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Mozambique

Elections smelling of gas in Mozambique!

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As the results of Mozambique's presidential election approach, tension is mounting and the ruling FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) party is not about to relinquish power, hoping to benefit from the gas windfall. Nearly 17 million voters were expected in Mozambique for the parliamentary, provincial and presidential elections on 9 October.

An outsider

FRELIMO reigns supreme in the country. It wins the majority of votes every time, although the accuracy of the ballot is systematically questioned by the opposition as well as by many international observers. Current president Filipe Nyusi is not eligible to stand for a third term, so Daniel Chapo has been chosen to represent FRELIMO. As in the previous election in 2019, other candidates include Ossufo Momade for the RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance) party and Lutero Simango for the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), a split from RENAMO.

The newcomer is Venâncio Mondlane, a former RENAMO member who left after failing to become the candidate for these elections. Very popular with young people, he has become FRELIMO's main rival. As for the political programmes of the two parties, they hardly vary. Initial figures show a high abstention rate, with a turnout of around 35%. The authorities have announced that the final results will be known in around ten days' time. However, initial results show Chapo in the lead, followed by Mondlane.

Blood in the gas

What will be at stake in these elections is whether or not there will be a second round. And if there is, then the FRELIMO candidate could be in an uncomfortable position.

Fingers are already being pointed at fraud. In a number of polling stations, turnout rates have exceeded 100% in favour of FRELIMO, and in some cases the police have seized ballot boxes or polling station presidents have been caught stuffing ballot boxes. Such fraud could trigger street protests after the results are announced.

The major concern for the FRELIMO leaders is gas exploitation by the big majors such as ExxonMobile and TotalEnergies in Cabo Delgado. This is a guarantee of substantial enrichment. Already in 2015, the country's leaders had opaquely borrowed 2 billion dollars, a large part of which was misappropriated, causing the country's economic stagnation.

Gas exploitation is yet to begin, and is far from a foregone conclusion. The authorities are facing a jihadist insurgency, which they have brought under control thanks to the intervention of soldiers from the Rwandan army. However, the situation remains extremely precarious. The population is as much the victim of radical Islamists as it is of the Mozambican armed forces. The latter are accused of executions and torture even inside TotalEnergies' premises after the company had withdrawn its staff.

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

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