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Disarmament in Mozambique¹

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The United Nations' failure to effect meaningful disarmament during its ONUMOZ operation in Mozambique has had serious consequences, especially for South Africa. For ONUMOZ to have disarmed all armed individuals would have been an impossible task, but the weapons it did obtain and which were earmarked for decommissioning could have been destroyed. ONUMOZ's failure was linked to its weak mandate regarding disarmament. It did not spell out what disarmament should entail, and the criteria for its success; disarmament was not clearly distinguished from demobilisation; the UN failed to provide the political and financial resources to ensure that weapons were properly collected and decommissioned. Post-UN disarmament in Mozambique has been more successful, a reflection of growing confidence in peace at local levels and in senior policy-making circles. Since 1995, the old weapons caches have ceased to pose a serious threat to internal security. Ironically, it is South Africa that suffered most in the end, as large numbers of light weapons flowed out of Mozambique. However, joint police operations, and a change in market demand for guns in South Africa, has seen a decline in the arms trade from Mozambique. An influx of new weapons, not the rusting arms caches, now pose the main security threat in Mozambique.

Introduction

Light weapons have long been viewed as an insignificant fringe of the conventional arms trade. But the end of the Cold War has changed that: sales of major weapons have declined, while the trade in light weapons, including small arms, has increased significantly as separatist groups, criminal syndicates and beleaguered governments all purchase significant amounts of weaponry.² The manufacture and international trade of these weapons is highly decentralised, and ever cheaper products are entering the market. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the subsequent absence of any effective export controls has added to the flood of weapons, a situation which has been further exacerbated by the movement of large quantities of surplus weapons from past conflicts to new conflict zones through a growing network of semi-official and secret arms pipelines.³ Light weapons suit these new conditions for a number of reasons: they do not require any form of infrastructural support to facilitate their use – unlike weapon systems, a light weapon can be used with minimal training and expertise – and light weapons have a low rate of obsolescence, so they remain useful over a long period. In addition, small arms appeal to smugglers because they combine high value with low density (as do drugs), and profit margins can be large.

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¹ The author would like to thank the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Department of War Studies, King's College and the British American Security Information Council for supporting this research.

² M. Klare, 'The Global Trade in Light Weapons and the International System in the Post-Cold War Era', in J. Boutwell, M. Klare and L. Reed (eds), *Lethal Commerce: the global trade in small arms and light weapons* (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Cambridge, 1995), pp. 31–43.

³ M. Berdal, 'Disarmament and Demobilisation after Civil Wars. Arms, soldiers and the termination of armed conflicts', *Adelphi Paper*, 303 (August, 1996).

During peace-keeping operations there are often opportunities to decommission light weapons left over from a conflict. But in most cases this opportunity is overlooked: the UN peace-keeping operation in Mozambique in 1992–1994 was no exception.⁴ After the conflict ended, the networks which had controlled the flow of light weapons in war time drew on arms caches to traffic weapons to neighbouring states, especially South Africa.

Light Weapons and Disarmament in Mozambique

On 4 October 1992, a ceasefire in Mozambique was finally agreed upon in Rome, bringing an end to the 16-year civil war which had cost some 100,000 civilian lives and devastated the economy. The ceasefire signalled the start of a UN-supervised peace process, which culminated in Mozambique's first ever multiparty elections on 27–29 October 1994. The UN's Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) drew on lessons learnt from the flawed Angolan peace process, in particular that elections should not be held before the armies of both sides had been demobilized, and that peacekeeping operations should not be conducted on the cheap.⁵ But it did not have a chance to draw conclusions with regard to disarmament.

Light weapons were the most commonly used arms in the Mozambique conflict. Russia supplied the majority of them, and China and others a lesser number. The number of weapons was large: INTERPOL estimated in 1995 that some 1.5 million AK-47s were distributed to the civilian population during the course of the war.⁶ Renamo received weapons from a variety of sources. Rhodesia and later South Africa were key suppliers. Kenya provided ammunition in the late 1980s, while other weapons were provided by Portuguese, German, American and Gulf sources. Much of Renamo's weaponry was re-circulated Chinese and Russian light weapons. In the last years of the war, Renamo also relied heavily on weapons captured from government forces. The government itself distributed tens of thousands of AK-47s to civilian militia units in 1982, and very few of these were ever returned.⁷

Disarmament was implicit in ONUMOZ's mandate, as a part of demobilization. A 'demobilized soldier' was defined as an individual who, 'was demobilized at the decision of the relevant command, and handed over the weapons, ammunition, equipment, uniform and documentation in his possession'.⁸ Weapons brought into the Assembly Areas (AAs) were temporarily stored in structures locked with two padlocks, for which the Camp Commander held one key and the UN's military officer at the AA the other. There were few raids on such structures because soldiers had hidden better weapons elsewhere. João Baptista, a Frelimo soldier from Massingir AA, explained:

We knew that guns make good business. So we kept the best for ourselves. I have sold some to dealers from Joni [Johannesburg] and I keep others for the future. The secret is to keep them in good condition. Frelimo was never going to pay us for the years we were made to fight. We have to look after ourselves.⁹

⁴ S. Hill, 'Disarmament in Mozambique: Learning the Lessons of Experience', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 17, 1 (1996), pp. 127–145.

⁵ A. Vines, 'Angola and Mozambique. The Aftermath of Conflict', *Conflict Studies*, 280 (Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, May/June 1995).

⁶ In early 1992, Russia provided a Swiss funded project with details of weapons shipped to Mozambique as part of the planning process for demobilization, but these details have remained confidential.

⁷ A. Vines, Renamo. From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique? (James Currey, Oxford, 1996).

^{8 &#}x27;General Peace Accord for Mozambique', reproduced in United Nations Department of Public Information, *The United Nations and Mozambique 1992–1995* (United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, 1995), p. 116.

⁹ Interview, Maputo, March 1995.

