

## DETAILS OF MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT-MNR AGREEMENT ON ELECTORAL SYSTEM

In Rome and within the framework of the continuing bilateral negotiation process, the Mozambican government and the Mozambique National Resistance, MNR, have finally signed Protocol 3 on the general principles governing the drawing up of a new electoral law and on the eventual changes to related legislation.

We look at some of the most important points in Protocol 3. It is important to begin by noting that Protocol 3 gives the Mozambican government the responsibility of drawing up the electoral law in consultation with the MNR and all the other political parties.

Protocol 3 defines principles for certain specific areas, including those that concern freedom of the press and of access to the media. Affirming the citizens' right to freedom of the press and freedom of information, the document specifies that those freedoms include the right to create and manage newspapers, other publications, radio and television stations and other forms of written or spoken media. The document also states that those rights will not be inhibited by censorship.

Protocol 3 enshrines the freedom of association, expression and political propaganda. It stresses that administrative and fiscal regulations must not at any time be implemented to discriminate against, or prevent, the exercise of those rights for political reasons.

Protocol 3, which also enshrines freedom of movement and residence in the country, then addresses the issue of the return and social reintegration of Mozambican refugees and war-displaced people. Among other guarantees, the document states that Mozambican refugees and war-displaced people will be guaranteed reintegration and repossession of their property, if it still exists, and the legal right to demand such property from whoever may be holding it.

Protocol 3 enshrines a number of electoral procedures. It is worth noting that the electoral law will establish a system whereby the principle of a direct, equal, secret and personal vote will be respected. It also provides for simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections to be held within one year of the date of the signing of the general peace accord. That deadline may, however, be extended if there are obstacles rendering the implementation of the accord impossible.

The document defines a minimum age of 25 for voting poses. The electoral process will be organised and led by the National Electoral Commission, which will be formed by government officials. MNR-appointed officials will make up one third of the National Electoral Commission's officials.

Regarding the republic's elections, Protocol 3 specifies that our country's provinces will be the electoral regions. It is up to the National Electoral Commission to decide on the number of seats per region on the basis of each province's population. The electoral system will be legally established and it will be based on the principle of proportional representation.

Protocol 3 also determines that those parties wishing to form coalitions for parliamentary elections must do so with only one symbol on their list. The document adds that coalitions will not be permitted once the electoral campaign has begun.

Protocol 3 provides for the establishment of a minimum percentage of the national vote. Parties failing to attain that percentage will not secure any seats in parliament. That percentage will be agreed on in consultation with all parties and it is not expected to be lower than 5%, or higher than 20%. Citizens older than 18 are eligible for seats in the assembly of the republic. The Mozambican government and the MNR have, however, agreed to implement a transitional requirement applying to the upcoming elections whereby citizens must be older than 25 to be eligible for seats in the assembly of the republic.

Regarding financial issues and facilities, the aforementioned document states that, on the basis of the number of candidates per party, the National Electoral Commission must guarantee the unbiased distribution of available subsidies and logistical support, to all competing parties, for the electoral campaign.

Protocol 3, which was signed yesterday, also states that the Mozambican government will work to make it easier for the MNR to secure facilities and other means allowing the accommodation and movement of, as well as communication among, its members, so that it can carry out its political work in every provincial capital and, available means permitting, in other places.

The document states that the President will be elected on an absolute majority vote. Should no candidate obtain an absolute majority, the two candidates securing the most votes must face a second round of voting within three weeks. The protocol specifies that presidential candidates must be older than 35 and their candidacies must be supported by a minimum of 10,000 signatures by electorally active Mozambican citizens older than 18.

Protocol 3 also says that the Mozambican government will request support from the international community at large and from Italy in particular, for all the aforementioned purposes.

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