
**MOZAMBIQUE: MNR REPRESENTATIVE
INTERVIEWED ON LISBON RADIO, COMMENTS
ON CHISSANO'S SPEECH**

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Labour stoppages continue in Mozambique. The health workers' strike ended yesterday but today the workers of the transport sector went on strike in their turn. . . Some observers believe that this, labour unrest forced President Joaquim Chissano yesterday to complete the break away from Marxist constitutional principles and to accept direct talks with the MNR. . . In Lisbon the MNR has welcomed with satisfaction Chissano's proposal of direct talks. Mota Lopes will now talk about this with the MNR representative in Europe, Manuel Frank.

[Lopes] Manuel Frank, good evening, thank you for coming. I would like to start by asking you for the MNR's response to yesterday's Maputo speech by Joaquim Chissano.

[Frank] First of all, we accept direct talks, indeed that is what the MNR has always demanded from Frelimo, direct talks on an equal footing and without preconditions. Now we think we have finally achieved this.

[Q] Some sources say the talks might begin during the first week of February, in Nairobi. Can you confirm this date?

[A] I cannot confirm it, I do not have the information to do so. I know they will start soon, but I cannot tell you the exact date. . .

[Q] To what do you attribute this somewhat surprising openness shown by President Joaquim Chissano in recognising the right to strike - in fact I believe the respective decree was promulgated today in Maputo - the rights of assembly and association - to what does the MNR attribute Joaquim Chissano's sudden openness?

[A] I do not know if you are familiar with the document he - er - President Chissano mentioned at the rally yesterday. It was drawn up by the two mediators, Mugabe and President arap Moi. Basically that document represents a withdrawal of support from Frelimo by Robert Mugabe. And up to now the Zimbabwean troops had been its main support. Losing this support, Frelimo finds itself with no other way out, hence all the haste in gaining the initiative, in seeking to gain the support of the population, so as to deprive us, - or so they think - of the support we enjoy.

[Q] When was the document drawn up, and what does it say, in general?

[A] I believe it was drawn up in early December or late November, and basically the two mediators recognise that the MNR and Frelimo should meet with a view to working out a peaceful, negotiated solution to end the war in Mozambique. The two mediators recognise the MNR's existence, that is the point.

[Q] But up to now the Mozambican government had always refused to enter into direct contact with the MNR.

[A] Precisely. Hence the sudden change, into accepting direct talks, and into a stance of openness - an openness that we had always advocated. Deep down they are trying to take the credit away from us by making the kind of reforms that we had always advocated, so that they can say that they - not us - introduced the reforms. But in practice it is clear that they have been pressured into doing this. It is not as if they had long intended to do it, quite the contrary. They have been pressured into this.

[Q] What has been the MNR's military stance since the indirect contacts began?

[A] Well, the war continues without any kind of letting up.

[Q] No letting up but no stepping up either?

[A] Yes, I will not go so far as to say that we are limiting ourselves to defensive tactics, we also attack, but without any kind of intention of scoring an overall military victory.

[Q] And what about the Mozambican authorities? Has there been any military reaction on the ground, any offensive of late as is happening in Angola?

[A] No, no, no. Frelimo's activity has been much reduced. . .

[Q] It could be said that in his speech yesterday Joaquim Chissano gave in to almost all of the MNR's demands, leaving only one in abeyance, the question of a multi-party system. Am I right in thinking that this is a matter of principle for the MNR?

[A] Yes, yes, yes. And I think that on this too they will have to give in. Without a multi-party system how could we exist in Mozambique? It does not make sense. There must be a multi-party system.

[Q] And what is the MNR's stand on the question of future elections in Mozambique? Would only Frelimo and the MNR candidates be allowed to stand, or would they be open to any other party that might be formed?

[A] ... The election rules will have to be laid down in a constitution to be drawn up by a constituent assembly. So the answer to that question will be provided by the constitution itself. Of course, since we advocate a multi-party system, we do not draw the line at ourselves and Frelimo, other parties must be allowed as well. But this fact will be dealt with by the constitution.

[Q] So the MNR advocates a solution akin to that recently applied in Namibia?

[A] Precisely: that is the solution we advocate.

[Q] And do you want UN supervision when the time comes?

[A] Well, we have not got to that point yet, that is a matter to be discussed at the negotiations.

[Q] And where will the direct talks be held? Nairobi?

[A] In principle, I believe Nairobi, but we have no objections to another venue.

[Q] Are you optimistic as to the peace prospects?

[A] Oh yes, I have been optimistic since July. To be quite frank, I think that Frelimo has given in to all our demands - with that exception of the multi-party system.

[Q] And do you think that Joaquim Chissano will be able to cope with a certain amount of dissatisfaction among his more radical supporters, namely the military?

[A] Frelimo?

[Q] I mean whether Joaquim Chissano's openness might not give rise to a measure of dissent in the more radical wing, especially the military, and whether he will be able to cope.

[A] I think so, yes, I think expressions of dissatisfaction are quite likely.

[Q] And do you think Joaquim Chissano is strong enough to withstand them?

[A] I think so. As you know there is all this social unrest going on, and even the radicals will not now be able to stop this popular force...

[Q] Thank you very much, Manuel Frank...
