

# EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

NANCY MSIBI

November 2019

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## CAN DEMOCRACY AND PEACE FINALLY COME TO MOZAMBIQUE?

SAIFAC AFRICA FORUM SERIES

**On 13 November the fourth and last event in the SAIFAC Africa Forum series for 2019 was held at Constitution Hill. The topic was “Can democracy and peace finally come to Mozambique?”. The series aims to draw on the experience of South Africa and connect it with developments in a particular country or group of countries. The speakers are legal and non-legal experts who provide critical analysis of their societies and an understanding of how to move them forward. The series is funded by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.**

Mozambicans voted in the general elections on 15 October 2019. The ruling Frelimo won with 73% of the vote. Thus, the incumbent President Filipe Nyusi won. There were reported incidents of violence during the election period. The opposition party, Renamo was not satisfied with the election results claiming that there was electoral fraud at the polls.

The panellists at the event were Mr Lutero Simango, Leader of MDM, Ms Fatima Masimbire, journalist and social activist in Mozambique, Mr Grant Masterson, Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Southern Africa and Prof Steven Friedman, University of Johannesburg.

In his opening remarks Prof David Bilchitz, Director of SAIFAC raised his dissatisfaction about lack of sufficient coverage of the elections in Mozambique in the South African media considering that South Africa and Mozambique are neighbours. It is well known that Mozambique, is one of the African coun-

tries, which helped the African National Congress (ANC) during the liberation struggle. He asked the question what political and legal reforms are necessary for peace in Mozambique? Mr Moritz Sprenker, Project Manager, KAS, gave welcoming remarks on behalf of KAS. He emphasised the importance of democracy, accountability of leaders and the rule of law.

### Timing of elections

In his presentation, Grant Masterson, EISA, who observed elections in Mozambique, stated that though there were reported irregularities the timing was right to hold elections in Mozambique, however if one asks the question whether the elections were credible then his answer was “only if you don’t mind procedurally flawed elections in a country where democratic values are variably observed and evidence of manipulation of numbers is apparent”. His assertion was that the court did not show interest to deal with political matters.

### Flaws in the elections

Fatima Masimbire mentioned that there were challenges encountered with the management of elections. Voter registration was interrupted for a month, as a result, some eligible voters couldn’t register to vote. Accreditation of some electoral observers was delayed, some received accreditation a day before voting and others still couldn’t observe elections because of lack of accreditation. There was no proper control of electoral boxes/materials. The ruling party started

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campaigning much earlier using state resources. There were also reports of assassination of civil society leaders.

**Commitment to democracy**

Lutero Simango uttered these words "Mozambicans must not lose hope". Even though he complained that rule of law is not respected and also that the Constitutional Court has political interference. Opposition parties are struggling to survive and they do not have access to the media like the ruling party. He further said "we remain committed to democracy" and opposition parties must reorganize themselves.

**Suggestions for improvement**

In order to ensure better management of elections the following improvements are necessary:

- An Electoral Commission which is non-partisan;
- proper separation of powers with politicians not involved in the selection of Constitutional Court judges.

**Conclusion**

There was active engagement between the delegates and panellists. In closing Steven Friedman said the problem with Africa is leadership and therefore collective action is needed for citizens to hold leaders to account and ensure that democracy thrives.



**Impressum**

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