

MOZAMBIQUE: PRESIDENT CALLS FOR INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN AGAINST "BANDITS"

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Excerpts from recording of speech by President Joaquim Chissano at a rally in Namaacha on 19th April (ME/0439 B/5)

We wanted you, the people, to speak, so you could contribute to the resolution of problems and towards better government of our people's lives in their various aspects. I think you have managed to do so. It is not important now to discuss whether what you said is right or wrong. What matters is that it is a valuable contribution that will be taken into account every time we think about our problems.

You spoke as though you were presenting problems connected with Namaacha district alone. Some of you even spoke as though you were presenting Namaacha village's problems. I want to say that you have focused on problems that affect our country as a whole. My delegation here will, therefore, derive much benefit from this contact and we will convey all we have heard here to other officials. Perhaps, we have not heard these things for the first time. As I said earlier, these problems affect the whole country. We are all going to look for solutions. However, by taking these problems into consideration, it does not mean that we are going to resolve them. The resolution of the problems mentioned here does not depend upon us, these officials alone. It depends on the efforts made by all people.

Before I say anything else, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Namaacha district, because, to a high degree, they are doing what is necessary. They are organising themselves to resist armed banditry. They have

suffered repeated attacks from armed bandits. Sometimes these attacks are on Namaacha village itself, but there have also been attacks against other places in Namaacha district, and we know that the people also resist banditry there. We know that the people organise themselves into people's militia and that the people's militia have been fighting side by side with our national defence forces. That is why, despite major enemy attacks, the people survive and struggle against hardship. The people here have not stopped producing. They may not produce very much, but they produce what conditions permit and they defend their production.

We have the examples of our students in the various schools here in Namaacha village, where there is the agrarian school, the teacher training centre, and the secondary school. These schools know how to defend themselves against armed bandit attacks, all on their own. We salute that patriotic spirit. For us, the fact that they defended themselves means that they defended the country. They not only defended their schools and their lives, they defended the whole country. They did not just defend the district. That is what we would like to see all people do, from Rovuma river to Maputo river, and that is what is happening. That is why we can see major successes in the struggle against armed banditry.

In many provinces, those successes are more visible than in Maputo province, but there have been successes even in Maputo province. For instance, defence in Namaacha district is worthy of praise. We have seen some plantations and I have been given products from those plantations. This shows that the famine that was once talked about here is now being fought. The people of the district know how to fight famine. They know they must produce. We know that production cannot be higher due to armed bandit destabilisation. That is why we say that defence organisation is paramount. The solution of all the problems that have been discussed here depends on the existence of tranquillity in our country and even in our district. Many of the problems we touched on here can be resolved locally but they are not resolved because there is no calm.

The students here have talked about having to go to Maputo to fetch food. This meant the need for means of transport. However, as far as we know, Namaacha district supplies food to Maputo, not vice versa. It would not be necessary to have to travel to Maputo to fetch food for the students if the situation were normal here. It would not be necessary for 14 trucks to come out here to distribute food if the situation were normal. There would be no stealing of food if the situation were normal. That is why we say the main problem you must face, with the courage you have already demonstrated, is the problem of destabilisation, the armed banditry problem. Therefore, let us intensify our struggle against the armed bandits.

Our people here began organising to defend themselves against the armed bandits. They must now intensify that organisation. These, therefore, are the main problems: banditry, famine and the lack of responsibility of some people, including some party and government officials. Obviously, irresponsible officials cannot continue in power. We must struggle against this lack of responsibility that makes officials commit such crimes against the people. These are the main

problems. The problem of leadership is very important at all levels, but leadership must function on the basis of mutual trust between the leadership and the people. In trusting in that leadership, the people must do everything to support it. They must not let the leadership make mistakes or commit crimes or fraud. The leadership must know that the people are following its work and that the leadership must account for its actions to the people.

However, among our people there are also individuals who should know better. When we talk about black marketeering, we must ask ourselves: who is doing it? When we speak about concentrations at the border, we must ask: who is concentrating at the border? Those are people who are part of our people but who show a lack of responsibility. They do not correctly analyse our situation. They want easy solutions that extend beyond the solution of the famine problem. They want to become rich through famine and even destabilisation. They do not help us fight the armed bandits. They facilitate embezzlement. They are the ones who sell stolen goods. They buy those goods where they know such crimes are committed. So, these people do not help keep watch over transport. Often, they benefit from attacks on trucks and trains. Then, they appear at the markets to sell their goods. They are black marketeers and they are the ones who steal.

Therefore, we must all gather to resolve those problems. We must discuss these problems in our homes and in our working places. Then we will find those who are responsible for this situation. We are not going to talk only when there is a crowd and pretend that those responsible are other people, when we know that they are standing next to us but we do not have the courage to speak up. . .

We should not be egoists. We need to work. All these problems arise because there is an insufficient number and quantity of these goods. In the whole country, not only in the districts when they say there should be a greater supply – a greater supply coming from where? Our problem is one of not having. That is the big problem, and the others follow: distribution, administration, diversions, etc. But the big problem is one of not having.

I would like to say regarding diversions that our Council of Ministers established a commission to investigate the diversions. There are large diversions. We discovered various people involved in this, even here in the district. The commission is working. The diversions start from the border to the port and continue from the port to the district. In the district there are diversions from the warehouse to the shops or places of distribution. But the fundamental problem is one of insufficiency and insufficiency is created by the armed bandits.

Therefore, we should think a little when we say things should come and that there should be an increase in their supply. We need to answer the question: from where? Therefore, there is one solution to combat it like they are doing here: to intensify the combat against the armed bandit. Then only will the things start to arrive. Exports from our soil, from our country.