

# The Nhamagodoa File

On 18 April, the Mozambican armed forces overran what the Renamo bandits referred to as a "secret presidential base" at Nhamagodoa, in Maringué district, in the central province of Sofala. Here they seized a large quantity of documents, to which AIM was given access in June.

Renamo seems to have acquired many of its papers at Nhamagodoa: most of the captured material dates from 1986-1988, though a few documents are dated earlier and later. They give a fascinating insight into Renamo, and particularly its relations with two countries who regularly protest they have nothing to do with the destabilisation of Mozambique - Kenya and Malawi.

The documents show that Kenyan support for Renamo dates from at least mid-1988, over a year before Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi was asked to mediate in the Mozambican conflict.

## Kenya pledges aid to Renamo

The key documents are transcripts of radio messages sent from Malawi to Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama by a Renamo contact who calls himself "Joseph". Internal evidence in the documents suggests that this man is Rod Hein, a white Zimbabwean fundamentalist missionary in the extreme right-wing sect, the Shekinah Ministries.

Joseph/Hein sent his messages first in English, and they were then translated into Portuguese. In many cases, both the English transcript and the Portuguese translation have survived.

Contacts between the Kenyan authorities and Dhlakama went via the then Renamo Secretary for Information, Francisco Nota Moises, who was based in Canada, but had previously lived for many years in Kenya.

On 9 May 1988, Joseph relayed a message from Nota Moises, saying "I am now in Kenya and have had meetings with the government of Kenya. The President of Kenya (Daniel Arap Moi) has asked me to be in contact between him and you (Dhlakama)".

"The men here in Kenya trust me, and they want the operation to be very secret", added Nota.

Arap Moi was annoyed at the "irresponsibility" of the then head of the Renamo Foreign Affairs Department, Artur de Fonseca, who "when he was invited to go to Kenya, was told to keep everything secret, but immediately after being informed, . . . phoned his friend, and this friend spread rumours that Mr Nota and Mr Fonseca were invited to Kenya to be killed".

Despite this display of Renamo paranoia, Arap Moi told Nota that he "has the pleasure of inviting the President of Renamo to go to Kenya. All arrangements will be made in confidence and top secrecy".

Nota advised Dhlakama not to tell anyone else, such as "your friends in the south or your friends in USA. We want this operation to be successful and secret". (The messages use the euphemism "the south" to refer to South Africa.)

On 10 May, Nota was in contact via Joseph again to say that he was dealing with air tickets to Nairobi for Dhlakama and his delegation. "The President of Kenya would like the visit to take place as soon as possible", he said.

In two successive messages on 13 and 15 May, Nota again relayed the Kenyan government's anger at Fonseca's inability to keep secrets. He complained at "Fonseca's tendency to treat everything like an open air show. His lack of secrecy and free talking is informing the enemy without him knowing it".

On 17 May, Nota said that the Kenyan authorities had decided to help Renamo "as much as possible because of interference from Frelimo". The message did not elaborate on the nature of this "interference", but it may be linked to Mozambique's good relations with the Ugandan government of Yoweri Museveni.

The Kenyans also advised Dhlakama "to make a strong statement expressing your willingness to settle the conflict peacefully if the other side is ready to negotiate". Dhlakama "should also appeal to foreign governments to set up such talks", added Nota. "The authorities here believe that this will give this country (Kenya) and other foreign governments the excuse to talk openly to Renamo".

A message from Joseph on 18 May stressed "Kenya's wish to assist and support" Renamo, but added "this must be kept in strict confidence, negotiating only between Mr Nota and Mr Joseph".

## Malawi and Kenya arrange security

"Kenya will provide travel documents and air tickets from Malawi, and will arrange the airlift from the interior (of Mozambique) to Malawi. Kenya will work with Malawi concerning security and secrecy", continued the message.

"Kenya requests Your Excellency to present a budget of needs, financial and material", Joseph added. "If this can be presented on your arrival, it will help matters to move more quickly. Kenya is determined that it wants to be of valid assistance".

