

MOZAMBIQUE: Stalemate ?

ION (398) 23/9/89

Peace negotiations which began in August in Nairobi to put an end to thirteen years of civil war in Mozambique seem to have come to a stalemate. One of the most active members of the Mozambican religious mission which participated in discussions with RENAMO, **Joaquim Mabuianga**, the Archbishop of Maputo's secretary, vehemently criticised the rebel organisation in an interview published in "Noticias". He considers that RENAMO's persistent violence is doing nothing to help the peace process. Joaquim Mabuianga's comments are all the more important as on one hand, he is very close to Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano who is also a cousin, and on the other hand he has been maintaining the contacts with RENAMO for several months. As for the rebels, they consider that the Mozambican clergy made no concrete proposition during discussions and are content to offer their "good advice".

It may be however, that these very firmly pronounced and opposite stances are a means for each camp to raise the bidding at a crucial moment in the discussions. Be that as it may, diplomatic activity has been stepped up and has indeed become very intense as regards the Mozambican question. Portugal's Prime Minister, **Anibal Cavaco Silva** will be in Mozambique from September 26 to 29, just as **Robert Mugabe**, President of Zimbabwe made a lightning one-day trip to Nairobi on September 20 for talks with Kenya's President **Daniel arap Moi**. Mr Mugabe previously went to Nairobi on a working visit on August 7, on the eve of the opening of the peace talks. The two Heads of State had been asked by President Chissano to mediate in the conflict.

RENAMO's leader **Afonso Dhlakama** is actively seeking to "Africanise" his movement. Until now he had hardly made any efforts to establish relations with the different African states, maintaining links almost exclusively with South Africa, Portugal and extreme-conservative parties in Europe and the United States. RENAMO's leadership has thus informed President Moi that the organisation is prepared to adhere to the OAU charter and that it considers the return to peace in Mozambique as an "important step in the fight against apartheid."

Mr Dhlakama also took advantage of being in Nairobi to make contact with several embassies, including that of the Soviet Union. This "internationalisation" of relations is all the more important for RENAMO as it fears that a direct agreement may be made between Pretoria and Maputo behind its back. There seems to be indeed grounds for such fear as there have been signs of closer collaboration between the South African and Mozambican intelligence, while Mozambique is multiplying the number of goodwill gestures made to South African firms, for example the recent gas and mining concessions allocated to Anglo-American.