

Mozambique peace process bulletin



Issue 11 - August 1994

Written by Joseph Hanlon

Material may be freely reprinted

Published by AWEPA, the European Parliamentarians for Southern Africa
Prins Hendrikkade 48, 1012 AC Amsterdam, Netherlands
Tel: (31) 20 - 626 66 39 Fax: (31) 20 - 622 01 30
Rua D Joao IV 163 (CP 2465), Maputo, Mozambique
Tel: (258) 1 - 49 24 25 or 74 10 89 Fax: (258) 1 - 49 24 21

Soldiers active; voters apathetic

Daily mutinies by soldiers on both sides demanding to be immediately sent home forced Renamo and the government to agree that the new army must be voluntary and that demobilisation must be speeded up. It seems likely that demobilisation will be finished by the end of August. The new army will have fewer than 13,000 men by the October 27-28 election, with too many officers and too few foot soldiers.

The mutinies undoubtedly hastened demobilisation. But they underlined the power vacuum in Maputo and have set a worrying precedent. Soldiers have shown that the only way to get action is to block main roads and hold civilians hostage. Militiamen have followed this lead, and unpaid workers at a cashew factory have blocked a road.

The power vacuum occurs at all levels. Government has seemed unable to take decisions since the peace accord. The peace and election processes are dependent on mixed commissions that must act by consensus, are bureaucratic and pedantic, and take weeks or months to agree tiny decisions. The United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) has been made to look powerless by a series of bandit attacks which effectively closed roads out of Maputo; ONUMOZ has 4208 troops in Mozambique for the purpose of protecting transport corridors, but often the troops remain in the barracks or on the beach.

Meanwhile, 5.2 million people had been registered for the election by 5 August, and it seemed clear that it would not be possible to

register all those eligible by the extended deadline of 20 August. Remote rural areas have been badly covered by registration brigades.

So far international and UN observers have reported remarkably few incidents of misconduct or intimidation. This may be because, unlike in Angola, Malawi and South Africa, prospects of an election in Mozambique have not provoked excitement. With less than three months to go before the election, civic education is minimal, unofficial campaigning has been limited, and voters are proving apathetic and disinterested. Potential voters seem more concerned with day-to-day survival and, with the war halted, do not see the elections having an impact on their lives.

Military option ended?

The mutinies involved not only reluctant soldiers that the two sides were holding in assembly areas in an attempt to force them into the new army, but also apparently crack soldiers the two sides were holding back as part of a "military option".

In mid-July more than 400 Renamo guerrillas who were not on any lists provided to ONUMOZ mutinied at Dombe in Manica province to demand demobilisation. To press their demand, they stopped traffic on the main north-south road; they forced more than 70 vehicles to drive 50 km to Dombe and held up to 500 people.

Two weeks later soldiers of the government's 6th tank brigade based at Matola Gare, 15 km from Maputo, blocked the main road out of capital

government's defence of the capital, the brigade's commander had prevented ONUMOZ from disabling the tanks two weeks earlier.

Indications are that both sides have tried to maintain a military force that could be used before or after the election. Both sides held back the best troops until last and have kept their top commanders out of the new army. Both sides demobbed more troops from unassembled sites such as military bases and sent fewer troops to assembly areas than planned.

Renamo held back at least two groups of unreported troops -- the group which rebelled in Dombe, and a group of about 500 in Mutarara district in Tete that has been the subject of repeated complaints from government.

Renamo's only formal complaint, that Frelimo had a battalion in Tanzania, was shown to be nonsense. But Frelimo, too, is widely assumed to have either held some troops back or sent some soldiers home to await instructions.

But the demand for demobilisation by the Dombe and Matola Gare groups shows that military leaders cannot guarantee the willingness to fight of even top troops. Soldiers on both sides have overwhelmingly said they want nothing to do with the new army and do not want to fight.

This means that, unlike Angola, the side losing the election could not raise a sizeable military force to return to war. This reduces the potential for the election loser to take the "military option".

Nevertheless, not all of the 6th tank brigade rebelled; some have joined the new army. Officers from both sides may have many fewer loyal troops than they expected, but even a few hundred committed soldiers could cause a lot of havoc.

Election: 5.2 mn register

By 5 August, 5.2 million people had been issued with registration cards. The National Election Commission (CNE) lowered its estimate of eligible people to 7.8 million. But it has extended registration from 15 August only to 20 August, and it will be hard pressed to register 6 million.

