

Mozambique

## 'VOICE' SEEKING NEW HOME

With its military base inside Mozambique smashed and the removal of its HQ and radio from Zimbabwe the anti-FRELIMO RNM may seek another host-country, writes *Paul Fauvet*



Right-wing Mozambican National Resistance propaganda: FRELIMO soldiers robbing impoverished Mozambicans

AN IMPORTANT and little-publicised side-effect for Mozambique will follow the ZANU victory in Zimbabwe. It will force the self-styled "Mozambican National Resistance" (RNM) to abandon its operational base in Rhodesia, and look for another nearby state to harbour its army and its radio station, the misnamed *Voz da Africa Livre* (Voice of Free Africa). South Africa is the most likely candidate for this role, but Malawi may also be interested.

The RNM used to have a post-box number in Salisbury as its address. But during 1979, perhaps to avoid embarrassing its friends in the Muzorewa-Smith regime, it shifted its public address to Europe. Then Governor Soames in the run-up to the elections gave an assurance that there would be no further broadcasts in Portuguese. It can now be contacted at a postbox number in Cascais, a plush holiday resort full of casinos and wealthy villas a few miles down the Portuguese

coast from Lisbon.

Cascais is a logical choice for the RNM since it is frequented by many elements of the far right, both Portuguese and Mozambican. For instance it is known that the clandestine Portuguese Liberation Army (ELP) is based in Cascais and even has a sophisticated illegal radio transmitter there; the Portuguese government shows no interest in closing it down. The ELP was set up by General Spínola after the failure of his Lisbon coup attempt of March 11, 1975. Members of the ELP collaborated with the South Africans in their invasion of Angola in Autumn 1975 and the ELP was deeply involved in the anti-Communist violence in northern Portugal that summer. Leading Mozambican reactionaries in Portugal keep in close contact with the ELP.

Many well-to-do *retornados* - Portuguese settlers who fled from Mozambique - can be found in Cascais. These include the owners of a luxury restaurant called Baluarte, which is a hive of right-wing activity. Also in Cascais are leaders of the abortive Dragons of Death *putsch* attempt of 1975 in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo).

From Cascais the RNM puts out various propaganda. Some of it is extremely crude, like this cartoon purporting to show FRELIMO soldiers robbing emaciated members of the Mozambican population. This kind of propaganda is very similar to that used by the Portuguese against FRELIMO during the war for independence.

Their written propaganda is more sophisticated. Their Statutes for example have been carefully drawn up to present the RNM as a legitimate nationalist movement, and as an impeccably demo-

cratic organisation. The structure outlined in the Statutes is faultless. The supreme body is supposed to be a policy-making congress which elects a national council. Assemblies of delegates from each province, district and locality elect their respective provincial, district and local committees. But since there is absolutely no evidence that any congress or any delegate assembly at any level has ever been held, this structure is merely a convenient fiction.

### Incantation

The document also makes solemn reference to "criticism and self-criticism," pledges "a democratic future of Peace and Concord for all Mozambicans," and disavows all discrimination based on sex, race, creed or religion. There are the inevitable incantations about Human Rights.

When it gets down to specifics, the document operates by deliberately bracketing "Communism" with "colonialism." Previously Mozambique was a Portuguese colony; now, argues the document, it is a Soviet one. So the first aim of the RNM is: "The total liquidation in Mozambique of the Marxist-Machelist political system and of all other systems of government that oppress freedom and the rights of man, as well as all traces of Communism, colonialism and imperialism."

The RNM goes on to inform us that it "reserves the right to form alliances with other organisations of armed anti-Communist struggle, or with other peoples under domination of totalitarian governments, so as to shorten the total elimination of colonialism, Communism, and imperialism from Africa."

This gives a kind of counter-revolutionary internationalism to the document. A number of countries are praised by name - Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Gabon and Zaire - for their condemnation of "the neo-colonialism of Soviet expansion in Africa." Some countries - which ones we are not told - are said already to have recognised the RNM. Reference is also made to "our brothers" fighting "Communist governments and Soviet imperialism" in the other former Portuguese colonies.

It is claimed that the Mozambican people "have in no way benefited" from the riches of the country since independence and that, indeed, Mozambicans are now poorer than they were under colonialism. Since it cannot deny all the social advances made in the five years of independence, the RNM distorts them, claiming: "Illiteracy is being replaced by the mental colonisation of almost the entire Mozambican population, which will turn our sons and daughters into fanatics, blind to Love, Freedom and to the Rights of each of us."

