned against Frelimo.
- In a meeting Monday 4 Nov with diplomats, Veronica Macamo - Foreign Minister, a senior Political Commission member, and the party agent for Frelimo – claimed observers called the election free and fair. **(Not true)** She stressed that donors have always backed Frelimo **(True)**, and expects them to continue supporting Frelimo. **(But will they?)**

5-way Pressure on Frelimo

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The current phase of the general strike

- Government - no one seems in charge, no spokesperson, president says nothing.
- After the two assassinations, Mondlane moved to South Africa so gives instructions on Facebook. On Monday set strike dates. But is he becoming a figurehead – youth taking control using his name? No obvious organisation on the ground.
- General strike, Phase 4, part 1:
Wed-Fri 13-15 Nov. Demos in Maputo, Matola and all provincial capitals, ports, and border posts. Appeal to lorry drivers not to work.
- 3 Goals:
 - ✓ honest election information;
 - ✓ end misery of poorest (poverty rising, no jobs or future);
 - ✓ stop kidnapping of Asian business people and families (done by police)
- More class based: Owners of trucks, mines etc are Frelimo elite.
- But protect property – no looting. Can defend against police.

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The strike is officially about elections, so conclude by looking more closely at Mozambique elections

- 1992 – agreed multiparty elections at end of proxy war.
Renamo as opposition. 1994 1st election.
- 1999 – Renamo's Afonso Dhlakama won. STAE rushed to change results in province computers – only changed president, so extra votes obvious.
- Jimmy Carter blew the whistle, but no one else. Donors backed Frelimo.
- Set precedent that fraud was allowed.

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'No one is neutral' – party based election management *especially not NGOs* rejected South African system

- CNE (National Elections Commission) and STAE (technical secretariat) led by largest party in parliament – always Frelimo. Constitutional Council (CC) is highest electoral court, head and most members named by President.
- Renamo demanded its own people in STAE to monitor – not trained and not effective – so Frelimo controls election machine.
- STAE, CNE and CC act in secret and can change results without saying what they did.

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Ghost voters

- Ghost voters – more voters than voting age adults.

2019 – 250,000

2024 – 800,000

- Gaza 2024: 150,00 registered, but only 100,000 adults.
- Parliament based on voter registration, so Gaza gained six seats.
Enough to get over the $\frac{3}{4}$ threshold needed to change constitution.
- Don't need to vote because Frelimo will win the seats.

*School yards may have looked
empty but the ghosts were ready to vote.*



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- **2019** much more blatant fraud. Celso Correia headed Frelimo election campaign.

2019 brings a change

- No micro management. Simple targets: Frelimo must win every district. Must win 10% more votes than previous election. Fair or foul makes no difference.
- EU observers: "unlevel playing field was evident" "climate of fear" "lack of confidence that the electoral administration and judiciary were free from political influence."
- "Not free, fair and transparent and the results not credible," civil society observers.
- There were "irregularities" in the counting of votes "jeopardizing the transparency of the electoral process," said two judges of the Constitutional Council
- **Despite the observer reports, donors turned a blind eye. EU said Mozambique government free to ignore the report.**

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2023 municipal election – proven theft

- Count is done in polling station and the results sheet (*editais*), signed and stamped, is posted on the door of the polling station and given to journalists, observers and party delegates. Has legal standing.
- Mondlane brought to CIP 833 of 889 (94%) of *editais* for Maputo, which showed he won by 65,000 votes. Similarly Renamo in Matola, with 88% of *editais*, had clearly won by more than 80,000 votes.

CC, CNE ruled Frelimo won Maputo & Matola.

Again, the international community backed Frelimo.

Proof had no value.

There were demonstrations in the north with 11 killed by police.



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2024 – complete Frelimo control

- Polling station staff (MMVs): 1 from each party and 4 chosen from public competition and must be neutral. But Frelimo issued order as to who should be posted in each polling station. As Frelimo tightly controls schools, they were teachers and school heads.
- Frelimo held meetings with the MMVs the Sunday and Monday before voting to show how to increase the Frelimo votes:
 - Physical: ballot box stuffing or adding ink mark to invalidate opposition vote.
 - On paper: change the results – swap Frelimo and Podemos. (Must check sums.)
 - Wait until observers & party delegates go to sleep so no one notices; write new edital.
 - Frelimo 'observers' (illegal) - vote anywhere with no check & vote often.

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The future?

- The CC will surely make some concessions. Probably take enough parliament seats from Frelimo to take them below $\frac{3}{4}$ threshold, and give those seats to Renamo and Podemos.
- That will not satisfy Mondlane.
- Youth want more than elections – want real moves to create jobs and reduce poverty.
- Will donors and lenders see that backing Frelimo unquestioningly has put all their investments at risk?
- Can donors and lenders afford to take a stand?



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