Table 1. Weapons registered during ONUMOZ's verification phase

- * 46,193 of various arms
- * 2,703,733 of various types of ammunition
- * 19,047 of various types of mines
- * 5,687 kilograms of explosives
- * 4,997 individual grenades
- * 220 intact boxes

Other military equipment registered during ONUMOZ:

Unilaterally demobilized government troops - 12,736 weapons

Armed, paramilitary, private and irregular troops – 43,491 weapons

Source: United Nations Department of Public Information, *The United Nations and Mozambique 1992–1995* (United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, 1995).

Eduardo Adão, a Renamo soldier from Changanine AA, gave a similar account: 'Guns can mean food. We do not want to be hungry. Before the elections we saw that we were being betrayed by politicians. Why give up the guns to weaken us further? We handed in the bad ones. Business is good with a gun'.¹⁰ The situation was complicated further by the fact that both Renamo and Frelimo ordered that weapons be hidden. Consequently, not every soldier arrived in an AA with a weapon. The number of weapons collected from paramilitary troops was also low, and the munitions submitted were of poor quality for similar reasons.

Though the General Peace Accord stipulated that '... all collective and individual weapons ... should be stored in warehouses under the United Nations' control', Renamo and Frelimo initially refused to comply. However, growing unrest in the AAs in 1994 by combatants waiting to be demobilized led both sides reluctantly to agree that ONUMOZ could transport military equipment in excess of 200 arms from each AA for safe-keeping in one of three Regional Arms Depots (RADs), in Nampula, Chimoio and Matola (See Table 1, above). The first such transfer took place on 15 March 1994, and such transfers continued until the end of 1994 under the supervision of ONUMOZ infantry.¹¹

But problems continued: the UN Supervision and Control Commission chairman, Colonel Segala, reported to the CSC in July 1994 that soldiers had admitted to hiding weapons outside the assembly areas. He warned, 'The presence of weapons dispersed around the country is a matter of particular concern, and can seriously imperil public security now and especially after the elections once the United Nations has left Mozambique'.¹² Though the circumspect nature of ONUMOZ's mandate largely prevented the peacekeeping forces from tackling arms caches outside the assembly areas, the Cease-Fire Commission (CCF) approved a mechanism to ascertain the existence of undeclared depots and caches. This 'verification process' was to take place after demobilization and before 20 October 1994, i.e. before the elections. However, because of delays in demobilizing, verification did not start until 30 August 1994 and then made little progress because both sides showed little interest, and because there was little time left for comprehensive checking.

¹⁰ Interview, Maputo, April 1995.

¹¹ E. Breman, Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Mozambique (UNIDIR, Geneva, 1996), p. 73.

¹² UN Cease-Fire Commission, 'Report of CCF Chairman to CSC Meeting on 18 July, 1994', CSC/MIN/033, annex 1.

After the closure of the assembly areas, the CCF arranged to visit sites, including arms caches, listed by the two sides as having been in military use. Arms were either to be destroyed or to be taken under UN control for transfer to the new army. The teams visited hundreds of arms caches before the mandate expired, but it was not an easy process. On one occasion, when UN teams went to check three arms dumps under Renamo control, they were given wrong coordinates for one cache, the local leader could not find the second, and the commander in charge failed to turn up at the third.¹³ Many other sites were not visited because of the short time-frame for the operation and failure to gain access to some sites. Nevertheless, the CCF did manage to visit a number of undeclared sites belonging to both sides: in the first five weeks of verification, the CCF found 130 unreported arms caches, including truckloads of arms.

Colonel Segala reported on 19 September 1994 that the military equipment registered during cantonment and verification was now 'posing a military as well as political problem' as the large quantities 'presented a potential for internal and external instability'.¹⁴ During a CCF meeting on 11 November, it was agreed that all weapons collected by ONUMOZ and under CCF control would be transferred to the new army: in the event, 180,000 weapons went to the new army and 24,000 were destroyed. But a great deal of the arms and ammunition recovered and registered was in fact never destroyed. A small amount of unstable munitions was destroyed in situ. Weapons and equipment placed in the RADs were categorised as operational, repairable and beyond repair, and only material deemed 'beyond repair' was destroyed. The UN assessed various options for destroying additional weapons in metal foundries, but it was decided they were too expensive: an ONUMOZ request in 1993 for an additional US\$52.5 million to ensure more comprehensive disarmament throughout Mozambique was turned down in New York. The danger of not destroying these weapons was confirmed by Lazero Mathe, director of FADM's equipment unit. He admitted that the weapons identified for destruction that had been put into the three regional warehouses by ONUMOZ were 'not accounted for'.¹⁵

Why did ONUMOZ have so little success in disarmament? In September 1994, ONUMOZ officials had tried to push on several occasions for access to large weapons caches especially in the final build-up to the elections – this included attempts to gain access to a large arsenal maintained in the Interior Ministry in central Maputo. But such violations were never exposed publicly, and usually resulted in compromise. In the case of the Interior Ministry, Aldo Ajello, the UN Special Representative, negotiated for the cache to be declared, but it remained in government control. Such compromises were, of course, partly politically motivated. It was only after the elections, and following international pressure, including from the US, that the issue of arms caches was made a priority. In October, the US presented the Mozambican government with a hard-hitting 'non-paper' threatening to 're-evaluate our future development assistance program in Mozambique' unless the government cooperated in five key areas, including allowing access to regional arms depots.¹⁶

ONUMOZ, encouraged by the international pressure, began to engage more actively in clearing and destroying weapons caches. Eric Lubin, aide to Aldo Ajello, admitted:

Ajello was a politician. He knew that neither side wanted to hand in their guns. He had seen the fight over mine-clearance and had decided that pushing this issue would only delay the

¹³ M. Hamlyn, 'Poll raises Mozambican fears', The Times, London, 21 October 1994.

¹⁴ UN Supervision and Control Commission, 'Minutes of CSC meeting of September 19, 1994', CSC/MIN/042.15 South African Press Association (SAPA), 24 July 1996.