On 7 August Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama expressed concern that not all the rural population could be registered by 20 August. The problem seems particularly severe in Renamo-controlled areas, and this could be cited as a reason to later reject the election outcome.

By early August registration still had not started in a few areas, and in many places people were expected to walk 15 km or more to register. The limited civic education campaign suggests that registration is compulsory (which it is not) and many people want the registration card as a photo-ID card, which must be increasing

abstention rate in the election.

Logistic problems

The CNE has faced horrendous logistic and political problems. By 17 July, more than half way through the campaign, only 1572 of a planned 1600 brigades were functioning. At the end of July, the CNE still had only 116 cars (half hired at high cost locally), and cars were still arriving in early August.

A meeting in Maputo of all provincial electoral and technical commissions agreed to increase wages of brigade members from US\$ 30 to US\$ 45 per month in exchange for weekend working. CNE head Brazao Mazula noted that much of the civic education is being done by religious and other non-government organisations, and he asked them to intensify their efforts.

Training of registration brigades was rushed and education levels are very low, so there have been mistakes made by some registration brigades.

Meanwhile, the decision last year that the national, provincial and district election commissions should not be neutral technical bodies but politicised bodies representing all parties bought agreement of the parties at a very high price. All decisions must be made by consensus, giving each member a veto. Especially at local level, commission members see themselves as representing party interests rather than simply running an election. The commissions are also taking a very rigid, bureaucratic view of the role, being concerned with applying the letter of the law rather than flexibility.

At the National Election Commission (CNE), interminable discussions make decision-taking very difficult. For example, after a month of discussion, the CNE concluded on 20 July that it could not reach a consensus about people outside the country voting, and thus those people will not be allowed to vote. Frelimo had wanted Mozambicans outside the country to vote, because many had fled Renamo, while Renamo was opposed.

Debate continues on the use of computers. Following confirmed computer fraud in South Africa and false allegations of computer fraud in Angola, Renamo is opposed to the use of computers in the count.

And no rules have been agreed on sharing radio time in the official campaign which begins on 12 September, nor has the CNE approved a code of conduct for candidates.

The CNE must also decide on a 4 August complaint from FUMO that trips by President Chissano to the provinces were campaign trips not permitted until the formal start of the campaign.

matters of state, Chissano was making snide comments about "partridges that eat your maize" -- an obvious comment about Renamo which just chose the partridge (*perdiz*) as part of its symbol. FUMO has not objected to similar trips by Renamo leader Dhlakama.

No money yet for parties

With only a month to go before official campaigning starts, the 15 small parties had still received no money from a special UN trust fund (which so far has only \$1.8 million from Italy). ONUMOZ had refused to hand out the money until the CNE set rules, so the CNE turned to the would-be recipients. On 2 July CNE approved a decision of a meeting of parties to divide the funds equally between all parties and give them all the money immediately.

The donors were appalled and decided, as CNE had insisted all along, that it was not for the CNE to set the rules. Finally in early August they said that each registered party would get \$50,000, probably as early as 12 August, and could have another \$50,000 if it accounted properly for the first amount and had spent it according to the rules. Money cannot be used for cars, houses or salaries -- which has appalled many of the smaller parties which hoped to pay for a presidential car.

Army: too many officers

Too many officers and too few foot soldiers is the prospect for the new Mozambican army, at least in the short term. Daily mutinies by soldiers from both sides demanding demobilisation finally forced the Supervision and Control Commission (CSC) to agree on 25 July that anyone who wanted to be demobilised could be, and any present soldiers volunteering for the new army would be accepted.

A joint UN/Renamo/government survey of assembly areas showed that only 3.6% of the 7559 Renamo troops wanted to go to the new army, while 10.9% of the 13,322 government troops were willing to go to the new army. (The actual percentage is probably much lower, about 7%, because the official figure includes 541 men from Ulongue where an unusual 94% are said to want to join the new army -- a figure not believed by anyone.) This means of 20,881 men in assembly areas on 2 August, only 1200-1700 will go to the new army.

A UN survey of troops in unassembled areas -- which includes crack troops held back until the last -- showed that only 10% of 4279 unassembled Renamo troops and 27% of government's 19,868 unassembled troops wanted

But of unassembled government forces, 50% of officers, 23% of non-commissioned officers, and only 9% of ordinary soldiers want to remain in the armed forces. By contrast, only 12% of unassembled Renamo officers want to stay.