The linking of Communism and colonialism is a moderately astute propaganda ploy. It does, however, oblige the RNM to provide itself with a few anti-

colonial credentials. It must establish some link between itself and the national liberation struggle against the Portuguese. The RNM, therefore, claims that it was founded on November 21, 1976 at a meeting of commanders in the FRELIMO army who were dissatisfied with "the Communist system of Samora Machel." This, they claimed, was contrary to the original political orientation of FRELIMO under its first President, Eduardo Mondlane (who was assassinated in 1969). They are then supposed to have pledged "to continue the armed struggle, now against Machelist Communism, until the complete liberation of the Mozambican people." This, claims the RNM, was confirmed at a representative meeting held on May 1, 1977 (note the date - someone in the RNM must have a sense of humour). In this way the RNM claims to constitute the authentic FRELIMO with Samora Machel a mere usurper.

It can safely be asserted, however, that neither meeting ever took place. As for the alleged contradiction between Mondlane's FRELIMO and Machel's FRELIMO, this is a pure invention. In fact Mondlane spent the last few years of his life fighting against reactionary, anti-Socialist elements within FRELIMO.

The motive force for setting up the RNM came from nowhere within FRELIMO. Rather, the figures involved were those who had willingly collaborated with colonialism, including former agents of the Portuguese secret police, the PIDE, and former members of *elite* units in the colonial army - the Commandos, the "Special Groups," and the dreaded *Flechas* (Arrows - perhaps it is a coincidence, but five arrows dominate the emblem of the RNM). Such units had earned a reputation for brutality. Not surprisingly, they saw little future for themselves in a Mozambique governed by FRELIMO, and slipped across the border into Rhodesia.

### Aggression

In mid-1976 the Rhodesian regime initiated its policy of large scale aggression against Mozambique, and round about the same time it seems to have taken the decision to use the right-wing Mozambican exiles as the core of a counter-revolutionary force that would be a useful complement to the regular Rhodesian army. This, in reality, was how the RNM was born.

It had plenty of money at its disposal, some from the Rhodesians and some from private sources. The notorious Mozambican rightist, Jorge Jardim, seems to have invested heavily in the RNM: under colonialism he was the richest man in Mozambique, ran the country's second largest newspaper, the *Noticias de Beira*, and recruited his own private army.

New recruits could, therefore, be well-paid and military training would be provided free by Rhodesia and South Africa.

The military strategy of the RNM has been fairly clear: their attacks have been

concentrated on the narrowest part of Mozambique, in Manica and Sofala provinces, so as to cut the country in half. They have hit at communications, derailing trains, attacking buses and generally making road travel in parts of central Mozambique a hazardous business. Their acts have been terrorist in the strict sense of the word, as is clear from the stories told by those who have been captured. They have killed and kidnapped villagers, burnt their houses and possessions, and gunned down unarmed passengers on buses they have stopped.

Their only attempt to gain political support has been on a regionalist basis, claiming that FRELIMO discriminates in favour of southerners and against the inhabitants of the north and centre.

### Communiques

Until very recently the RNM issued a steady stream of military communiques, boasting of fantastic numbers of FRELIMO troops killed, of the occupation of various towns, of the desertion of Mozambican soldiers to their side, etc. These were suspended, according to a letter from the RNM's Cascais address, "until the situation in Southern Africa became clearer," that is, until after the Zimbabwe elections. The ZANU victory will certainly mean the shutdown of RNM operations from Zimbabwe. But a better reason for the RNM's sudden silence on military matters is it suffered a crushing military defeat in November when the FPLM (the Mozambican regular army) took the RNM's main base by storm.

The FPLM had known for some time that there was an RNM base and that it was supplied regularly from Rhodesia, but it took a long time to locate it. It turned out to be on a mountain top in the Gorongosa game reserve. Once location of the base was known, the FPLM undertook the difficult task of storming it - difficult because it entailed moving heavy artillery up the mountain slopes in order to shell it; since Mozambique does not possess an air force, it could not be bombed.

The FPLM completed the operation in mid-November, and several hundred RNM terrorists were killed or captured. RNM operations in central Mozambique were completely disrupted, although various RNM bands are still at large in Manica and Sofala. Their importance will diminish as they run out of ammunition and cannot be resupplied.

The RNM is unlikely to give up, however. It has powerful friends in South Africa and in Western Europe. It will not lack for resources, financial and military. The Pretoria regime may find the RNM a useful instrument with which to blackmail Mozambique: perhaps suggesting that Mozambican support for the liberation of South Africa will be countered by South African support for counter-revolution in Mozambique. So the plotting of *emigré* circles in Cascais villas is likely to continue for the foreseeable future ●