¹⁶ See Human Rights Watch, 'Mozambique', Human Rights Watch World Report 1995 (Human Rights Watch, New York, 1994), p. 32.

peace process further. The priority was elections. Once they had passed successfully, disarmament could be safely pursued in the closing months of the mandate.¹⁷

Ajello himself, when later asked about why he had not prioritized disarmament earlier, replied that ONUMOZ had wanted to destroy a much larger number of weapons but this had not been allowed by the government.¹⁸ Stung by criticism that he had not acted against arms caches earlier, Ajello embarked upon a high profile trip in search of caches in November 1994.¹⁹ However, amongst many of ONUMOZ's Civpol and infantry units there remained little will to confront this issue. A peacekeeper from Urubat, the Uruguayan unit patrolling National Highway 1, commented: 'Active disarming is dangerous. That is not why we are here. We are here to watch and if they give us their weapons then fine. ONUMOZ's mandate is not to send back bodybags to Montevideo'.²⁰ A Zambian military official was equally philosophical:

We see wandering groups with guns frequently. We record this but can't do much. The quartering areas are closed and nobody wants to know about this stuff. Same with arms caches. We get reports of where these are. Some are in no-go zones. They know, and we know that these are out of bounds. The ones we get to are the old weapons. The ones that they no longer want. In that sense we offer a free clearance service.²¹

Such views were indeed very common.²²

By the end of ONUMOZ's mandate in Mozambique, the CCF had verified 744 locations (603 declared and 141 undeclared, 498 government sites and 246 Renamo sites), but it had run out of time to complete its examination of Renamo's declared and undeclared sites. In his final report of 5 December 1994, Colonel Segala confirmed the commission's inability to complete verification of Renamo bases and arms caches. Renamo had halted verification on 22 September, permitting only a limited resumption after 10 October. Of Renamo's 287 officially declared locations, only 116, or 40 per cent of the total, were visited. By contrast, the CFC had visited 99 per cent of the government's declared locations. The UN offered to maintain a small unit in Mozambique after the end of its mandate to complete its weapons verification work, but the government declined the offer.²³

In November 1994, just after Mozambique's elections, the South African edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine carried a feature article about a former Renamo combatant, João Jorge, who had become involved in light weapons trafficking from Mozambique into South Africa. The account illustrated how Renamo had been hiding its weapons throughout 1994 and how former combatants were selling significant quantities of these to South Africans. João Jorge was described as,

One of three of four people who knew the location of dozens of weapons caches dotted from Machado to Massingir. He had been a confidante of his brigade commander and had himself seen the burial of most of the weapons. Thousands of Chinese and Russian rifles, handguns and rounds of ammunition lay under shallow crusts of earth, waiting to be retrieved. João Jorge would use the men of Giraffe Platoon [an ex-Renamo unit] as his diggers and carriers. The plan was that the platoon members would denude every weapons cache that they could safely locate in southern Mozambique. They would enter and leave South Africa through Red Cross camps and barren stretches of the Kruger National Park, operating in teams of five or six, at staggered times, and bring back to South Africa small shipments every few days. The weapons would then be reburied in Kruger National Park, to be retrieved when needed. João Jorge would create

¹⁷ Interview, Paris, February 1995.

¹⁸ R. Synge, Mozambique. UN Peacekeeping in Action (US Institute of Peace Press, Washington, 1997), p. 110.

¹⁹ B. Phillips 'Renamo's "phantoms" of the bush worry UN', The Daily Telegraph, London, 18 November 1994.

²⁰ Interview, Xai Xai, September 1994.

²¹ Interview, Xai Xai, September 1994.

²² See J. Wurst, 'Mozambique Disarms', The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 50, 5 (1994), pp. 36-39.

²³ R. Synge, Mozambique. UN Peacekeeping in Action, p. 111.

a distribution network inside South Africa. He would bribe long-haul truckers who ferried goods between the northern Transvaal [now Northern Province] and the PWV [now Gauteng] to take a few extra packages on each trip. He would warehouse in Johannesburg's flatlands. He would buy several vehicles to move the arms into the townships, welded into door frames, roofs and petrol tanks. He would sell his wares to anyone who wanted them and could pay.²⁴

Such accounts did not bode well for South Africa.

There were in fact significant economic pressures on former soldiers which might have been expected to lead them in to a life of crime. Unlike demobilization itself, the social and economic re-integration of demobilized combatants is an open-ended process, and one which faced many challenges in Mozambique. Oxford's Refugee Studies Programme carried out a pilot study of the experiences of ex-combatants in Zambézia province, based on a sample of 2,700 combatants. It found that the average age of conscription was twenty and that most individuals had spent an average of ten years in military service. The study stressed that the poor training which soldiers had received in the army had left them a very poorly skilled group.²⁵

Not only were the ex-combatants short of skills, but they faced the prospect of trying to make a living in a devastated economy. In the Zambézian case, only a few opportunities for formal employment were on offer, mostly from economic agents who were themselves under-capitalised and who had reservations about investing in a not yet stabilized economy, particularly in terms of security. Compounding this problem was the fact that employers, including the Government and its local departments, tended to see ex-combatants as potentially violent people likely to disrupt the work place. Nor did the agricultural sector necessarily offer a solution: a common misconception amongst international donors was that small-scale agriculture could by itself facilitate the reintegration of ex-combatants. However, for several decades small-scale agriculture has not had the capacity to guarantee the subsistence of the rural family; problems such as a lack of roads and rural shops, land shortages and landmines were common. The Refugee Studies Programme study found that the average demobilized bachelor in Zambézia had 7.5 dependants, thus forming an average family size of eight to nine persons. The income of such families had to be complemented by various types of waged labour. Ex-combatants were thus not dispersing to the rural areas: they were leaving their families in the fields and looking for income-earning alternatives, particularly in informal commerce in the cities.

A second study by the Refugee Studies Programme has shown that there was little evidence to link former soldiers with armed crime in the capital city Maputo.²⁶ Some ex-combatants were possibly involved in petty crime, such as in the informal market (*dumba nengue*) of Estrela Vermelha, where much of the products on offer are stolen, or in local drug dealing such as in Bairro Militar (sometimes nick-named 'Colombia'). However, many of the threats made by ex-soldiers about their links to serious crime were bluffs, designed to extract government concessions. Overall, ex-soldiers were re-integrating quickly. Many married, and depended on the income of their wives.²⁷ In Maputo, it quickly became difficult to distinguish ex-combatants from other groups, and it was not clear that they were any more prone to engage in crime. This is not, however, to suggest that crime

²⁴ M. Fried, 'The Gun', Cosmopolitan, Johannesburg, November 1994.

