

# Renamo base in Kenya threatens peace talks

By KARL MAIER: Maputo

KENYA is Renamo's newest sponsor, permitting the rebel group to operate a training camp on Kenyan soil and acting as a conduit for supplies, according to Mozambican government sources.

The Kenyan factor is also threatening to delay efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement to Mozambique's vicious 15-year war. Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi's government has allowed Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama to set up at least one military training camp on Kenyan soil, according to Mozambican and international sources here.

After training in Kenya, the rebel fighters fly to Malawi and cross the border into Tete Province in north-western Mozambique, said the sources. They are then transported in vehicles of the Young Pioneers, a para-military group fiercely loyal to Malawi's octogenarian leader, Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

Military analysts said that recent Renamo arms purchases in Europe, principally in West Germany, have been shipped to Kenya before delivery to rebel-controlled areas in Mozambique.

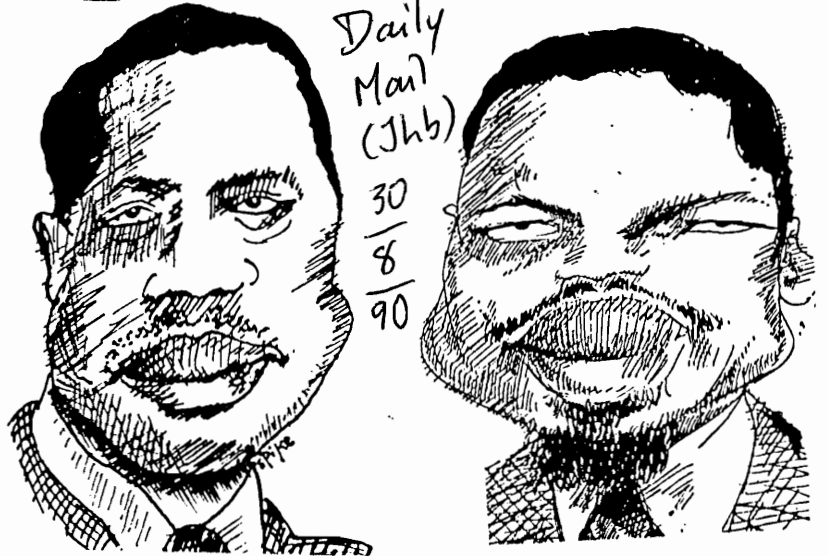
"After South Africa and Rhodesia, Kenya is becoming Renamo's third mother," said one Western diplomatic source in Maputo. "The rebel transport route used to be South Africa-Malawi-Mozambique. Now it starts in Kenya."

The second round of Mozambican peace talks in Rome earlier this month was sidetracked by a new demand from Renamo that the Kenyan government be appointed as mediator. That demand is threatening to stall the third round, scheduled for mid-September.

Renamo is understood to have very little in the way of a political platform and the government of Joaquim Chissano has already met their demands for a plural political system and a free market economy. The relatively unsophisticated Renamo officials now feel unsure of negotiating without guidance from experienced Kenyan officials, say diplomats whose governments are in regular contact with the rebel movement.

For its part, the Moi government hopes to win international kudos for brokering a Mozambican peace deal. Moi is facing increased international criticism as he clings to the one-party system. The mysterious deaths of his foreign minister and a prominent church leader have further tarnished the Kenyan government's reputation.

The conservative Moi administration has long been a western darling and



Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi

Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano

would welcome money spent by Renamo's private backers from South Africa, the United States, Portugal and West Germany.

The Kenyan government has long maintained contacts with the rebels, according to diplomats and Mozambican government officials.

But the relationship was strengthened last year when Chissano asked Moi and Mugabe to help set up negotiations between the government and rebels to end the country's vicious war.

Chissano, reportedly with Renamo's approval, announced the end of the joint mediation effort by Kenya and Zimbabwe when the Rome negotiations were held on July 8-10. The rebels had never accepted Zimbabwe as a mediator because of the estimated 7 000 Zimbabwean troops stationed near the rebel stronghold of Gorongosa in central Mozambique.

Instead the Catholic church emerged as the chief mediator, with observers from the Mozambique Catholic Church, the Italian government and a Rome-based Catholic lay charity present at the Rome talks.

Portugal has also taken a higher profile in contacts with Renamo. Immediately after the first round of talks, the head of Renamo's negotiating team, external affairs secretary Raul Domingos flew to Lisbon at the invitation of the Portuguese military intelligence service to brief government officials.

"The invitation came through the Military Intelligence Service, which has been our link to the Portuguese government. We have longstanding contacts. There exists a good relationship with

this service, and mutual confidence," Domingos said in an interview with the Portuguese television network, RTP, in mid-July.

"Our president, considering our respect for Portugal, accepted the invitation. Instead of going directly to Gorongosa, we came to Portugal to give a first-hand briefing about what is happening."

Renamo had proposed Lisbon as a venue for the talks, and the Portuguese government had repeatedly suggested that Chissano accept the site. But the Frelimo government has rejected the notion, with government officials saying that holding talks in Lisbon would be tantamount to calling into question the Lusaka Accords of 1974, which ushered in the country's independence.

While rebel sources have denied military support from either Portugal or Kenya, they have confirmed that they have a radio transmitter in Nairobi which they use to contact rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama at Renamo's Gorongosa headquarters. With Mozambican government approval, Kenya provides travel documents for the rebel negotiating team.

The start of the Mozambican peace effort coincided with FW de Klerk's rise to the presidency in South Africa — the rebels' main supporters since their first foreign backer, Ian Smith's Rhodesian government, succumbed to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

During visits to Maputo in July and December last year, De Klerk reportedly pledged to close down the remaining rebel camps in the Transvaal province near the South African Defence Force bases at Phalaborwa.