

B. AFRICA

MOZAMBICAN PRESIDENT ON MEETING BETWEEN CHURCH GROUPS AND MNR DELEGATION: "PRINCIPLES" FOR DIALOGUE

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Excerpts from report

President Chissano gave an important news conference to national and foreign journalists at the fourth congress hall early this afternoon. The Mozambican leader began by discussing the theme of the conference.

[Chissano recording] The theme is peace initiatives and what we have been doing in search for peace. We have been searching for peace in the People's Republic of Mozambique since the days preceding the signing of the Nkomati accord. We have never stopped taking initiatives since then. The process was interrupted after it had been noted that, as you all know, violations of the Nkomati accord had taken place. The process was dormant for a long period. Yet, even during this period there were actions and a number of initiatives in an attempt to create conditions for peace. . .

The military struggle has allowed us to weaken terrorism, banditry and destabilisation substantially. We recovered strategic areas and we weakened others that have not yet been recovered. Still, we always believed there was the need to seek other, non-military measures to accelerate the peace process. After listening to the people, we decided it was time to listen more closely to those Mozambicans who attack the people and the People's Republic of Mozambique. We wanted to know if they could provide concrete answers about their intentions and aims. We also sought greater clarity about their identities. We knew they were people used by promoters of interests alien to the Mozambican people. Even so, we had to determine who they were. Thus we had to hold some kind of contact, or have someone we could contact. We have always been careful to ensure that whoever contacts us does not give us some false identity. In other words, they must not be considered a political movement, let alone a party. They are not either of these. We know their origins. We know the [words indistinct] movement. They are not a political movement. They are not a party. . .

Corresponding to the desire of the leaders of various Mozambican religions, we asked them to try to contact the armed bandits with two objectives in mind. First, to learn what they want and a bit more about them in order to give us a basis for reasoning. This should be popular reasoning, in line with the reasoning of the church leaders themselves, who were trying to add a little to their understanding of the phenomenon, so we could move forwards on such a basis.

However, the question about what they wanted has never been answered in a logical manner. It has always been answered with many contradictions. So, in various meetings we had with individuals, and based on other information, we got some idea about the thought processes inside Renamo.

Finally, with the support of the government of Kenya, a more organised meeting was set up between a delegation of the so-called Renamo and Mozambican religious leaders, representing 19 different churches, that is, the Catholic Church and the churches comprising the [Mozambique] Christian Council. They met in Nairobi, but they did not reach a satisfactory conclusion. There were a number of setbacks in the holding of the meeting, because a ringleader in the delegation of the so-called Renamo became seriously ill. So, there were (?problems) during the discussions.

However, our religious leaders got the impression that it was possible that some Renamo members could, at least, agree to end the atrocities carried out against the people. Yet, this never happened and atrocities continued.

An appeal was made by religious leaders on a [words indistinct] basis. The religious leaders urged them to arrange a meeting with Mr Afonso Dhlakama himself, the leader of the so-called Renamo, because they wanted direct discussions with him in order to hear his own voice, and to determine his attitude in an attempt to create conditions for direct talks between the government of the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Renamo ringleaders. This meeting took a long time to arrange, that is, after the first Nairobi meeting. Finally, it was decided to hold a meeting on 12th June. The religious leaders were ready. Afterwards, it was decided to postpone this meeting to 17th June, and again to 19th June. It was not held on 19th June. Finally, it was set for, no, it was set for the 17th [no month as heard], but the meeting was marked for 19th July.

Therefore, a delegation of religious leaders has remained in Nairobi until now. They are waiting for a delegation, they are waiting for Mr Dhlakama to talk with them. However, for reasons as yet unknown to us, Mr Dhlakama has not appeared. No delegation of the so-called Renamo has appeared in Nairobi yet.

Still, efforts are continuing to ensure the meeting will take place. We want to announce we have a small delegation which will accompany this process. It will not participate in the meetings, but it is in Nairobi to help the Kenyan government and the religious leaders themselves clarify any issues arising from the talks. It must be noted that it is not there to talk or hold discussions with the mediating teams of the religious leaders and the Kenyan government. They are there to provide peaceful clarifications that may help make our positions understood. That delegation [words indistinct] in preparation for this second meeting, our government found it should do something to make the process move forwards. As talks were expected to begin back in March or April, our government decided to take one more step forward: we decided to give (?information) to the religious leaders and the Kenyan government for more positive talks with the armed bandits. In other words, instead of asking the armed bandits to give us suggestions about their intentions so we could then react as we had been doing, we decided to advance a platform that those belonging to Renamo would think about.

So, we made recommendations to the religious leaders and the Kenyan government. We told them what principles must be observed for dialogue to occur between the Mozambican government and the so-called Renamo. They are principles. We told them: once these principles have been accepted, dialogue is assured.

Those principles were conveyed orally to the religious leaders and the Kenyan government. As there are many countries interested in these continuing initiatives, we thought, well, we may as well convey those principles to them. Everybody was asking: do the party and government want dialogue or not? Do they accept dialogue or not? What are they doing? Do they think the conflict will only end by military means or are there other approaches? Those governments were aware that there were really initiatives, that there was an idea, an idea of what needed to be done. As you may recall, when I visited the United States, I told President Ronald Reagan we wanted to join efforts to find a solution to the destabilisation of Mozambique and southern Africa. I spoke to President Reagan, and I also discussed the issue with other countries, especially England. We have also maintained incidental contacts with France, Italy and the FRG, not to mention the frontline states.