²⁵ J.-P. Borges Coelho and A. Vines, Pilot Study on Demobilization and Re-integration of Ex-combatants in Mozambique (Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford, 1995).

²⁶ J.-P. Borges Coelho, *The Re-integration of Ex-combatants in Maputo* (Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford, 1997).

²⁷ C. Dolan and J. Schafer, *The Re-integration of Ex-combatants in Mozambique. Manica and Zambezia Provinces* (Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford, 1997).

Province	Weapon category					
	Light weapon	Heavy weapon	Munitions	Landmines		
Cabo Delgado	_	_	_	_		
Gaza	314	5	na	na		
Inhambane	360	5	13 ^b	450		
Manica	427	-	46,906	734		
Maputo	31	38	5,251	251		
Nampula	22	7	6 ^b	_		
Niassa	23	-	-	_		
Sofala	801	-	70,110	1,279		
Tete	150	4	83 ^b	130		
Zambézia	124	154	412	3,000		

Table 2. Mozambican police seizures of weapons in 1996

^b = Crates; na = information not available.

Source: Mozambique police, September 1997.

was not a serious problem, and that the legacies of the war did not make a significant contribution to that problem.

Controlling Arms and Violence in the Post-ONUMOZ Period

On 20 December 1996 an unidentified gunman ambushed and wounded a South African tourist. Such incidents were not uncommon: Mozambican Police figures showed a yearly increase in armed crime.²⁸ The government recognised the proliferation of small arms as part of the problem. The then Home Affairs Minister, Manuel Antonio, announced in April 1995 that a master plan to deal with the large quantity of illegal weapons circulating in Mozambique had been drawn up. The plan included stepping up patrols along Mozambique's main roads, re-establishing district police commands, and increasing co-operation with police forces in neighbouring countries.

In the first three months of 1995, police apprehended members of 30 armed gangs and found 69 arms caches. Between January and July of the same year, the police reported seizing over 6,000 guns and 24,000 rounds of ammunition.²⁹ The government claimed that between November 1995 and November 1996 its police discovered a further 50 arms caches (collecting more than 1,000 guns and hundreds of mines and grenades), 'neutralised' 214 bands of robbers, and recovered 105 cows and 337 cars.³⁰ Press reports of the discovery of new arms caches were a weekly occurrence. In September 1997, the Mozambican police announced that they had uncovered and destroyed 11,734 firearms of different calibres since 1995.³¹

Despite these successes, popular confidence in the police remained low, and the arms discovery and arrest figures papered over serious problems in the police force. In 1995, 102 policemen were expelled for unethical activities; between January and October 1997, a further 137 police were expelled, and a total of 290 policemen faced disciplinary hearings.³² Policemen regularly disregarded the law: a constant stream of reports of police maltreatment of detainees, especially in Maputo, reached groups like Human Rights Watch, and

²⁸ According to Maputo's official police statistics, there were 19,630 crimes committed between July 1993 and March 1994, 22,602 between July 1994 and March 1995, and 24,300 between July 1995 and March 1996.

²⁹ A total of 1,070 arms came from Sofala Province, followed by Zambézia Province with 1,047.

³⁰ S. Daley, 'In Mozambique, Guns for Ploughs and Bicycles', *The New York Times*, New York, 2 March 1997. 31 *Noticias*, Maputo, 15 September 1997.

³² Radio Mozambique, Maputo, in Portuguese 1730 gmt, 3 October 1997.

police and military officials were often implicated in gun running. Artur Canana, the governor of Manica province, admitted that weapons had been sold illegally from police stations: 'There is nothing we can do about the indiscipline of certain officers, which is making the problem worse'.³³ In November 1996, the then Attorney-General Sinai Nhatitima, in his report on crime to parliament, made devastating accusations against the police. He said that many of the guns used by criminals came from the police: 'Guns are stolen or ''disappear'' from the arsenals and are lent out, rented or sold to be used in criminal activities'.

Neutralising arms caches was the first issue on the agenda in two meetings between President Chissano and the Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, on 5 February 1996 and 21 December 1996. Both were concerned about the dangers of bands of men carrying weapons outside their control. They decided to set up a working group, with members appointed by the government and Renamo, to deal with the dismantling of arms caches.³⁴ The problem was a serious one. Lionel van Dyke, director of the Zimbabwean-based Mine-Tech security firm pointed out that arms caches were a much bigger threat than landmines:

We are finding arms caches all the time. Even in the middle of towns. I am amazed that the UN didn't have these shown to it or hadn't destroyed them if they did. The weapons and ammunition around here are a time bomb. Not necessarily for renewed war, but there are plenty of guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition to keep criminals and poachers in business for decades.³⁵

Mine-Tech had found that in central Mozambique, where it was clearing mines as part of the Cahora-Bassa power-line rehabilitation scheme, the numbers of armed groups seen by its men had increased in 1996. Incidents of re-laying landmines and of attacks on the roads had also increased. Some of these actions were intended to prevent the re-establishment of state administrations: local people were involved in drug and contraband trading, and wished to keep the state out. Prior to destroying arms caches in 1995, Mine-Tech personnel had increasingly found that weapons, especially small arms and mines, had been removed by unknown individuals.

However, in 1997, these trends seemed to be changing. Mine-Tech now found that local people were leading them to virgin caches. Another mine-clearance firm, Special Clearance Services (SCS), noted a similar trend: in 1996 and 1997, SCS found local communities putting weapons on the road for their clearance teams to destroy. They believed that these communities were practising local-level disarmament, that they did not trust the local police and hence preferred to see these weapons destroyed by foreign firms.³⁶ Ignacio Save, a farmer from Manjacaze (Gaza province), explained that the destruction of arms caches was important symbolically and socially: 'The destruction of these weapons is important for us. It symbolises the end of war and we know these guns cannot be used again. It reminds us that things are better and helps us forget the past'.³⁷

Alongside these local changes in perception, the government took additional action, aimed at bringing banditry along the country's main roads under control. Special police units were formed. One such was 'Lightning Battalion'. This Battalion was deployed in

³³ C. Bishop, 'Arms for Africa. Deadly trade poses threat to stability', *The Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 27 August 1995.

