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SPOTLIGHT

MOZAMBIQUE: *Peace proposals*

According to sources close to the Secretary of State for Cooperation, the government in Mozambique has just communicated a document containing a peace plan with a view to reconciliation in Mozambique to a limited number of embassies in Maputo, namely, the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, France and Italy. The document is a "non-paper", a draft, and was also given to Portugal's Secretary of State for Cooperation, **Durao Barroso**, during his recent visit to Maputo.

This Mozambican peace initiative contains the same proposals as Maputo drew up in October 1984 during the first indirect peace negotiations with RENAMO. Accordingly, Mozambique's government would only be prepared to discuss changes to be made in the country's political institutions on two main conditions: that RENAMO recognise the current President of the Republic and Mozambican institutions, and that it lay down its arms. The government also considers that any changes to be made to Mozambique's political institutions cannot be discussed during the peace talks but only by putting the issues to the Mozambican people. On his return from the Gbadolite Summit in Zaire where it was agreed that there would be a cease-fire in Angola, President **Joaquim Chissano** announced in Beira on June 24, that he was prepared to follow Angola's example but demanded that first, RENAMO lays down its arms and agrees to cooperate with Mozambique's government. Maputo's "new" peace plan also focuses on the government assuring the assimilation of RENAMO's guerillas into economic life. It seems partly influenced by ideas recently put forward by the Catholic Church in collaboration with Luso-Mozambicans (ION N°387).

In Lisbon, Maputo's new peace proposals would be considered "timorous and inadequate". Since 1984, RENAMO has been demanding that the principle of free general elections be admitted as well as the Constitution modified, also the withdrawal of foreign troops and advisors and the formation of a provisional government open to RENAMO under the authority of the current President of the Republic. During 1984's indirect talks, the Mozambican delegation, directed at the time by **Jacinto Veloso**, did not accept that an agenda for the content of the negotiations be set out before they begin. RENAMO, whose delegation was then led by **Evo Fernandes**, assassinated last year, accepted this albeit against their will. The negotiations broke down, a failure. At that time, South Africa was pushing for a fifteen-month cease-fire which would have allowed enough time to arrange for free elections. However, in the statement issued after RENAMO's first congress held this June, there was no mention of conditions for a return to peace in Mozambique, apart from a request to see South Africa participate in the talks as a mediator. This would indicate that the rebel organisation's leaders are willing to give future talks a chance (ION N°388). According to well-informed sources, RENAMO would have also shown interest in Maputo's

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latest initiative. Since Mr Barruso's visit to Maputo, Portugal considers itself as a mediator and would be weighing up the best alternatives for scheduling and organising various contacts. And to this end, as soon as Mr Barruso had completed his visit to Maputo, he left for Zimbabwe then South Africa and the United States, the visits clearly part of a peace efforts. Moreover, Harare had invited Lisbon to formulate a peace proposal for Mozambique. According to certain sources, Mr **Robert Mugabe's** response was clear, "Mozambique is your baby.", he apparently said to Mr Barruso.

In the eyes of Lisbon, the Mozambique conflict would seem far more complex than the one in Angola. It therefore seems likely that a meeting between Joaquim Chissano and RENAMO president **Afonso Dhlakama**, will not be sufficient to straighten out the problem.

There are various elements complicating the scene including the presence of independent groups of bandits, "warlords" unrelated to RENAMO; a division within RENAMO, the dissident wing being led by **Gimo M'Phiri**; UNAMO (ION N°371) receiving support from Malawi and influence from Zimbabwe (with a 10,000-strong task force), South Africa (RENAMO is still receiving aid from certain military circles) and the CSU, the Bavarian Christian Democratic party which had been lending its support to RENAMO until quite recently.

Given these conditions, it is hardly possible to conceive of a rapidly negotiated cease-fire in Mozambique like the one we have just witnessed in Angola.