The results of the survey confirm what occurred when ONUMOZ tried to collect 4552 people from assembly areas indicated by the two sides for infantry training in the new army. On both sides, more than two-thirds of those listed refused to go. Only 1453 agreed, meaning only two battalions can be trained instead of the six planned.

Even the units already trained are under strength, with 2949 soldiers instead of 3616 as planned.

Including trainers and other offices, the 5 August strength of the FADM, including people now in training, is only 5961. With 1200-1700 available from assembly areas and 5000-5700 available from unassembled locations, this points to an army of about 12,000-13,000 people -- far below the 30,000 called for in the peace accord and even the 15,000 for whom training places are available.

And this will include nearly 4000 officers -- more than is needed for an army of 30,000 men.

These figures tend to confirm the view that, at least on the government side, it was the officers and not the ordinary soldiers who wanted a large army, and that the government military may have been delaying demobilisation in the hope of press-ganging enough soldiers to justify the large officer corps.

In effect, the two sides have been forced to agree what UN Special Representative Aldo Ajello proposed some time ago -- to demobilise all non-volunteers now, and look for young volunteers after the election.

But the new government will be under intense pressure from donors and the World Bank not to have such a large army and not to recruit new soldiers. In that case, some provision will need to be made for the excess officers.

August end

Assembly areas will close by 22 August and demobilisation of both assembled and unassembled troops should finish by the end of August, according to ONUMOZ officials.

President Joaquim Chissano is expected to demobilise himself on 15 August. Parts of the government's Mozambique Armed Forces (FAM) have already been closed down, and during August the rest will be shut down and handed over to the new Armed Defence Force of Mozambique (FADM).

unassembled troops had been registered:

	Renamo	Government
Unassembled	4,795	20,074
Assembly areas	17,441	43,296
Total	22,236	63,370
Planned	22,637	64,466
Total/plan	98%	98%

Access remains restricted

Mozambique is still two countries with two administrations, with some Renamo areas remaining closed or tightly restricted.

In Dombe in Manica province there was still a large Renamo military presence in early August; officially 422 soldiers had not been demobilised. Local people are not allowed to talk with outsiders without approval of Renamo officials.

Elsewhere in the centre of the country, the Mozambican Red Cross has been able to do drought relief in some Renamo controlled areas but has been barred from others. And people are still prohibited from leaving some Renamo zones.

The UN Secretary General in his report to the Security Council in July again "noted with concern that access to a few Renamo-controlled districts is still impeded."

The joint Territorial Administration Commission has been weak and slow. Government did not treat it seriously and did not appoint to the Commission anyone from the Ministry of State Administration which must actually oversee the reintegration of Renamo-controlled zones. This has led to needless tensions between the Commission and the Ministry.

Official appointments of Renamo nominees as government district and rural administrative post administrators has so far been token. In Manica and Sofala provinces, Renamo officials still defer to their Renamo provincial "governors", and Renamo continues to issue licences to traders and businesspeople to work in Renamo zones.

Politics: Angola, Nicaragua or Malawi?

Will Mozambique be like Angola, with the ruling party winning? Like Nicaragua, where the ruling party lost to US-backed insurgents? Or could it be like Malawi and have a president from one party and a parliament controlled by other parties?

When the peace process began, it was widely assumed that Frelimo would win and that the need

subsequent months, Frelimo seems to have lost ground while Renamo and the unarmed opposition parties have gained.

Substantial international support has undoubtedly been effective in converting Renamo and Dhlakama from guerrillas into political figures. Dhlakama's rallies are well attended and he has made good use of television training.

In sharp contrast to the MPLA in Angola, Frelimo has not made use of the peace process period to put forward a new image and new programme. Increasingly Frelimo is blamed for the economic hardships caused by structural adjustment, and for the widespread corruption. Although Frelimo still carries the prestige of the party which brought independence, this may not be enough. Some Frelimo militants now accuse the party of over-confidence.

Polling is particularly inaccurate in Mozambique, but a 28 July poll in *Mediafax* caused comment because it seemed to correspond to the gut reaction of some party militants. In four cities in Inhambane, 324 people said how they might vote. For president, 46% chose Chissano, 26% Dhlakama, and 24% Domingos Arouca (who is from Inhambane). But for parliament, only 29% picked Frelimo; Arouca's FUMO drew 27%, Renamo 17% and Monamo 15%. This suggests, as many suspect, that Chissano may be more popular than his party.