Renamo was not entirely happy with the Malawian connection, but on 20 May Joseph reassured Dhlakama that "this country is for Renamo and will help where they can".

Joseph certainly had access to Malawian government stationery. An envelope headed "On Malawi Government Service" was found at Nhamagodoa.

with the words "To the President of Renamo from Joseph" scribbled across it.

A Malawian contact, named only as "Marcos", told Dhlakama via Joseph that Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano's impending state visit to Malawi "does not mean that Malawi agrees with the policy of Chissano, but that Malawi has to entertain the government of that country if they request a visit".

Joseph also claimed that the Malawian authorities would deliver Mozambican refugees into the hands of Renamo. "The Malawi government will be very happy to help move the displaced people to Renamo zones, i.e. Milange. We will get the International Red Cross to contact the Malawi government to make all the plans". (At this time, the district of Milange, on the border with Malawi, was occupied by Renamo.)

An undated message states that Renamo's support in Malawi comes "from the security police. They trust us . . . They are very willing to cooperate with us in anything except bombs."

Apparently the deal the Malawian police wanted was that Renamo would not attack the railway from

Malawi to the northern Mozambican port of Nacala, which is Malawi's cheapest outlet to the sea.

"They want the troops to be withdrawn from the railway line and want to help us in anything as long as we do not disturb the railway", continued the message.

One of the messages confirms that Renamo smuggles Ivory via Malawi. On 23 July 1988, Joseph wired Dhlakama that "we don't have money to pay for the plane" for a trip into Mozambique. But the pilot was prepared to trust Renamo to pay him later. In gratitude for this attitude, "perhaps Your Excellency could reward the pilot with an elephant tusk, as a present, and not as payment".

The messages concerning Kenya break off at this point, but the contacts made in 1988 clearly bore fruit later, with Dhlakama installed in Nairobi, and Renamo members trained in Kenya being infiltrated into central Mozambique via Malawi.

Kenya's complaints against Fonseca were also heeded: he was removed as head of the Foreign Affairs Department, a post now occupied by Raul

## German academic confirms he wrote to Dhlakama

The only one of Dhlakama's correspondents with whom AIM was able to speak was Prof André Thomashausen, a German academic working at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, who had tried to enroll Dhlakama as a student for a correspondence course.

He confirmed the authenticity of the letters bearing his signature which were among the Nhamagodoa documents.

On 26 August 1987 Thomashausen wrote to Dhlakama in Portuguese on UNISA notepaper, saying that he had discussed the Renamo leader's studies with UNISA rector, Prof Theo van Wijk "who has asked me to confirm that UNISA will do everything possible to permit and facilitate your studies".

The UNISA offer, Thomashausen explained, "will include sending a group of teachers to Your Excellency's General Headquarters, and to any other place that you name, for the final examination".

But Thomashausen added that, in order for UNISA to accept Dhlakama's application, "we need some kind of school certificate, or at least a declaration sworn by a schoolteacher confirming the number of years of schooling, and the nature of this education, that Your Excellency has already undertaken".

AIM spoke to Thomashausen by telephone, and he confirmed that "UNISA did receive a sort of application from President Dhlakama on the possibility of studying, and I informed him of our procedures".

AIM read out extracts from the captured letter, and Thomashausen said "it sounds like the sort of thing I would have written".

But apparently there was no follow-up. "We heard no more of it", said Thomashausen. He added that some time later he heard that Dhlakama was angered by the UNISA procedures "because he thought it was unfair to ask him to produce school certificates".

Thomashausen also confirmed a June 1987 letter to

Renamo Washington representative Luis Serapião in which he wrote "A businessman has asked me if there is any possibility of the export by the Resistance (Renamo) of semi-precious stones, especially tourmaline".

He told AIM that he had indeed made this request. "There was a gentleman in Pretoria linked to the jewellery trade", he said. "He couldn't get hold of tourmaline, so he phoned me and asked if he could get the stuff from Mozambique".

Thomashausen's correspondence with Serapião also expressed concern at the ethnic character of the Renamo leadership, which, "as far as is known, is predominantly Ndau" (Ndau is a dialect of Shona spoken in parts of central Mozambique).

