

Political police: Frelimo's new iron fist

(Abridged)

Rumblings of discontent are heard throughout Mozambique and in the last few weeks several Frelimo leaders have admitted that the creation of the brand new revolutionary society has run into serious trouble. Predictably the flashpoint is Beira, long renowned for its rebellious nature – the late Antonio Salazar once named its people “the grumblers”.



The reasons for Beira's present “open revolt” were spelled out recently by Commandant Francisco Medeio of the Beira province army command. He told a meeting of the party faithful: “The population has rebelled against Frelimo because the committees and the soldiers are not behaving as they should.”



Beira: In open revolt

Medeio said people had been threatened and beaten up in the streets of Beira and in the provincial villages. Members of the dynamisation committees had stolen the possessions of “fleeing capitalists” and had pocketed the proceeds of the sales.

He said: “Let us stop beating about the bush and accept that the revolution has stagnated here and the enemy is gaining ground due to our betrayal of the people and of Frelimo's political and ideological line.”

Medeio complained: “Nobody turns up any longer when people's meetings are called and, worse still, work has stopped on the collective farms and in the building of communal villages. The only increase is in drunkenness and other vices.”

He claimed: “Members of the dynamisation committees and the men of the liberation forces are actively encouraging the very evils they were supposed to fight – prostitution, lobolo, premature marriages, alcoholism, superstition and witchcraft.”

Claiming that “reactionaries” were taking advantage of the situation, he said: “One foreign flag that no longer means anything to us (the Portuguese flag) was recently hoisted

where our flag had been flying since June 25.”

Some 600 km north of Beira, in the coastal town of Pemba (formerly Porto Amelia), Governor Raimundo Pachinuapa, one of Frelimo's hardliners, said: “Robbery and prostitution are rife in Pemba following the mass migration of youths from the rural areas to the city.” Pachinuapa's province, Cabo Delgado, bordering on Tanzania, was once held up as a model society free from corruption and ambition.

The governor claimed: “There are now more youths in Pemba than in the whole countryside and, as they cannot find any means of subsistence in the city, they become burglars and the girls turn their bodies into movable shops.” He threatened to send them back to the bush to do their share in tilling the soil and building communal villages.

About 1 000 km south of Beira, in the Gaza province, citizens met last week with local political Commissar Felix Ahmane to air their grievances against Frelimo. Ahmane promised that the “indisciplined platoon of the people's liberation forces stationed at Bilene would be transferred elsewhere and offending members of the dynamisation committees would be dealt with immediately.”