

# Renamo sabotages Rome accord

As January wore on, it became depressingly evident that the leadership of the Renamo bandits was not taking seriously the agreement it had signed in Rome with the Mozambican government on 1 December.

Under the agreement Zimbabwean forces operating in Mozambique are restricted to the rail corridors linking Zimbabwe to the ports of Maputo and Beira. In return, Renamo gave an undertaking to cease all attacks against the two corridors.

But the bandit raids, particularly into the Beira Corridor, did not stop. While attacks in December might have been explained by difficulties in Renamo communication, leading to failures to inform all bandit groups of the Rome accord, the same excuse could hardly hold for raids in January. (See the box on the opposite page for details of such attacks).

The Zimbabweans completed their redeployment into the Beira and Limpopo Corridors by 28 December, well in advance of the 5 January deadline set by the agreement itself. But, according to Col Clever Chiramba, the commander of the Zimbabwean forces in the Beira Corridor, even when withdrawing, Zimbabwean units had come under Renamo fire.

"When our troops were moving out of combat positions in the Pungwe area, Renamo attacked them, thus impeding the pace of the redeployment",

said Col Chiramba. "This was not supposed to be done in terms of the Rome accord".

According to reports in the Harare newspaper *The Herald*, when the Rome agreement was signed, there were less than 1,000 Zimbabwean troops stationed in parts of Mozambique outside the two corridors. The paper said that Mozambican garrisons had taken over from the Zimbabweans at Casa Banana, Maringue, Fabrica, Machesse and Cavallo, in the northern parts of Manica and Sofala provinces. Most of these positions had once been Renamo camps, and there were fears that the bandits might now try to retake them.

The Zimbabweans were particularly annoyed when Renamo attempted to sabotage the Beira-Zimbabwe railway twice in the first week of January: there could be no more blatant disregard for the Rome agreement. Furthermore, the Zimbabwean army was convinced that these actions were deliberately ordered by the top Renamo leadership.

Col Chiramba said that Renamo radio messages, intercepted by Zimbabwean military intelligence, showed that Renamo's commander-in-chief, Afonso Dhlakama, had personally ordered attacks not only against economic targets in the corridor, such as the railway, but also against Zimbabwean troops. He thought this might be an attempt to provoke

## Peace remains number one priority - Chissano

President Chissano pledged on 4 January that efforts to achieve peace would remain the top priority for the Mozambican government in 1991.

Speaking at the traditional New Year reception offered to the diplomatic corps, Mr Chissano said that, although 1990 would go down in history as the year "in which delegations of our government and Renamo met for the first time to discuss mechanisms leading to an end to the war", the wishes of the people had not yet been satisfied.

The "partial agreement" signed with Renamo in Rome was "just the first step on the road to a general ceasefire".

The approval in November of a new, pluralist constitution

created the possibility "for greater participation by citizens in the life of the country", said the President.

The political transformations under way "reflect qualitative changes in the exercise of democracy, respect for differing points of view, and the need to give equal opportunities to all those who wish to contribute in a peaceful way to national unity and progress".

He stressed that there was now "no acceptable pretext" for the continued destruction of lives and property. The conditions now existed for "free political debate as to who should govern the country".

Mr Chissano said that this year the Mozambican parlia-

ment will pass a new electoral law. The elections themselves would be held at a date "to be announced at an opportune moment".

Mr Chissano expressed joy at the return of African National Congress President Oliver Tambo to South Africa "to lead the struggle for justice and democracy" after decades of exile.

"We hope that many more of his fellow countrymen will soon be allowed to leave exile and return to South Africa", he added, calling on the Pretoria regime to remove rapidly the remaining obstacles to negotiating a new constitutional dispensation.

## Renamo's violations of the Rome agreement

The following is a chronological list of the violations of the Rome accord as reported in the Mozambican media.

**January 2:** Renamo attacked Mozambican troops at **Motasse**, in the Limpopo corridor, between the towns of Magude and Chokwe. Two of the attackers died, and two Mozambican soldiers were injured.

**January 2:** Renamo attacked a village run by the "Rosemary Koro" religious group in the **Maforga** area of the Beira Corridor.

**January 2:** Renamo kidnapped eight people at **Selva** on the Beira-Zimbabwe road, near the Zimbabwean border.

**January 2:** Five bandits attacked the small town of **Tica** on the Beira-Zimbabwe railway in Sofala province, kidnapping three people, two of whom were later murdered.