Thomashausen told AIM he learned later that Serapião was "terribly offended" by his raising this issue. On the ethnic question, "I never really got an answer", he said.

## Messages from commanders reveal atrocities

Renamo commanders in the field openly recognise the terrorist nature of at least some of their activities, accorded to transcripts of radio messages found at Nhamagodoa.

One such message, sent on 17 June 1988, from a Renamo commander in Sussundenga district, on the border with Zimbabwe, details operations carried out by two "special groups" on what it describes as "missions of terrorism inside Zimbabwe" (the Portuguese word "terrorismo" is used).

The first group of ten bandits "did its work on 16 June and executed five members of the population, and burnt down 12 of the people's houses".

On the same day, the second group, also ten strong, "executed 11 members of the population, and burnt down 17 houses".

The raiders robbed the houses before burning them, and the message meticulously listed the loot as "five blankets, ten skirts, eight dresses, three pairs of trousers, eight saucers, two radios and a record player".

Another message contained a cold-blooded plan to wipe out an entire village and seize the food it contained.

On 6 January 1988, the local commander in the district of Marromeu, on the south bank of the Zambezi, wired a message to his superior, a Renamo

general called Zacarias, which said "we have information about a village where there is a lot of food, rice and other foodstuffs, and so we request that a group go and destroy the village".

The commander did not expect to face any resistance. "There are only six guns defending this village", his message continued, "and the people using these guns are not trained".

A message of 16 May 1988 from the Renamo General Staff to Dhlakama's "Presidential Office" stated that there had been 332 military operations the previous month, including "90 acts of terrorism and 13 villages destroyed".

Domingos, who leads the Renamo negotiating team in the peace talks in Rome.

Also among the documents were copies of letters exchanged between Renamo and right-wing individuals in the US and elsewhere.

Thus on 27 November 1986, Dhlakama wrote a letter of thanks to Neil Blair of the American conservative group "Free the Eagle", thanking him as "the friend who has given Renamo its first home in the United States".

"For the first time" Renamo has an office, a telephone and a professional staff to launch its long overdue political offensive in the outside world", continued Dhlakama. "I am deeply indebted to you".

### Dhlakama thanks his friends

On the same day, Dhlakama wrote a gushing letter of thanks to Louisiana millionaire James Blanchard III, described as "one of Renamo's first friends as we seek to tell our story to the outside world".

"I was deeply touched by the abundance of your gifts such as the splendid knife more befitting an Arab sultan than a guerrilla chief, the radios, medicines and numerous other articles", wrote Dhlakama.

Both these letters are carbon copies, typed in English.

A letter in Portuguese, also of November 1986, was sent to Armand de Borchgrave, editor of the right wing daily, the *Washington Times*, thanking him for sending the journalist Holger Jensen to Renamo-occupied parts of central Mozambique.

"Mr Jensen has informed me that the *Washington Times* supports our war against the Marxist regime, and I thank you greatly for this support", wrote the Renamo leader.

A completely different note was struck in a letter to Pat Robertson, head of the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), a fundamentalist religious television station, based in Virginia. For the purposes of this letter, Dhlakama underwent a conversion to Christianity. Renamo, he said, recognised that the natural disasters that Mozambique had suffered since independence "are not accidental, but are the direct results of an atheist system. We in Renamo attribute our growing victories to our creed".

Robertson's attempt "to restore principles based on respect for god in America inspires and encourages us".

CBN, said Dhlakama, "was the first television channel to visit us. We would like to maintain and consolidate this special relationship. We also have much to learn about national reconstruction based on biblical foundations".

A letter from Jesse Helms, Republican Senator for North Carolina, dated 16 February 1989, and written on headed notepaper of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Dhlakama "I understand that there may be an opportunity to meet with a congressional delegation that is travelling in the area. I hope that you will make every effort - taking into account prudent security and appropriate secrecy - to make contact with these congressmen".

An undated handwritten draft in Portuguese from Dhlakama to Helms thanked the Senator for "your

efforts to reverse the American position on Mozambique".

