

# Mozambique: Moving with the times

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Pride is now a major block to direct negotiations between President **Joaquim Chissano's** government and the *Resistência nacional moçambicana* (Renamo or MNR) on ending the 14-year war (AC Vol 31 Nos 22, 23).

Mozambique's proposals for reform, especially on the constitution, have gone much further than anyone had expected. This means a shift in the balance between the **Angolan** and Mozambican negotiations (AC Vol 30 No 25). Luanda is now trailing behind Maputo - and President **José Eduardo dos Santos** is now apparently waiting with keen interest to see what Chissano comes up with. His interest is being fuelled by the fighting around Mavinga, which reduces pressure to delay the Angolan talks.

Little divides the ruling *Frente de libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) and Renamo in their vision of the country's political future. In early January, Chissano presented a liberal draft constitution which meets most of the rebels' demands for political reform. The document proposes direct elections, by secret ballot, for the presidency and the People's Assembly. It outlaws the death penalty and proposes a host of basic individual freedoms, including the right to strike and to own private property. Both Chissano and Renamo leader **Afonso Dhlakama** agree that the major outstanding issue, a multi-party system, is negotiable.

The pride factor is evident in Frelimo's demand that, before negotiations begin, the rebels must recognise the Republic of Mozambique, its constitution and laws. Dhlakama has repeatedly rejected this demand, despite entreaties by the **United States, Britain** and, to a lesser extent, **South Africa**. The **George Bush** administration has put forward its own seven-point document to break the deadlock (see Box). During a difficult 8 December Nairobi meeting with Washington's chargé d'affaires in **Zimbabwe**, **Edward Fugit**, an angry Dhlakama tossed the US document away. He was objecting to point six, which calls for recognition of 'the legitimacy of the Republic of Mozambique.'

But since then, Renamo has agreed to unconditional negotiations, dropping its prior demand to be recognised as a political movement. International impatience is gradually focussing on Chissano. The mediators in the conflict, Presidents **Daniel arap Moi** of **Kenya** and **Robert Mugabe**

of **Zimbabwe**, are busily searching for wording for an agreement to begin talks which will satisfy both Chissano's desire for formal recognition of the government and Dhlakama's unwillingness to grant this. Their efforts centre on the

## THE US PLAN

Text of United States 7-point peace proposals for Renamo-Frelimo talks. Presented to **Afonso Dhlakama** by **Ed Fugit** in Nairobi on 8 December.

1. There must be a peaceful solution to the conflict and a cessation of all attacks on civilians.
  2. Democracy in Mozambique is based on freedom of expression, association and economic opportunity.
  3. All Mozambican citizens have the right to participate in the political, social, cultural and economic life of the nation and in the determination of national policies.
  4. The people are sovereign and have the right to make decisions involving their governance.
  5. National reconciliation and unity shall be the guiding principles in the peace process.
  6. All parties shall recognise the legitimacy of the Republic of Mozambique and its constitution, institutions, and the fundamental laws emanating from them.
- Fundamental changes in the existing order within the Republic of Mozambique are to be brought about peacefully and democratically.

**Kenyan/Zimbabwean** document drawn up in December. This is now the main working document for the talks. It urged both sides to negotiate without preconditions. Although it noted the world community recognises the Maputo government as legitimate, it did not condition talks on the rebels' agreement to do the same. Chissano found such wording objectionable, and during a 16 December meeting with Mugabe in Harare, requested the document be amended.

The constant bickering over recognition is beginning to irritate some of Frelimo's friends in the West, including Washington, and in Africa. These include Harare, which has

stationed 7,000 troops in Mozambique to defend Zimbabwe's vital transport routes through Beira and Maputo ports. After the July 1989 offensive against rebel headquarters in the central region of Gorongosa, the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) has now restricted its troops to defensive operations along the railways through the Beira Corridor in central Mozambique and along the Limpopo river to the south. ZNA morale has been further damaged by cross-border raids into Zimbabwe - at least 400 Zimbabwean civilians have been killed in Renamo attacks since June 1987 - and by rebel attacks in December on the central town of Chimoio, site of Zimbabwe's main army base in Mozambique.

Many observers believe Chissano's insistence on Renamo recognising his government may have been simply an attempt to buy time to allow preparation of the draft constitution. Chissano needed to have the constitution ready, the reasoning goes, so that political reform would be seen to be a Frelimo initiative and not the result of rebel demands. Chissano's next step is to find a way to bring the rebels into his promised national debate on the constitution.

On the battlefield, Mozambique's army has continued to deteriorate, with no end in sight to chronic shortages of food and ammunition. Such scarcities will only get worse given the tidal wave of political changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the army's main sources of supplies. The withdrawal of Soviet military advisors has accelerated in the past year, falling from 800 to 250 by early January 1990. East German secret-police advisors are pulling out as well, and supplies of AK-47 assault rifles and ammunition are drying up. Most worrying for the army is the growing lack of spare parts for helicopters and fighter jets. Some military experts believe that Chissano can count on only about 5,000 well-fed and well-supplied troops of his 30,000-strong army to continue the battle against the rebels.

Senior government officials are increasingly worried about the effect on enlisted men of continuing strikes in the cities. Workers' demands for better pay and working conditions and an end to corruption among party leaders strike deep chords in an army which has continually been ne-

glected by the top brass. The focus of much discontent is the defence minister, General **Alberto Chipande**, whose incompetent management and lack of strategic thinking is generally blamed for the collapse of the army.

Maputo's relations with Pretoria, until recently Renamo's main backer, have continued to improve thanks to pressure from Britain and the USA and the considerable diplomatic skills of Chissano, who served as foreign minister until his predecessor, **Samora Machel**, died in an air-crash in South Africa in October 1986. The **F.W. de Klerk** government has provided Maputo with limited military supplies to help protect the tripartite rehabilitation of the giant Cahora Bassa hydroelectric complex in the northwestern province of Tete. This could cover ten per cent of South Africa's power needs. South African and Mozambican generals are getting along handsomely, regularly lunching on prawns and Portuguese wine at Maputo's plush Hotel Polana. When border raids have occurred, they have travelled together in each other's helicopters to inspect the sites.

After a November rebel attack in Maputo province, along the border with South Africa's Kruger National Park, the commander of Mozambique's frontier guards, Gen. **Domingos Fondo**, flew to Komatipoort in a Soviet-made Mi-8 helicopter and then boarded a South African Puma helicopter to reach the site, about 80 miles northwest of Maputo.

Diplomatic sources say that Mozambican-South African cooperation could be further increased to provide protection on the 130-kilometre road and railway between Maputo and the border town of Ressano Garcia. This route, the vital outlet to the sea for coal and citrus exporters from the Transvaal, has been repeatedly attacked by Renamo units as they step up pressure on the capital. Constant raids on the power lines from South Africa over the past six months have severely curbed Maputo's energy supplies, repeatedly leaving the capital in darkness. The power cuts have belatedly brought home the war to residents of the capital, who have generally been spared the effects of the conflict and, along with the wave of industrial strikes, undermined the government's Western-backed efforts to restart the economy ●