**January 3:** Renamo killed six people in an attack on the **Cheringoma** centre for displaced people in Dondo district. The centre is in the Beira corridor, within a stone's throw of the Beira-Zimbabwe pipeline.

**January 3:** Bandits blew up part of the Beira-Zimbabwe railway at **Muda**, 74 kilometres west of Beira. One person was killed in this incident. Damage to the track was not serious, and took rail workers four hours to repair.

**January 4:** Bandits, probably the same Renamo group responsible for the Muda attack, blew up the railway at **Mafambisse**. This time it only took Mozambique Railways 45 minutes to reopen the line to traffic.

**January 4:** Renamo attacked a supermarket, a shop, two restaurants, and the social centre of the Beira football club, all on the outskirts of **Beira**, and located beside the main Beira-Zimbabwe road. As they returned to their base, the raiders were intercepted by Mozambican troops, and in the ensuing clash, at an area known as **Six Mile**, two bandits were killed.

**January 4:** Renamo attacked the **7 April** agricultural cooperative in the Beira Corridor, burning down several houses and destroying a tractor. The raiders left behind photographs of the Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, and a message justifying attacks on the Beira Cor-

ridor, on the grounds that the Zimbabweans had not redeployed all their troops (a claim strongly denied by Zimbabwe).

**January 5:** Armed men, thought to be members of Renamo, but wearing uniforms of the Mozambican army, attacked the suburb of **Nhaconjo**, on the outskirts of **Beira**. They seriously injured one person, kidnapped an unknown number of others, and looted property from two families.

**January 5:** Renamo killed two people and wounded seven others in an attack against a tractor in **Nhamatanda** district. The tractor was travelling on the Inchope-Gorongosa road, part of which is inside the Beira corridor, and part outside. The tractor, which was severely damaged, belonged to a private farmer and was carrying woodcutters.

**January 6:** Renamo attacked the village of **Mutua** in the Beira corridor, killing one person. They burnt down nine houses and looted a further 17.

**January 7:** Renamo attacked an outlying suburb of the city of **Chimoio**, capital of Manica province, killing one person and kidnapping five others.

**January 8:** Renamo wounded three people in an ambush against a vehicle belonging to the private company "Organizações Vumba" travelling along the Beira Corridor from Manica to Beira.

**January 10:** Renamo wounded four timber workers in an attack on the road from **Inchope** in the Beira Corridor to Gorongosa. The attack took place about four kilometres from the Inchope crossroads, and it is not entirely clear whether the exact spot of the ambush is just inside or just outside the technical definition of the corridor.

**January 11:** Renamo killed four people and wounded ten others in an ambush against a truck travelling along the Beira-Zimbabwe road in **Dondo** district. The truck, belonging to the private company "Moçambique Florestal", had been routinely transporting workers to their jobs.

Zimbabwean forces into moving outside the corridor in hot pursuit of the bandits.

Mozambique and Zimbabwe took their complaints about Renamo violations to the international Joint Verification Commission (JVC) that is monitoring implementation of the Rome accord.

Given Italy's role as mediator, the JVC is chaired by the Italian ambassador to Maputo, Manfredo di Camerana. Sitting on the Commission are repre-

sentatives of Mozambique, Renamo and Zimbabwe, and of eight other countries - the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, France, Congo, Zambia, Kenya and Portugal.

Investigation of the complaints proceeded slowly. By 10 January, the military sub-commission of the JVC had looked into three of them. That day the JVC issued a statement announcing that Renamo was "most probably" responsible for all three incidents.

## ICRC resumes flights to war zones

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began an operation in late January to fly in relief supplies to several thousand people living in an area controlled by Renamo bandits in the central Mozambican province of Sofala.

This is the first ICRC operation into bandit-held territory since an agreement was reached in Rome on 1 December, under which the ICRC may undertake humanitarian operations throughout Mozambican territory with the consent of both the Mozambican government and Renamo.

The area concerned lies between the small towns of Canxixe and Senga-Senga in the district of Maringue. Senga-Senga had been retaken briefly by the Mozambican Armed Forces in mid-1990, but was back in Renamo hands by the end of the year.

Renamo claims that between 50,000 and 60,000 people are living in this area, but the ICRC would neither confirm nor deny this figure. "We don't know", the ICRC Maputo representative, Dominique Grosz, told AIM on 25 January. "We are doing our own registration of the people there now".