"The dismantling of a state of Soviet slavery, and the appearance of a new nation based on constitutional government and Christian respect for human dignity and freedom will make the Brezhnev doctrine an object of ridicule", the Renamo leader told Helms, signing himself "your friend for ever until final victory".

The extreme right wing British "Conservative Students Foreign Affairs Group" (which is disowned by the mainstream of the British Conservative Party) wrote on 24 April 1988 to the Canadian home of Nota Moises, condemning "the British government's shameful involvement in supporting the Maputo regime".

"Please be assured that we are doing as much as we can in our Party to advance the cause of freedom within Mozambique as led by your movement", the letter declared.

### Renamo begs for funds

Nota Moises replied on 22 May 1988, and asked the conservative students for money. "We face one major problem which hampers our efforts to disseminate information: a lack of resources both material and financial", he said. "Straightaway my department needs a telefax machine to disseminate information to major newspapers, news agencies and other centres as quick as possible".

Nota also wrote a begging letter to South Korean dictator Roh Tae Woo on 25 February 1988, asking for Korean financial support, and describing the Seoul regime as "democratic".

Nota Moises sent copies of all these documents on to Dhlakama's headquarters.

Dhlakama even wrote, in English, to US President Ronald Reagan in 1986, urging him "to send a representative to see our successful efforts and how closely our goals coincide with the Reagan doctrine".

"I know that you share my concern about the spread of communism and Soviet efforts to destabilise southern Africa", said Dhlakama. "However, I am pleased to inform you that in Mozambique we are now in a position to inflict a major defeat on the communists".

He urged Reagan to change American policy on Mozambique. "I think your government has been misled by Frelimo propaganda as to the true nature of our cause", he said.

There is no evidence that Reagan ever replied to this missive. However, the then US Vice-President (now President) George Bush did express interest. In a letter he sent on 29 June 1987 to Renamo Washington representative Luis Serapião, Professor André Thomashausen, Director of the Institute of Foreign and Comparative Law at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, said that he had conveyed invitations to Dhlakama for visits abroad from a personal envoy of George Bush, as well as from the Prime Minister of Bavaria, Franz-Josef Strauss.

Astonishingly, Dhlakama turned these invitations down, saying that the time was not appropriate for him to travel abroad, but that anyone wishing to speak to him would be welcome in his headquarters inside Mozambique.

## Renamo leaders at each other's throats

Intrigue has always been endemic in Renamo, and the Nhamagodoa documents throw further light on a world of backstabbing, and jealousies.

Nota Moises and Artur da Fonseca in particular were at each other's throats. Nota wrote to Dhlakama on 15 June 1988 demanding that Fonseca be sacked. "In the five years that he has been Secretary for Foreign Relations it is difficult to see anything that he has done that can be considered a success", complained Nota. "He speaks badly and antagonises everyone".

"Fonseca behaves like a clown, and demonstrates a total absence of personality and dignity", lamented Nota.

Fonseca felt much the same towards Nota, and on 15 May 1988 he sent a message to Dhlakama alleging that Nota was associating with Artur Vilanculos, an exile who had been expelled from Renamo in 1983 and then set up a rival organisation. He described Nota's behaviour as "treason".

"He has been destroying all the contacts I have made", wrote Fonseca.

A second message, sent on the same day, attacked the Renamo office in the United States, and made the extraordinary accusation that Renamo spokesman Tom Schaaf had written the US State Department report of 1987 on refugee accounts of Renamo atrocities. (The report was, in fact, written

by refugee expert Robert Gersony.)

Fonseca protested that the nominal Renamo representative in Washington, Luis Serapião, "always acts as Tom Schaaf's subordinate." He claimed that Serapião had been heard to call Fonseca "Fernandes' errand boy who has just lost his boss" (a reference to the murder of Renamo General Secretary Evo Fernandes in April 1988).

Fonseca claimed that Serapião had also called Dhlakama "illiterate".

Eventually, Dhlakama did act on these protests and removed all three men, Nota, Fonseca and Serapião, from office.