

If peace is signed, will Renamo actually ^{W Minter} cease fire? ^{26/1-1/2} ⁹⁰

IS Renamo able to ensure that the various bands which operate under its name will abide by a peace agreement?

Researcher William Minter, in a study based on interviews with Renamo defectors last year, found the rebel army had a well-organised command structure and a sophisticated system of radio communication in the south of the country.

This is presumably a legacy of the training these commanders once received from the South African military.

But Renamo's degree of organisation appears to dissipate as it moves northwards. A senior diplomatic source in Maputo says a basic estimate is that 50 percent of rebel attacks would stop within two weeks if a ceasefire were to be signed immediately. The remaining bands, grouped around individual warlords, would continue to sack the countryside.

"The capacity for another force in Renamo to rival Dhlakama if he enters into a peace agreement and then continue the same kind of destruction remains high," says Davies.

But perhaps the most perverse heritage Renamo will leave is the psychological damage it has caused to a generation of Mozambicans. Kok Nam, Mozambique's top war photographer, explains this with an anecdote.

"When I went to a rehabilitation centre for Renamo defectors I met a young man named 'Fifteen'. I said to him, 'Hey man, why do they call you Fifteen'. He didn't want to say anything but the other guys said to him 'Hey man, tell him why'. He said, 'I burned 15 buses with people inside'. And he laughed just like that ... But he had a crazy look in his face. Most of that group had no normal reactions."

The list of atrocities committed by the rebels is endless. This is how Nam remembers a visit to a village in Gaza province where the army had just ousted a group of rebels: "The rebels lined the entrance to the village with the heads of men on top of poles. They each had their genitals cut off and stuck into their mouths. On the other side of the path was a line of women's bodies. They were naked and had their heads and legs cut off."

The diplomatic briefing on Renamo says that in order for there to be peace, the need to negotiate with the rebel movement is unavoidable. For it to happen, the rebel organisation needs to transform itself from an externally trained terror movement into an indigenous political party. A major reason why this is unlikely to happen stems from the fact that "Renamo's core group contains a large number of psychopathic personalities".

In downtown Maputo there is an orphanage for children of the war, administered by an American and British aid organisation called Save the Children. It has produced a manual for training teachers and welfare workers in basic techniques of therapy that tells how young boys are dragged into the army. To ensure that the recruits do not have the option of deserting, Renamo often forces the boys to kill a member of the family.

In Maputo I asked Cynthia Scott, a member of Save the Children's staff, whether the minds of young people could recover from the pain inflicted on them if peace was restored to the country. "To tell you the truth," she said "I don't think it's a question that can be answered."

Eddie Koch