



PRESS RELEASE – PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

Well-organised voting preceded by a campaign marked by violence, limitation to fundamental freedoms and doubts about the quality of voter register

Maputo, 17th October 2019. – The European Union Election Observation Mission – Mozambique 2019 presented today, at a press conference, the preliminary statement on the observation of the General and Provincial Assemblies elections of 15 October. These first conclusions include the analysis of the following aspects of the electoral process: the electoral campaign, the legal framework, the performance of the electoral bodies, the quality of the voter register, the candidate nomination, the role of the media and the participation of women in the electoral process. This preliminary statement also covers an analysis of the voting day, observed in all the provinces of the country by more than 150 observers from the European Union, Canada, Switzerland and Norway, who visited 807 polling stations.

On the occasion of the presentation of the preliminary statement, the Chief Observer, Mr Sánchez Amor, said: *“On election day the voting procedures were well-implemented. However, on counting, the absence of national observers in almost half of observed polling stations did not contribute to the transparency of the process. We are now in the district tabulation of results phase. We ask the representatives and candidates of the different political parties to wait for the publication of results calmly and peacefully. We also urge political parties to respect the deadlines and channels established by law for the submission of any appeal”*.

A delegation from the European Parliament, led by Mr José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, joined the Mission and adhered to its preliminary conclusions. Mr García-Margallo y Marfil highlighted the importance of an *“inclusive and transparent electoral process and the rejection of violence”*. Furthermore, he states that *“we call on all parties to ensure the continuity and the full implementation of the recent peace agreement”*, underlining that *“peace and democracy go hand in hand”*.

The main conclusions of the European Union Election Observation Mission at this stage of the process are:

- The electoral process took place in a polarised and challenging environment where inter-party violence was prevalent as well as a mistrust between the main political parties and a lack of confidence that the electoral administration and the judiciary were independent and free from political influence.
- Logistical election preparations were adequate and generally on time. Opening and voting were well-implemented in a transparent process. The polls opened on time across the country. Election day was well organized with relatively few incidents. However, established national observer groups experienced difficulties with their accreditation, frustrating their efforts to have a wide national coverage and implement the planned sample for parallel vote tabulation.
- Registration figures revealed an increase in the number of registrants in all provinces, with a substantive increase in Gaza, where the number of registered voters almost doubled since the 2014 polls. Technical shortfalls and tight timeframes resulted in an undisclosed number of multiple registrations and inactions by the accountable institutions adversely affected the quality of the voter register.

- Campaign activities took place in a tense environment with regular incidents of violent nature involving party members and supporters. Limitations to freedoms of assembly and movement of opposition parties were often reported.
- An unlevel playing field was evident throughout the campaign. The ruling party dominated the campaign in all provinces and benefited from the advantages of the incumbency.
- A lack of public trust was observed in the impartiality of the national police forces, who were often perceived as more supportive of the ruling party and not managing properly the election related incidents and complaints.
- The EU EOM media monitoring unit noted an imbalance in news bulletins and programmes covering the campaign. In both types of programmes, Frelimo received the largest share of coverage, often in an uncritical tone.

The European Union Election Observation Mission will continue in Mozambique until the declaration of results and will follow the complaints and appeals system. The Mission will publish, further ahead, a more detailed final report that will include a series of recommendations to improve future electoral processes.

The full version of the preliminary statement is available for download on the official EU EOM website (www.eueom-mozambique2019.eu).

For further information, please contact:

Silvia DE FÉLIX, Press & Public Outreach Officer
Phone: +258 87 895 9870
E-mail: silvia.defelix@eueom-mozambique2019.eu