

# Peace Talks Come Closer

**D**ecember saw a number of developments in the Mozambican government's peace initiatives.

**End of November:** In Nairobi, where President Joaquim Chissano was attending the eighth summit of the Preferential Trade Area (see PTA Summit Demonstrates Optimism), a Mozambican source denied that the president would meet with leaders of the MNR during his stay in the Kenyan capital.

The source said, "We did not come with any programme that involved the armed bandits and their leaders," adding that "we don't know how the rumours started".

He noted that the mediators in the peace process, Presidents Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, had not met during the last few months to determine the current situation of the talks and so had nothing new to present to the Mozambican government.

**December 1:** The Mozambican authorities "would not leave a stone unturned" in the search for peace in the country, Mr Chissano told the PTA meeting, presenting an extensive outline of his government's peace initiatives.

**December 6:** Speaking at the opening of the second session of the Frelimo party's 167-member Central Committee since the party's Fifth Congress in July (see box), Mr Chissano declared that the set of 12 principles laid out by the government and presented to MNR leaders in Nairobi by Mozambican churchmen in August "must be respected".

These principles state that the first condition for direct dialogue between the government and the MNR is "an end to all terrorism and banditry". They also demand an acceptance of the established order in the country and state that the constitution can only be changed by the will of the people and not by violence.

Mr Chissano pointed out that these principles "correspond to the unanimous feeling of our people", as shown in the visits he made in November and December to the central provinces of Zambezia, Sofala, Tete and Manica.

**December 7 - 8:** Presidents Moi and Mugabe met for talks in Nairobi and were reported by the Zimbabwean news agency Ziana to have signed a secret agreement on the steps to be taken to establish peace in Mozambique.

Ziana also said that MNR bandit leader Afonso Dhlakama had been in Nairobi at the same time, but it is not known whether he met with Mr Moi

before the Kenyan leader's meeting with President Mugabe.

**December 13:** A Mozambican government source denied claims made to reporters in Nairobi by MNR bandit chief Afonso Dhlakama that the Kenyan and Zimbabwean presidents supported direct negotiations with no preconditions between the government and the MNR. Speaking to AIM in Maputo, the source said that "as far as we know, the position of the mediators is not that there should be negotiations without preconditions. On the contrary—the Renamo leaders must recognise the Mozambican constitution, the institutions that emanate from the constitution, and the existing order."

**December 14:** President Chissano told the opening of a session of the Mozambican parliament, the People's Assembly, that the principles established as a basis for a possible dialogue with the MNR "remain the same and are unalterable".

**December 18:** In the Cape Verdean capital, Praia (where he had attended a summit of the heads of state of the five Portuguese-speaking African countries), Mr Chissano said that his government was "optimistic" about the mediation efforts being undertaken by Mr Moi and Mr Mugabe. He said the Mozambican government was prepared to enter into dialogue with the MNR bandits, provided they accepted principles that respect the sovereignty of the people and of the country.

**December 21:** President Chissano, still in Praia, said that the two statesmen mediating in the Mozambican conflict had suggested that it was now time for the Mozambican government to meet directly with the leaders of the MNR bandits.

Mr Mugabe and Mr Moi had apparently indicated in a message to Mr Chissano the political basis on which such a meeting could be held. This would include the need to maintain the national unity of Mozambique, respect for Mozambican sovereignty, and acceptance of the legitimacy of the Mozambican government.

Mr Chissano commented that "it has always been our desire to open a direct dialogue between the government and the MNR leaders, but we were waiting for them to accept the bases established for such a dialogue".

The purpose of a dialogue with the bandit leaders, said Mr Chissano, would be "to achieve the peace we have so greatly yearned for, by creating the conditions for all Mozambicans to have the pos-

sibility to enjoy a normal life in the political, economic and cultural spheres".

"We do not demand that all Mozambicans be in agreement with every clause in the constitution, nor even that they be in agreement with the existing order and all its laws," explained Mr Chissano. Instead, the government wanted every Mozambican "to participate democratically in improving the democratic process and the constitution".

"Not even the government or the Frelimo party has the right to deny this possibility of participation to the Mozambican people," said Mr Chissano.

This was the framework within which the nationwide debate on amending the constitution would take place in the new year, which he added, would "determine the context in which general and presidential elections are held in 1991".

Asked if the article in the constitution that gives a leading role to the Frelimo party would be scrapped, Mr Chissano replied, "it is the wishes of the people that will dictate everything. If, during the debate, the people think that it is not Frelimo who should lead the state, then they will say who it is who should direct both society and the people."

He added that in any country, capitalist or socialist, there is always one party that holds power,

and that party leads state and society for the duration of the period that it is in power. In the Mozambican case, he pointed out, "there is just one party, and it is in power on the basis of the will of the people. If the people decide they don't want this party, then Frelimo will no longer be able to be the leading force in state and society."

Mr Chissano made it clear he was not extending any kind of political recognition to the MNR. "We do not recognise the MNR as a political party", he said. "Its origins and its behaviour do not justify giving it this name."

"But we recognise that it is a group of Mozambicans constituted as a group under the strong influence of forces opposed to our independence, and involved in the destabilisation of Mozambique," he said.

**December 28:** At a meeting with the Maputo city party committee (see box on page 16), Mr Chissano said that Mozambique was now awaiting clarification on the bandit leaders' recognition of the Mozambican constitution and of the established order in the country.

## Democracy is the Central Issue

The Frelimo Party Central Committee ended a four-day meeting in Maputo on 9 December with a final statement opposing the establishment of a multi-party system in Mozambique.

The 17-page document stressed that political systems are the result of historical and cultural circumstances. "A single-party system should not be imposed upon the people, but it is equally unacceptable for a multi-party system to be imposed on the people by outside pressures or by violence," said the document.

It stated that "the creation of a multi-party system is not a demand raised by the Mozambican people", who continue to look to the Frelimo party for "the means of defending our independence, consolidating national unity, and guarantee-

ing territorial integrity and economic and social progress".

The document warned that "the existence of more parties at this stage in the nation's development could nurture factors of division". It argued that the central question was "the deepening of democracy, both inside the party, and in society at large, so as to broaden the space for a pluralism of ideas, and so that all citizens may feel free to express their views on questions that concern the nation, and may participate in the process of governing".

The final document called for an increase in party membership, urging all existing members to recruit more candidates for the party. It also urged that admission procedures be simplified.

A party disciplinary code was discussed but not ap-

proved. The final document said it was to be redrafted and simplified, and then presented to the membership for discussion.

The Central Committee also stressed the reorganisation of the armed forces. The document described this as "a permanent process" seeking to improve the organisation and efficiency of the Mozambican army. It attributed this year's military victories over the MNR in the centre of the country to the reorganisation.

The Central Committee defined the areas which should now receive particular attention in improving the armed forces' combat readiness, but the document did not indicate what these areas were.

This was the second meeting of the Central Committee elected by the party's Fifth Congress held in July.