Ajello vs. government

During June and July UN Special Representative Aldo Ajello and the government entered into an extended battle. Ajello argued the government was publicly attacking his authority and position in an effort to delay demobilisation and the formation of the new army. So he launched a major diplomatic campaign to hit back at the government.

He tried to get the UN Security Council and the foreign members of the CSC to publicly criticise the government for delays. But in the Security Council Mozambique was defended by Brazil and the Council only agreed to send a fact-finding and arm-twisting mission which arrived on 8 August. Most CSC members backed the proposed criticism, but it was stopped by Italy and an Africa member.

But Ajello did succeed in getting diplomats in Maputo to criticise the government, publicly and privately. Most outspoken was US ambassador Dennis Jett, who used the US independence day celebration to give a speech which was seen even by the opposition press as an unacceptable intervention in Mozambican politics, and as backing for Renamo.

change", in a set of rhetorical questions Jett called on voters to consider (and by implication to back) the party speeding up the process of demobilisation (at a time when ONUMOZ was accusing government of delaying demobilisation) and the party which supports "power sharing" (backed by Renamo and opposed by government).

Jett went further, and called on the small opposition parties to form a coalition.

The press outcry and then the mutiny by unreported Renamo troops tended to mute diplomatic criticism of the government.

But the Security Council mission and a flying visit of US Undersecretary George Moose both increased the pressure on the two sides to meet the demobilisation and election schedules. Moose also seemed to be trying to smooth feathers ruffled by Jett's speech, however.

National unity government?

Pressure for some kind of pre-election deal continues to grow, both from Mozambicans and from the diplomatic community. In an interview, Jett stressed that there was simply too much potential for disputes after the election, and there must be a deal prior to the election that ensures both sides accept the outcome.

In his independence day speech Jett used the Portuguese phrase *partilha do poder* which translates as "power sharing". Others have talked of a *governo de unidade nacional* (GUN, government of national unity).

Discussion had centred around a South Africa-style agreement to give vice presidencies and ministries in proportion to votes. It seems widely accepted that the largest party in a province should have the governorship (governors are appointed by the president).

Otherwise, however, the discussion has broadened. Some are suggesting a formalisation of the role of the parliamentary opposition, to give official standing to the leader of the opposition. It might be possible to agree to increase the power of parliament and of governors.

Others are pointing out that a GUN should represent not just political parties, but should also reflect the ethnic and social composition of the country and draw in people from outside the parties.

Central to any settlement is the growing realisation that political power is seen by all parties as access to resources, particularly land and money. Thus a GUN is not just power-sharing but also "cake-sharing".

Jett was particularly clear on this when he said that what he wanted to see was that Mozambique

there should be "a greater participation in the elite. It cannot be a closed shop."

Dhlakama and Chissano have been meeting regularly privately and government ministers have also been meeting with Renamo. In a quiet reversal of an earlier stand, houses are being made available in Maputo for Renamo people, and it is widely assumed that some "gentlemen's agreement" has been reached to ensure that if Renamo loses, the top dozen people in the party will be provided for.

So far, however, Frelimo has been unwilling to allow Chissano to announce publicly any agreement with Renamo.

What we paid for

"Having invested a half billion dollars in this process, it is not simply a question of ratifying the process and walking away. We want to see change," US ambassador Jett told the BULLETIN. This includes greater participation in government, concern for human rights, and a greater role for the private sector.

The US is also leading a campaign to ensure a large role for donors and a smaller role for government in the post-election period. Writing in *Mozambique Report*, the magazine of the UN Office of Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHAC), the USAID director in Mozambique, Roger Carlson, argued that relief and reintegration programmes now handled by ONUMOZ and UNOHAC should not be given to the government when those agencies close after the election -- even though "all of these activities fall within the natural and proper scope of governments." Instead, these programmes should be handled by a mix of UN and non-government bodies controlled by the donors.

Comment: Frelimo radio?

Discontent is growing inside the media about the dual role of Manuel Tome as director of Radio Mozambique and Propaganda Secretary for Frelimo. Whatever Tome's actual role, RM will never be seen as independent while a party propaganda secretary remains head. Even were he not to put pressure on journalists, some might fear for their jobs if they report freely. Journalists in the independent press are now saying privately that to protect their own integrity they will need to distance themselves from RM during the election. This would be unfortunate, since the shortage of journalists and resources in Mozambique means that even a limited coverage of the election require collaboration of all media. *jh*