

# Agreement on Zimbabwean forces signed with Renamo

A third round of peace talks in Rome between delegations of the Mozambican government and of Renamo took place from 8 November to 1 December, and resulted in the first ever formal agreement between the two sides.

But this agreement, covering only the presence of Zimbabwean troops in Mozambique, fell far short of what the Mozambican side had hoped for. The Mozambican delegation, led by Transport Minister Armando Guebuza, was mandated to sign a general ceasefire with Renamo.

But Renamo persistently refused to discuss a ceasefire. Its delegation, led by the head of its Foreign Affairs Department, Raul Domingos, was interested in just two things – the appointment of mediators, and the question of the Zimbabweans.

The first point was easy enough: an official communique on 10 November announced that the government delegation had accepted Renamo's request that the four observers at the talks play the role of mediators. These observers were Mario Raffaelli, representing the Italian government, Andrea Riccardi and Matteo Zuppi, members of the Santo Egidio Community, the Roman Catholic lay charity at whose headquarters the talks were held, and the Catholic Archbishop of Beira, Jaime Gonçalves.

Rome talks, the Permanent Secretary at the Kenyan Foreign Minister, Bethwell Kiplagat, who has taken it upon himself to act as a Renamo adviser, was present in the Italian capital.

For the next three weeks the talks continued, largely under a blanket of silence. President Joaquim Chissano made the Mozambican government's general position clear when he opened the Second National Conference of the country's trade union movement, the OTM, on 12 November: the peace the Mozambican people wanted was one that "respects property, freedom and human life and dignity", he said.

Such a peace should rest on "harmonising the interests of all the social groups and strata that comprise the Mozambican nation". It would be a peace in which "decisions are taken democratically, without the pressure of arms".

"We all want acts of terrorism and violence to end once and for all", said Mr Chissano. "We want the continual destruction of the social and economic infrastructures of our country to end".

But in Rome Renamo's only concern was with the presence of Mozambique's Zimbabwean allies on the battlefield. This was point one of a lengthy agenda, and it proved impossible to reach any of the other points.



The head of Mozambique's negotiating team.  
Transport Minister Armando Guebuza

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## Renamo demands mediation again

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Before the government and Renamo began meeting face to face, the Presidents of Kenya and Zimbabwe, Daniel Arap Moi and Robert Mugabe, had acted as mediators. Their services were dispensed with in July, when both sides agreed that, since they were talking directly, there was no longer a need for mediation. However, Renamo changed its mind in August, and raised the demand for a mediator again.

The bandits would have preferred their Kenyan friends to act as mediators, and indeed during the

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## Zimbabwean forces to move into the rail corridors

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The partial agreement that was eventually signed on 1 December states that Zimbabwean troops are to be confined to the two rail corridors linking Zimbabwe to the ports of Beira and Maputo. The Zimbabweans are allowed inside the corridors and within an area three kilometres on each side of the corridors. These limits may be altered by the commission set up to monitor the accord.

The movement of the Zimbabwean troops into the two corridors was to start within 15 days, and was to take a maximum of 20 days. Thus all Zimbabwean forces inside Mozambique are to be stationed along the Beira and Limpopo corridors by 5 January 1991 at the latest.

The agreement forbids the Zimbabwean troops, while moving into the corridors, from involvement in any military operations of an offensive nature. For its part, Renamo pledged not to engage in any attack or other offensive military operation along the two corridors.

The Mozambican side was to communicate to the negotiating table the number of Zimbabwean troops remaining in the corridors.

The agreement also set up a Joint Verification Commission (JVC), to monitor implementation of the accord, to which the Mozambican government and Renamo each appointed three members. The Zimbabwean government was also invited to appoint three representatives to the commission.

Also sitting on the JVC are the four mediators, or their envoys, and they will chair the meetings. Eight other countries, agreed upon by the two sides, will also be represented: these are the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, France (who are all permanent members of the United Nations Security Council), Portugal, Congo, Zambia and Kenya.

The commission is to set up its headquarters in Maputo, in premises to be provided by the Mozambican authorities. Commission members will enjoy diplomatic immunity, and both the government and Renamo committed themselves to ensuring the security and free circulation of commission members to any area covered by the agreement (which means that Renamo members of the commission will be able to visit Maputo without fear of arrest).

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"This should not be an agreement on  
how to continue the war"

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The government and Renamo delegations asked the Italian government and the governments of other countries providing members for the JVC to mobilise financial and technical support so that the Commission can function effectively. The Commission will monitor the implementation of the agreement for six months, and its mandate may be renewed by mutual consent of the government and Renamo.

Both sides undertook to avoid any action "that may directly or indirectly violate the spirit or the letter of the present agreement". Should "any abnormal event of a military nature" occur that endangers the agreement, then, at the request of one of the sides, the mediators "may take useful initiatives to identify and overcome the problem".

At the signing ceremony, Mr Guebuza described the agreement as "a limited step forwards", but one



*A child in Chicique hospital, Inhambane province, who has lost both legs due to Renamo mines. Will the Rome agreement lead to an end to suffering of this sort? (AIM/Antonio Muchavel)*

that "falls below our expectations". It was "just a first step in dealing with matters of substance".

The agreement was "a positive step" insofar as "it shows a minimum of understanding on one question".

"We took a very long time and spent enormous effort to reach this first step", added Mr Guebuza. He hoped it would indeed prove to be the first step in a process leading to a ceasefire "to put an end to the war and establish peace in our country".

He warned that this should not be "an agreement on how to continue the war". The government side was determined that the agreement should be the start of "de-escalation leading to the end of the war".

"We restate to our fellow countrymen of Renamo", said Mr Guebuza, "our firm determination, on the basis of interests that unite all Mozambicans, to carry on together along the path we have started until peace is established".

In a few short remarks, Raul Domingos claimed that the exclusion of "foreign forces" from the conflict "is an encouraging step to advance towards political questions and later to questions of a ceasefire".

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### Renamo also pledged not to attack the Nacala Corridor

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At a press conference given on his return to Maputo on 5 December, Mr Guebuza decried the Rome accord as "an important step in the right direction", and one which "once consolidated, may lead to a general ceasefire".

Asked about the presence of Malawian troops along the northern rail corridor, linking Malawi with

the port of Nacala, Mr Guebuza said that currently there were no military operations in this area "and Renamo promises that it will continue not to attack that corridor".

On the operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the war zones, Mr Guebuza noted that Renamo had attacked Red Cross vehicles in the past. "We have now reached an agreement that these convoys should not be attacked", he said.

Thus supplies to needy civilians in war zones could be guaranteed, "but unfortunately we have not yet reached an agreement on the return of Mozambicans from neighbouring countries".

"The government insisted with Renamo that the return of these Mozambicans should be guaranteed", explained the minister. This meant that there should be a "minimum of security" for returnees, "so that a month after their return they are not attacked again, and forced to leave the country once more".

But no such agreement was reached, and Mr Guebuza expressed concern "that we shall have one more year in which our fellow citizens are living in the sad conditions" of refugee camps.

Asked whether the Mozambican army would take over positions outside the corridors previously held by Zimbabwean troops, the minister declined to answer, pointing out that this was classified information.

But even before Mr Guebuza gave his press conference, there were signs that Renamo was not taking the agreement seriously and planned to carry on much as before. Thus on 3 December, at Zipinga, in Manica province, bandits sabotaged a stretch of the Beira-Zimbabwe railway in blatant violation of the accord signed in Rome.