³⁴ The working group fell short of an earlier demand by Renamo for a tripartite commission involving the South African and Mozambican police forces and former Renamo military officers. The issue subsequently became politically contentious, with Renamo wanting a higher profile for itself on a commission and the government arguing for a lower key working group which it could control.

³⁵ Interview, Lionel van Dyke, Harare, April 1996.

³⁶ Interview, Bernie Auditorie, director of SCS, Maputo, 27 February 1997. See also SCS, 'Company Profile', no date.

³⁷ Interview, Manjacaze, 7 April 1997.

June 1995 along highway 215 (Maputo-South Africa) after the killing of South African tourist Chris Joubert by men armed with AK-47s, and the injury on the following day in the same area of another South African. Four gangs, consisting of sixteen men, were arrested in the following weeks, and 13 AK-47s, four pistols and three other semi-automatic weapons were captured – there have also been reports that 'Lightning Battalion' beat up suspects.³⁸

The creation of 'Lightning Battalion' reflected not only the seriousness with which the government was treating banditry, but also the refusal of other forces to take on this role. The regular armed forces, FADM, refused to take on internal policing responsibilities, while the Rapid Intervention Police argued that their role was predominantly in urban policing. One reason for the reluctance of regular units to involve themselves in such activities is that a significant proportion of armed banditry was being carried out by current or former soldiers. One FADM soldier, who did not want to be named, claimed, 'We make money by selling guns from the arsenals. Some of our people also engage in banditry to get extras. It's a way to survive. I don't agree with it; it's a continuation of bad habits from FAM [the old government army]'.³⁹ Lazero Mathe, director of FADM's equipment unit, admitted that the situation was chaotic: 'We have more weapons of war than military personnel. The only problem is that we don't know how many or where most of these weapons are'.⁴⁰

If chaos provided opportunity, economic factors often provided motive for former and serving soldiers, as well as for civilians. One potential highwayman, a 19 year old from Gaza province, explained:

There is no work for me. I have few skills except using a gun and its easy money. The occasional action makes money. I used to be Frelimo, then joined Renamo, then joined Frelimo. I have played war for both. Now I work for myself and my group. As long as we move around, we get few problems. We can pay for information about police activity. Prices have gone up since those South Africans got involved. Our secret is to be careful. We try not to kill people, but accidents can happen during confusion.⁴¹

Another young man who had become involved in crime asked, 'What is there for people like me to do? A gun gives me a job! My family struggle on the land and they can't feed me. I need to help them. The police use guns all the time to make money. So can I! Everything around here is about money. Eh, without it you have nothing. So I make money with a gun'.⁴²

Urban crime, especially in Maputo, rose particularly sharply. Most Mozambicans appeared to regard armed crime as an occupational hazard, but the donor community was not so complacent. Foreigners (and the Mozambican elite) invested heavily in private security systems and guards, thereby creating a new class of armed personnel. In a recent study of the re-integration of Maputo ex-combatants, 24 per cent of the 476 interviewed had found employment as security guards – they were provided with training, weapons, vehicles and radio-communications.⁴³ A crime-wave in September and October 1996 in Maputo, in which several expatriates were killed, sent the donor community into hysteria. Switzerland threatened to freeze its US\$30 million aid package if the government did not show a firmer commitment in the fight against crime.⁴⁴ Germany and Spain also took a strong position.

³⁸ This unit was subsequently deployed on other routes, such as the Maputo-Beira road and the Ponta do Ouro-Maputo roads.

³⁹ Interview, Maputo, March 1995.

⁴⁰ SAPA news agency, 24 July 1996.

⁴¹ Interview, Maputo, March 1995.

⁴² Interview, Maputo, March 1995.

⁴³ At least seven companies were involved, namely Delta, Proteg, Alfa, Sosep, Securitas, Tivonele and Bassopa.

⁴⁴ M. Massingue, 'Mozambique. Riding on a Crime Wave', *Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly*, Harare, November 1996.

The guns used in this armed crime appeared to be mostly new; increasingly hand-guns, not AK-47s, were the preferred weapon.

By early 1997 the situation around Maputo had improved.⁴⁵ Police figures suggested armed crime may have peaked.⁴⁶ Violent crimes had in fact declined immediately following the appointment of a new Home Affairs and Police Minister, Almerino Manhenje, in 1996. Manhenje's appointment was not a government initiative: a combination of donor unease, a local media campaign, and pressure from local people forced a reluctant President Chissano to replace Manhenje's predecessor, Manuel António. Manhenje quickly ordered police action against known crime gangs and a new unarmed, but better trained, police unit was mobilised. But it has become increasingly evident that other senior officials have turned a blind eye to the arms trade or have become actively involved in it. For example, an arms and contraband pipeline run by Portuguese businessmen through Nacala port, exposed in 1996, appeared to have links with senior officials.⁴⁷ It seems the weapons involved were put on light aircraft and flown elsewhere, illustrating the relaxed nature of Mozambique's ports and airports.⁴⁸

Alongside increasing government efforts to control arms and violence, there have also been non-governmental initiatives. Mozambique's Christian Council (CCM), the umbrella body for the main Protestant churches, has tried to reduce violent crime by offering goods for illegally held guns. The 'Guns into Hoes' programme was born in 1991 during the peace process. However, despite support from both the CCM and the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (for a separate but similar project), the programme was blocked by President Chissano in April 1992: it seems he feared that, although the initiative was aimed at encouraging Renamo soldiers to exchange their guns for food, Frelimo soldiers would be equally attracted to bringing in their weapons, thus leaving government forces weak at a critical time in the run up to the peace agreement.⁴⁹

After further lengthy delays, the *Associação dos Desmobilizados de Guerra* (AMODEG) contacted the CCM in mid-May 1995 to assist it with providing good quality beans and flour in exchange for guns from demobilized soldiers. The presumption was that ex-soldiers had access to guns and ammunition, and that offering food in this way might encourage them to exchange some of their weapons in times of food shortages rather than using them to commit crime to survive.⁵⁰ The programme finally got off the ground on 20 October 1995.