Thus, we conveyed these principles orally to all those countries, including Portugal which is a very important country in this search for solutions. We have maintained frequent contacts with it. In fact, we have even conveyed our principles to South Africa. In this way, they all learned that the Frelimo party and the government of the People's Republic of Mozambique are not against dialogue in itself, but reject dialogue apart from the principles we have set down. To help the memories of the representatives of those governments to whom we conveyed those principles, we put those principles on paper, but that is not a document. It is not a peace plan. However, it is from those principles that a peace platform may be found.

In principle, that proposal would have been directly conveyed to the Renamo ringleaders, but they repeated they wanted unconditional negotiations. We did not, and do not understand what they meant by unconditional negotiations. We know very well what they aim to achieve through the so-called unconditional negotiations. Thus, we advanced principles that were put down on paper, but which do not constitute a document. What we are saying is that if they accept those principles, then there will be dialogue on the basis of a well-defined agenda, in other words, on the basis of well-defined goals. In that way we can try to answer the question we have often asked: dialogue about what? To negotiate what? You must understand we have never said no to negotiation, but we have always asked: negotiate what?

Yes, sometimes we put our ideas about freely in an attempt to prompt responses from them. We did this in our discussions, in our rallies. We said: if they accept, if they want to talk about integration in the life (of the nation), if they seek guarantees and so on, we can receive them. However, it appears that it was not enough. That is why we put those principles on paper so they could be used by all those wanting to help us find a solution.

Such principles are as follows. I am not going to read them from number one to six so as not to create the impression that this is a document. We have numbered the paragraphs in order to make it easy to read, but I will not read them accordingly because this is not a document. That is why we have called it a non-document. In English we call it a non-paper. [preceding two words in English].

So, it reads as follows. We are witnessing a destabilisation operation which should not be confused with a struggle between two parties. The operation has been carried out through brutal terrorist actions which cause immense suffering, particularly among the people and to their property. Hundreds of thousands of people have already been killed. Much of the country's socio-economic infrastructure has been destroyed or paralysed, impeding the normal life of the citizenry and displacing millions of people.

One must find ways to put an end to this inhuman situation. The first action should be to stop all terrorist and bandit activities. Thereafter, one should create conditions for the normalisation of the lives of all Mozambican citizens so that they may take part on the one hand in the country's political, economic, social and cultural life, and on the other hand, in the discussion and definition of policies which will guide the country in each of these aspects. These policies are established by national consensus and formulated through a process of consultations and debate with the people, or social groups, involved in the process

The main laws on land, health and education were approved following popular consultation. The revision of the constitution, which is still in progress, is being carried out through debates which are aimed at introducing increasing elements of democratic participation in the functioning of the state. Religious institutions are being consulted as part of the process for the drafting of legislation on freedom of worship. The dialogue is aimed at clarifying such positions and guarantees the participation of all individuals, including those who have so far been involved in violent actions of destabilisation.

From the outset, such participation and the enjoyment of rights relate to the process of the assertion of principles outlined in the constitution, that is, the defence of individual and collective freedoms, the defence of human rights and the defence of democratic rights. Individual and social freedoms, namely freedom of worship, expression and association are guaranteed. They should not be used against overall national interests to destroy national unity, national independence and the integrity of persons and property. They cannot be used to promote tribalism, racism, regionalism or any form of division or sectarianism. They cannot be used in the preparation or completion of actions punishable by law, namely theft, murder and aggression. They cannot be used in the preparation or completion of violent actions against the state and the constitution, that is, secessionist movements or coups d'etat.

Changes or political and constitutional revisions or even changes in the country's main laws, which in most cases have been carried out or are near implementation through debates or consultations involving citizens, can only be carried out with the broad participation of all citizens.

It is unacceptable that a group uses intimidation and violence to impose itself on society as a whole. It is undemocratic that through violent means a group should change the constitution and the country's main laws. The normalisation of life and the integration of elements who have so far been involved in violent actions of destabilisation implies their participation in economic and social life through the most appropriate means agreed to by such elements and guaranteed by government. . .

These are the principles. If they are accepted, we will talk with the so-called Renamo. As you must have noticed, we do not even demand as a prerequisite that they stop fighting. They must just accept the principles. We understand they are scared of putting down their weapons because they do not know what will happen next. Thus, we cannot demand they put down their weapons until they have heard what will follow. . .

I have invited Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi to visit Maputo. In Maputo, we will outline, discuss and begin to prepare the foundation which we hope they will finally listen to, because this is a call from our people and from the whole of the international community. We hope they will accept the principles we have just listed. Thus, we believe it is time we start preparing the next stage. President arap Moi will arrive here days from now.

Together, we will outline the steps to be taken. We have ideas. We cannot disclose those ideas now. It would be premature. Perhaps even after the meeting with President Moi it will not be convenient to divulge them. Perhaps even the ideas we have today will change after our meeting with President Moi. Therefore, this is not the time to speculate about those ideas. What I must say is that the [Frelimo] Central Committee is meeting at this moment and has approved these principles, as well as measures taken by the Frelimo party leadership. You will probably recall we convoked a new conference a few days ago, which we subsequently cancelled. We cancelled it precisely because we felt it was not right to start broadcasting these delicate issues to the media. Although there has been much speculation and rumours have spread here and there, it was not convenient for us to make that information official without submitting a full report to our Central Committee. Even though the Central committee now knows and we could have made things public, we still delayed it a little bit, because we believed it would be a good thing to allow the Nairobi meeting to be held. [Passage omitted: Chissano answers journalists' questions.]
