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Mozambique

A fraud too far in Mozambique

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Mozambique, a Portuguese-speaking country in southern Africa, is used to cyclones, but it's experiencing a completely different storm. The storm was caused by the mass mobilisation against electoral fraud at the general elections on 9 October. While the authorities declared the victory as president of Daniel Chapo, the candidate of the ruling Frelimo party, with 71% of the vote, Venâncio Mondlane, the main opponent with 20% of the vote, is contesting the results. The mobilisations reflect a desire for change, but the opposition is far from representing a political alternative that will serve the people.

Fraud and corruption

Frelimo is no stranger to electoral fraud, which has enabled it to retain power since the country gained independence in 1975. But today this is no longer acceptable, and the protest is massive for two main reasons. The level of fraud is unprecedented. Many observers have reported ballot box stuffing and inconsistencies in the figures, resulting in voter totals of over 100%. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) refused to endorse Chapo's victory. Such is the embarrassment that the Constitutional Court has still not given its verdict. The second reason is that the people want real change. With Frelimo in power, corruption to the tune of nearly two billion dollars has been a real drag on the country's economic growth. By the authorities' own admission, two-thirds of the population live below the poverty line. The policy of discrimination against certain communities has encouraged the emergence of a jihadist guerrilla movement in the Cabo Delgado region, bringing to a halt the huge gas production project in which TotalEnergies is involved.

A climate of repression

Venâncio Mondlane declared himself the winner of the elections and called on the population to fight against 'electoral banditry'. Demonstrations were widespread and took place in almost every province of the country. The authorities responded with a terrible crackdown. The police fired live ammunition at the demonstrators. Human rights organisations estimate that 70 people lost their lives. Many people were arrested. The police took advantage of Frelimo's social surveillance to arrest and execute the leaders of the demonstrations in the neighbourhoods. Venâncio Mondlane's lawyer and a close associate were killed in the street. Mondlane, who had fled to South Africa, claimed to be the victim of an assassination attempt. He is now living in hiding. The people's fighting spirit is not strong enough to sweep away the regime, but it is strong enough to prevent the normalisation of political life.

A lack of alternative

This precarious balance has prompted all the parties to join forces in a broad opposition front to demand the truth from the ballot box, at Mondlane's initiative. This is not his first battle against electoral fraud. In 2023, he fought against the inversion of results to his detriment when he was a candidate for mayor of Maputo. At the time, Mondlane represented Renamo, the main opposition party. When Renamo refused him the nomination for the 2024 presidential elections, he turned to Podemos, a small party made up mainly of former Frelimo members, whose two candidates were unable to stand. So it was a case of a candidate looking for a party and a party looking for a candidate.

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Mondlane's arm wrestling with the Frelimo dictatorship should not obscure the fact that he warmly congratulated Donald Trump on his election, and this was no mere diplomatic manoeuvre to turn Washington into an ally. This former evangelical pastor has expressed his admiration for Bolsonaro and, during his visit to Portugal, met with the far-right Chega party.

This makes it all the more necessary to mobilise independently from an opposition that does not really represent an alternative.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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