By January 1997, 874 firearms, 79 other weapons (knives etc.), and over 20,000 armaments ranging from bullets to bazooka shells had been collected in the Maputo area (see Table 3).⁵¹ Some of these weapons were made into anti-militaristic sculptures for show

⁴⁵ In other areas, however, serious problems continued. Armed robberies in the last quarter of 1995 increased by 30 per cent along Zimbabwe's eastern border with Mozambique. Zimbabwean police source, Harare, April 1996. While Zimbabweans blame Mozambicans, the Mozambican authorities complained of increasing numbers of Zimbabwean-based criminals who entered Mozambique.

⁴⁶ The police recorded 2,370 crimes against property in 1996, of which 658 were robbery (135 of these armed), a slight reduction from 1995. *Noticias*, Maputo, 4 March 1997.

⁴⁷ Interview with Jakkie Potgieter, senior researcher, Institute for Security Studies, Eskom Conference Centre, Midrand, 3 July 1997.

⁴⁸ Mozambican army chief of staff Lieutenant-General Lagos Lidimo has rejected these allegations as the fabrications of former officers of the South African apartheid army bent on disturbing the good relationships among southern African states. *SouthScan*, 12, 25 (4 July 1997).

⁴⁹ In 1991, even a small Protestant church's 'Arms into Ploughshares' project in Malawi, sponsored partly by the British High Commission in Lilongwe, to deal with the increasing number of guns coming into Malawi from Mozambique had to be stopped because the Mozambique government found that its troops in garrisons like Malanje were selling their weapons. Interview with Dennis Osborne, ex-British High Commissioner, Lilongwe, December 1991.

⁵⁰ Noticias, Maputo, 26 May 1995.

⁵¹ Interview, Boaventura Zita, CCM, Maputo, 4 March 1997.

Weapon type	1995	1996
AK	76	279
Pistols	36	55
G3	4	11
ZG1	0	1
Mauser	12	23
RPG	18	32
P.P. XA rifle	82	79

Table	3.	Mozambique:	CCM	arms
i	nto	ploughshares	project	

Source: Conselho Cristão Moçambicana, 8 January 1997.

at Maputo's International Trade Fair in August 1996.⁵² The programme was planned to run for two years, and had an initial budget of US\$1.2 million, provided by Germany and Japan but was extended on 14 October 1997 with a Swedish grant of US\$125,000 and has expanded to Gaza and Inhambane Provinces. Most of the money was used to provide incentives for people to come forward and hand in their weapons: bicycles, sewing machines and agricultural hand-tools were offered in return for weapons. Anyone who provided information leading to the discovery of a significant cache might receive a tractor. The programme has, however, run short of money, and people have complained that they have not been rewarded for handing in weapons. The programme has also been limited to the far south of the country, around Maputo city. And there are additional complications, as illustrated by the recent case of Delphina Armando Cossa in Maputo. She received a sewing machine in exchange for her brother's pistol. The CCM subsequently discovered several bicycles given out by the Council for other weapons at the family home: using more than one family member, it seems the brother had been slowly turning in a store of weapons without attracting attention to himself.⁵³

It was not, of course, only guns which presented a threat in post-war Mozambique. Mines were used extensively by all sides during the war – nearly 40 types of anti-personnel mines from more than a dozen nations have been reported – and in some areas they continued to be planted after the war.⁵⁴ Mines have claimed some 10,000 victims and continue to kill and maim on a daily basis: more than 1,000 people have been injured by mines since the October 1992 peace accord. Landmines constituted one of the most immediate obstacles to post-war development: they hindered the delivery of relief aid, resettlement, and agricultural and commercial reconstruction. Though the frequently cited UN estimate of two million mines in Mozambique is certainly too high (the real total is in the hundreds, or even tens, of thousands), Mozambique clearly has a serious problem.

Mine clearance efforts have, however, been plagued with delays and controversy. President Chissano announced in October 1995 that Mozambique was prepared to head an international campaign against landmines, but little concrete action was taken for the next year and a half as the Mozambican military wanted to retain the option of using landmines. However, as the Fourth International NGO Conference on Landmines (held in Maputo in

⁵² ELO Ecumenico, 32 (August 1996).

⁵³ Daley, 'In Mozambique, Guns for Ploughshares and Bicycles'.

⁵⁴ A. Vines and J.-P. Borges Coelho, 'Trinta Anos de Guerras e Minas em Moçambique', in Arquivo (ed.), *Moçambique: Desminagem e Desenvolvimento* (Maputo, Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1995) pp. 11–49. Both government and Renamo forces have laid a limited number of mines since the peace accord, in some cases simply to wage local vendettas. Bandit groups, criminals and poachers have also used mines. See Human Rights Watch Arms Project, *Still Killing: Landmines in Southern Africa* (Human Rights Watch, New York, 1997), pp. 62–99.

February, 1997) approached, the attention paid to landmines greatly increased domestically, regionally and internationally, spurring a policy decision. Mozambique's Foreign Minister addressed the NGO Conference and announced an immediate ban on the use, production, import and export of antipersonnel mines. In December 1997, Mozambique also signed the Ottawa Treaty banning the use, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Destruction of Mozambique's stockpile has not, however, been addressed by the government and mine clearance remains a difficult issue.

