



*First meeting of the Joint Verification Commission in Maputo, under the chairmanship of Italian ambassador Manfredo di Camerana (AIM/Perhat Mornade)*

## Joint Verification Commission starts work

The Joint Verification Commission (JVC), set up to monitor the implementation of the partial agreement reached by the Mozambican government and Renamo on 1 December, took office in Rome on 19 December.

Under the agreement, Zimbabwean troops in Mozambique are confined to the two rail corridors between Zimbabwe and the ports of Maputo and Beira, while Renamo pledged not to launch any attacks on the corridors.

The JVC has 46 members, representing ten countries in addition to the Mozambican government and Renamo. The other countries involved are Zimbabwe, as an interested party, Italy, in its capacity as chairing the mediators in the peace talks, and the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, France, Zambia, Congo, Kenya and Portugal. Italy coordinates the JVC through its ambassador in Maputo, Manfredo di Camerana.

The Mozambican government appointed three officers to the JVC - Maj-Gen Salvador Mutumuque, the head of operations in the General Staff of the Mozambican Armed Forces, Col. Graça Chongo, and Maj André Justino Nrepo.

The Renamo representatives are Pascoal José, Jeronimo Malagueta, and Inacio Morgado. The bandits refer to them as General, Brigadier and Major respectively.

Kenya is represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Bethwell Kiplagat, and by Brigadier Opanadi, two key figures in the Kenyan government's support for Renamo.

The United States has four representatives on the Commission, headed by Richard Roth, Deputy Director for southern Africa in the State Department.

The other countries all have three representatives, with the exception of the Soviet Union, which only appointed one diplomat, a first secretary in its Rome embassy.

Assisting di Camerana in chairing the Commission are four personalities chosen by the mediators. They are Francisco Filota, Roman Catholic bishop of the central Mozambican city of Chimoió, Fabio Ricardi of the Catholic lay charity the Santo Egidio Community (at whose Rome headquarters the peace talks have been held), and two colonels in the Italian army.

Immediately after the commission had been sworn in, a fourth round of peace talks began between the Mozambican government and Renamo in the presence of the mediators. As at the previous round, Transport Minister Armando Guebuza headed the Mozambican side, while the Renamo team was led by the head of their foreign affairs department, Raul Domingos.

The meeting only lasted until 21 December, and made no substantial advance. A very short joint communique said that the meeting had begun discussing the "political questions" on the agenda agreed at the third round in November. The two delegations drew up "a working basis" for the next round, scheduled for January.

The statement gave no further details, but AIM's correspondent in Rome reported that, as expected, Renamo had started the meeting with complaints that the Mozambican government was advancing "unilaterally" with political reforms. Renamo thus wanted to ensure that the laws being adopted to regulate multi-party politics in Mozambique should take into account the bandits' own positions.

In fact, it turned out that Renamo's ideas on the registration of political parties were not significantly different from those of the Mozambican government.

As for the electoral law, this has not yet been presented to parliament, and the government has made clear its willingness to consider a moratorium on the law until Renamo has given its position.

With these minimal procedural agreements clinched, it was hoped that the two sides could make a joint statement on political principles, concerning the nature of future political parties in Mozambique and the outlines of an electoral law.

Since Renamo apparently agreed with the government that political parties should be national in scope (i.e. not regionalist or secessionist in nature), and should not be based on religion, it ought to have been relatively simple to draw up such a declaration.

The Mozambican government also wanted agreement on a timetable for the discussion of such political matters as the electoral law. It is believed that the government wanted the discussion on all such matters to be concluded by March 1991.

At this point all hopes of substantial agreement from the fourth round collapsed, when Renamo simply rejected any attempt to timetable the discussions, declaring that this was a form of "political pressure" from the government.

There had also been hopes that a "Xmas truce" might be declared during the talks, which would at least have expressed a political willingness to end the war.

#### **No truce for Xmas**

But Renamo wanted a truce of just four days, from 23 to 27 December, while the Mozambican delegation argued that the truce should be extended until at least 15 January. This was because the Xmas period was already less than a week away, and four days was not even time enough for the order to stop shooting to reach all the units in the field.

Renamo refused to reconsider its position, and so no truce at all was agreed.

Members of the JVC began to arrive in Maputo on 24 December, among them the three Renamo representatives. Looking rather fearful, they declined to make any statements to the press. This was the first time ever that members of Renamo were legally and publicly present in Maputo.

The JVC had already met twice in Rome, and it held its first meeting in Maputo on 27 December under Mr di Camerana's chairmanship.

The Italian diplomat said that agreement had already been reached on exactly which areas were included in the two corridors. He announced that a military sub-commission had been set up to follow



*The three Renamo members on the Verification Commission, Pascoal Jose, Jeronimo Malaqueta, and Inacio Morgado (AIM/Ferhat Momade)*

the operations envisaged under the Rome accord (the main such operation was the redeployment of the Zimbabwean troops to within the Beira and Limpopo Corridors).

A further JVC meeting on 31 December dealt with "technical matters", including the establishment of sub-commissions at key points in the corridors (these would be the cities of Beira and Chimoi in the Beira Corridor, and Chokwe and Chicualacuala in the Limpopo Corridor).

#### **Chissano calls for tolerance**

At the traditional end of year reception given on 28 December in the presidential gardens for cadres of the state, the Frelimo Party and the country's

social organisations, President Chissano urged Mozambicans to adapt to the new pluralist reality in which supporters of the government would have to live side by side with ideological opponents.

"We have already begun to live together with those who are fighting against us, guns in hand", he said, referring to the Renamo delegation on the JVC. "Although a ceasefire has not yet been proclaimed, and the war is not yet at an end, we have started living with them. We are discussing some of the problems with them here in Maputo".

"We hope that next year more of them will be here", said the President. "Not only those who are fighting against us,

but also those who merely disagree with us ideologically".

He called for "dialogue and understanding". He added that Frelimo hopes its ideas would prevail, "but we also want to hear and respect the ideas of those who will come with their own conceptions, often opposed to ours".

"We hope they will come in a constructive spirit, so as to make a contribution to the greater well-being of our people", said Mr Chissano.

Attention should be directed towards rebuilding the country. "If the conflict of ideas takes place in that context, then it will be salutary", he said. "But if it is based merely on selfishness, then it will lead to even greater chaos".