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Comment

Chissano's move deserves support

ONE of the lasting contributions that Zimbabwe can make to the current search for peace in Mozambique is to ensure that the terms of the negotiations enjoin the MNR to desist from engaging in activities that will violate the spirit of negotiations between Frelimo and the MNR. The recent escalation of MNR attacks in Gaza and Maputo provinces are some of such activities.

In formulating the terms of peace talks in Mozambique there will be need to spell out the procedural steps, and the responsibilities of the parties to the negotiating table. A start could be ensuring that the MNR tells its rank and file members to stop all attacks. This way there will be no need for shedding more blood.

In Angola, sadly, the June 22 Gbadolite ceasefire and peace agreement between the ruling MPLA and Unita has not stopped the killing. There is need, therefore, to ensure that in Mozambique the killing stops. The MNR war is already Southern Africa's holocaust. It should stop now that the two parties have acknowledged the need to negotiate a settlement.

On Friday President Mugabe said he and President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya had been asked by President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique to contact the MNR with a view to bringing about negotiations for peace in Mozambique. Zimbabwe and Kenya can best assist by establishing whether powersharing will bring about the desired peace.

It will also be necessary to establish what, whoever constitutes the coherent leadership of the MNR, understands or means by powersharing; whether the MNR is fighting for the return or compensation for nationalised former Portuguese properties in Mozambique; or whether the MNR just wants a de-Sovietisation of Mozambique. By looking at these and other relevant areas, it will be possible for the peace negotiations to move at an appreciable pace, once they start.

The integration of the MNR into the government, the army, police and airforce will need to be defined clearly so that a repeat of what has happened in Chad, when Mr Acheiki Ibn Oumar of the CDR made peace with President Hisssein Habre, is averted.

Additionally, there will also be need to ensure that the MNR's backers in the South African military will respect the outcome of the peace settlement between the Frelimo government and the MNR.

Perhaps, this is where the Americans will become useful. They are listened to and respected by the South African government and its military hawks. The US can prevail upon the South African military to desist from encouraging the MNR to continue its holocaust.

The Unity Accord between Zanu (PF) and PF-Zapu spelt out clearly the nature and format of the new set-up in Zimbabwe. The armed dissident war ended as a result.

President Chissano's 12-point peace plan, which has already won considerable international approval, needs to be promoted, and the MNR needs to make good its pledge to respond "positively" to this initiative. President Chissano deserves support for his vision and pragmatism. Mozambique deserves peace.