Mozambique-South Africa Co-operation

One of the most important developments with regard to the control of weapons and crime was the increasing co-operation between South Africa and Mozambique. In March 1995, during a visit to South Africa by President Chissano, a formal security agreement between the two countries was signed. Under this agreement, the South African Firearms Investigation Unit and the Mozambican police force would operate jointly in southern Mozambique against arms traffickers and others. The agreement also provided for a regular exchange of information as well as access to detainees for interrogation in whichever country they were held. Following a meeting between South African Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi and Mozambican Interior Minister Almerino Manhenje in June 1997, both countries agreed to increase their police co-operation to allow Mozambican police access to a South African detective academy.⁵⁵

In 1995, joint Mozambican-South African police operations resulted in the destruction of 45 arms caches in southern Mozambique. In July of the same year, Mozambican and South African police officers jointly destroyed over 270 firearms and a large quantity of ammunition in front of the press. Much of this weaponry had been hidden around Maputo province. In the second phase of the joint operation, dubbed Operation Rachel-II, hundreds more rifles, submachine guns and other weaponry were destroyed.⁵⁶ A total of 2,211 AK-47s and more than a million rounds of ammunition were destroyed in the first two joint operations.⁵⁷ A further operation, Operation Rachel-III, which focussed on Gaza, Inhambane and Sofala provinces between 21 July and 11 August 1997, netted more than 5,500 machine guns, sub-machine guns and automatic rifles (1,177 of these were AK-47s). Seventy-eight pistols, 518 anti-personnel landmines, four anti-tank mines and three million rounds of ammunition of various calibres were also located and destroyed.⁵⁸ Further operations have been planned: some 70 caches of weapons have already been located in Cabo Delgado province.

Operation Rachel has, however, faced problems. The co-operation of the Mozambican authorities has not always been enthusiastic, and there were a series of scandals in which arms traffickers were tipped-off prior to raids, indicating the involvement of both South African officials and their Mozambican counterparts with the traffickers. As a result, there

⁵⁵ SAPA news agency, 10 June 1997.

⁵⁶ The total captured was 685 AK-47 rifles, 154 sub-machine guns, 255 rifles, 47 mortar tubes, 29 RPG-7s, 2 anti-aircraft heavy machine guns, 170 mortar bombs, 84 anti-personnel mines, 5 pistols and 23,415 rounds of ammunition.

⁵⁷ M. Naude, 'Control of illegal weapons across borders: practical examples', paper presented at First International Conference on Comparative Regional Security, Institute for Security Studies, 1–3 July 1997; SAPA news agency, 10 June 1997.

⁵⁸ News Media Statement by the Divisional Commissioners National Detective Service and the Crime Prevention and Response Division, 'Joint Operation: South Africa Police Service and Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM): Arms Caches in Mozambique (Operation Rachel III)', Pretoria, 11 August 1997. Other weapons found and destroyed included 336 hand-grenades, 153 detonators, 3,726 mortar bombs, 79 rocket and mortar launchers/tubes, 2,340 projectiles (including 158 RPG-7 projectiles), 13 cannons, and 3,674 magazines of ammunition.

have been several purges of the teams. It remains to be seen how the northern Mozambique operations will perform.

Security co-operation between South Africa and Mozambique may well expand further. The Mozambican Defence Minister, Aguiar Mazula, and his South African opposite number, Joe Modise, signed a Letter of Intent on 4 February 1996. It authorized the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to enter Mozambican territory 'in zones of difficult access for Mozambican police and security forces', and allowed SANDF units to enter Mozambique in 'hot pursuit' operations. A joint commission of defence ministries on frontier problems may be extended to include joint exercises.⁵⁹

Cooperation between South Africa and Mozambique has become ever more urgent because many of the firearms leaving Mozambique are destined for South Africa. The influx of illegal firearms to South Africa has been stimulated by political conflict, growing crime and a perceived need for self-protection.⁶⁰ Criminal gangs have armed themselves in order to intimidate and control people in certain areas, and they increasingly use light weapons in criminal activities linked to financial gain. In 1995, crime was estimated to have cost the South African economy R31.3 billion, or 5.6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Since 1989, South African murders have increased by 61 per cent, armed robberies by 119 per cent and rapes by 80 per cent.⁶¹ Guns have proliferated in this context: in mid-1996, 1,933,222 citizens owned 3,503,573 licenced firearms in South Africa, an increase of over 60 per cent from the 1986 total of 2,492,633 licenced firearms.⁶² In 1996 the demand for firearm licences averaged 20,000 requests per month, a clear response to increasing levels of violent crime.

Crime networks operating in South Africa are well established and sophisticated: the same networks are often used for smuggling firearms, drugs, vehicles, ivory, rhino horns, gem stones and precious metals. During the arrest of four members of a suspected million dollar Bulgarian car theft syndicate in March 1997, police were astonished to find papers stating that 10,000 AK-47 assault rifles would be delivered with 'the grenade-chargers missing'.⁶³ South African Police reported that, in 1995, seven organized crime syndicates which primarily participated in either drug trafficking, stock-theft, housebreaking or diamond and gold related offences, were also involved in the illegal firearm trade. In 1996, the South African Firearm Investigation Unit was monitoring the activities of more than 2,800 suspects known to be involved in the illegal firearm trade. The Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamaddi, told Parliament in June 1996 that there were 481 known crime syndicates operating in South Africa, of which 112 were involved in vehicle and weapons smuggling.⁶⁴

There is little doubt that the availability of firearms has increased violent crime. However, the number of illegal weapons circulating in South Africa is not known: figures range from 400,000 to eight million. Police estimate that they seize 10 per cent at most of the weapons that enter the country illegally. They seized 11,660 firearms during 1993, 14,460 firearms in 1994, and over 15,000 in 1995; in the first six months of 1997, they seized 71 AK-47s, 155 rifles, 515 hand weapons (pistols) and 181 homemade guns. Though the South African media frequently report that AK-47s are used in armed crime, playing on

⁵⁹ Domingo, Maputo, 11 February 1996.

⁶⁰ See J. de Cock, 'A Sociological Account of Light Weapons Proliferation in Southern Africa', in J. Singh (ed.), Light Weapons and International Security (Delhi, Indian Pugwash Society and BASIC, 1995).

⁶¹ G. Oosthuysen, *Small Arms Proliferation and Control in Southern Africa* (South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1996), p. 10.

⁶² D. Besdziek, 'Into the Breech: Reversing the Proliferation of Firearms in South Africa', *African Security Review*, 5, 6 (1996).

⁶³ The Star and SA Times International, London, 12 March 1997.

⁶⁴ The Sowetan, Soweto, 20 June 1996.

Weapon type	1993	1994	1995	1996
Rifles				
AK-47	1,403	1,589	1,392	1,169
Other	1,170	1,297	892	1,512
Shotguns	593	691	632	632
Sub-total	3,166	3,577	2,916	3,313
Pistols				
Stechkin	20	10	4	2
Scorpion	11	16	32	3
Makarov	174	164	172	221
Tokarev	77	56	58	263
Other	4,327	5,150	6,934	8,803
Sub-total	4,609	5,396	7,200	9,292
Revolvers	1,894	2,364	2,842	2,812
Home-made	1,991	3,123	2,624	2,806
Grand total	11,660	14,460	15,582	17,223
Ammunition so	eized: 1993-1	996		
7.62 mm	119,610	103,424	40,717	48,299
Other	1,194,826	203,367	108,259	105,439

Table 4. Weapons seized in South Africa: 1993-1996

Source: South African police figures.

images of communist onslaught encouraged during the apartheid years,⁶⁵ in fact pistols and revolvers have become the popular tools of armed crime in South Africa.

As South African Police statistics show, in the majority of crimes such as armed robbery, housebreaking and car theft a pistol is preferred to an assault rifle – for the simple reason that pistols and revolvers are much easier to conceal. An exception are attacks on security companies, which attract gangs, many of them armed with AK-47s and armour piercing bullets. An illegal arms dealer in central Johannesburg (whose wares included AK-47s, R-4s, and Stechkin, Scorpion, Makarov and Tokarev pistols), complained that, 'When I started this business, I bought up a whole lot of AKs from suppliers in Mozambique. But there is little demand for them. I have good stocks, and can offer you a good price, R200 each. I need to move stock, otherwise I'll be out of business. I need cash to buy pistols. That's what people want; I'm always short on stocks'.⁶⁶

The change in preference in favour of hand guns in South Africa has affected the pattern of weapons transfers to South Africa from Mozambique, as well as the types of weapons which are handed in or recovered in Mozambique. The sweeps carried out under Operation Rachel have captured far fewer pistols than rifles, and few pistols have been handed in to the CCM in Maputo. Mozambique police say that new Stechkin, Scorpion, Makarov and Tokarev pistols are being transferred through Maputo port to South Africa. These originate in Bulgaria, Albania and Russia. They usually only pass through Mozambique, although there is some evidence that they may be stockpiled with Mandrax and other contraband items for some period in Maputo.

Although automatic weapons are not used extensively in armed crime, there does still appear to be a market for them in South Africa. In his recent study of small arms proliferation in southern Africa, Glenn Oosthuysen warned that such weapons may be being stockpiled by political groups such as in KwaZulu-Natal pending an upswing in violence.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ J. de Cock, 'A Sociological Account of Light Weapons Proliferation in Southern Africa', p. 110.

⁶⁶ Interview, Johannesburg, 7 March 1997.

⁶⁷ Oosthuysen, Small Arms Proliferation and Control in Southern Africa, p. 14.

Dealers also appear to be stockpiling, and former Renamo bases in southern Mozambique and secret locations in the Kruger park⁶⁸ have been used as depots for the arms trade to the Ingwavuma area in KwaZulu-Natal.

Conclusions

The United Nations' failure to effect meaningful disarmament during its ONUMOZ operation has had serious consequences, especially for South Africa. While it would have been impossible for ONUMOZ to disarm all armed individuals, it could have more efficiently destroyed those weapons it did obtain, especially when it became apparent that the new integrated FADM army would be far smaller than anticipated. As we have seen these weapons have since become 'unaccounted for'. ONUMOZ's failure was tied to its weak mandate regarding disarmament. It failed to spell out clearly what disarmament should entail and the criteria for its success. It did not clearly distinguish between disarmament and demobilisation (and neither did researchers).⁶⁹ The UN also failed to provide the political and financial resources to deal with the issue and to see that weapons were properly collected and decommissioned.⁷⁰

Post-UN disarmament in Mozambique has been more successful, a reflection of growing confidence in peace both at local levels and in senior policy-making circles. President Chissano's blocking of various 'Arms into Ploughshare' schemes, and his refusal to allow the UN to destroy weapons or to stay on past its mandate to work on disarmament, were mainly motivated by insecurity. Since 1995, disarmament in Mozambique has gained speed, and the old weapons caches are no longer such a serious threat to internal security. Ironically, it is South Africa that has suffered most from the peace-dividend, as large numbers of light weapons flowed out of Mozambique. However, the joint South Africa/Mozambique police operations (Operations Rachel I-III), and a change in market demand for guns in South Africa, has seen a decline both in the arms trade from Mozambique, and in the illegal retention of AK-47s inside Mozambique itself. Local level efforts to disarm have also been successful, though they have failed to attract public attention.

Mozambique's challenge now lies in controlling the flow of new illegal weapons in southern Africa, and the links of senior officials to crime syndicates. When there has been political will to deal with these issues there have been tangible results. The Mozambican government's banning of anti-personnel mines in February 1997 is one example; the replacement of Home Affairs and Police Minister Manuel António with Almerino Manhenje in November 1996 is another. If the government fails to act against the arms trade in Mozambique, and does not support continued disarmament, there may yet be significant implications for democracy and civil liberties. Stockpiled guns and ammunition may be drawn upon by groups tempted to use violence to obtain their goals; crime syndicates are likely to supply weapons to whoever can pay. Mozambique's recent history shows how quickly armed individuals can cause a social, economic and humanitarian crisis.

ALEX VINES

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⁶⁸ An example of this was a huge weapons cache found by police in the Kruger National Park on 16 July 1997. The cache was about five kilometres from the park's border with Mozambique. It contained 105 AK-47 assault rifles, 1,700 rounds of Tokarev 7.62 mm ammunition and two RPG-7 projectiles. The weaponry, all of Russian origin, apparently emanated from Mozambique. SAPA news agency, 16 July 1997.

⁶⁹ Hill, 'Disarmament in Mozambique: Learning the Lessons of Experience', pp. 127-145.

⁷⁰ C. Smith, 'Light Weapons and International Trade', in UNIDIR (ed.), Small Arms Management and Peacekeeping in Southern Africa (UNIDIR, Geneva, 1996), p. 55.