Mr Grosz said that the ICRC was distributing a total of around 200 tonnes of clothes, blankets and soap in an operation that would last for perhaps three months. They were not distributing food, and he did not think there would be any need for this in the Canxixe area unless the rains failed this year.

The ICRC has also resumed flights into isolated areas in the centre of the country under government control. Prior to the 1 December agreement, they had been unable to do this, since there was no

security guarantee from Renamo.

But since December, the ICRC has been able to fly safely into the Zambezi Valley towns of Chemba, Caia and Marromeu in Sofala, and Mandle in neighbouring Manica province.

These flights mainly carry medical supplies to support the Mozambican health service. However, Mr Grosz thought that with large numbers of people coming out of the bush into government held areas in northern Manica, it might also be necessary to restart an airlift of food to the Mandie zone.

The ICRC's operations in Mozambique have long been shrouded in controversy, since it is the only one of the many humanitarian organisations operating in the country that has persistently maintained official contacts with the bandits.

In the case of a clash at Motasse in the Limpopo Corridor on 2 January, the JVC statement said that "the nature and strength of the attack, and the well-coordinated manner in which it was conducted leads the JVC to conclude that it was most likely an attack by Renamo forces". This attack resulted in the deaths of two of the attackers, and injuries to two Mozambican soldiers.

The second case was a raid on the outskirts of Beira on 5 January. The JVC noted that the attackers had come from and retreated towards "a known Renamo area". None of the attackers had been recognised by the local population, and the object of the looting had been utensils and clothing rather than money. These factors, plus the nature of the weapons and explosives used, and the size of the attacking force, led the JVC to conclude "that it was most likely an attack by Renamo forces".

Similarly with the third case, an incident of sabotage on the Beira-Zimbabwe railway on 4 January: although there was no direct physical evidence indicating who was responsible, the nature of the attack led the JVC to conclude that, once again, this was "most likely" the work of Renamo.

Meanwhile, the effects of the Zimbabwean troop withdrawal had a serious impact on the road between Zimbabwe and Malawi which runs through

the middle of the northwestern Mozambican province of Tete. The Mozambican government had wanted this "Tete Corridor" included in the Rome agreement, but Renamo claimed it was subject to separate arrangements the bandits had made with the Malawian authorities, since Malawi is the main user of this route.

But in the second week of January, Renamo launched a series of attacks on convoys using this road. With the Zimbabweans withdrawn, there was no military escort on these vehicles. The attacks came on 8, 9 and 10 January, and the first two ambushes were on a relatively small scale, with one driver killed, another slightly injured, and one truck destroyed.

But the third ambush, 55 kilometres south of the Malawian border, was massive, and resulted in the deaths of at least five drivers and one passenger. Three trucks were burnt out, and ten others were abandoned as their drivers fled (these were later recovered undamaged).

A group of Malawian road hauliers visited the scene of the attack in a Mozambican military vehicle the following day. One of them, Kevin Scott, said they had examined the bodies of a murdered woman passenger and a driver.

## US diplomat urges Renamo to respect accord

The US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, condemned Renamo for its violations of the Rome accord at a Maputo press conference on 12 January.

Speaking immediately before leaving Mozambique after a 24 hour visit, Mr Cohen said the United States was "disappointed" at the violations, and at "the established fact that Renamo has been responsible".

The American diplomat said he hoped the violations were "based on a misunderstanding", perhaps due to "confusion with respect to the terms of reference".

The United States was in contact with Renamo "expressing the view that the agreement must be adhered to".

"We have been pressing on Renamo the urgency and need to comply fully with the Rome agreement", he stressed.

Mr Cohen had met with President Chissano earlier in the day. "We discussed the next steps in the peace process and how the United States can help move the negotiations along quickly", he declared.

Mr Chissano wanted to hold general elections "as soon as possible", continued Mr Cohen. "He told me he does not want to be a president selected by the Frelimo Central Committee for a long time; he wants to be president selected by the people of Mozambique".

As for continued South African support for Renamo, Mr Cohen said that while South Africa had, prior to F.W. de Klerk assuming the presidency, operated "a policy of interfering in neighbouring countries", he believed that de Klerk "has stopped that, and that destabilisation is no longer taking place".

When it was pointed out that there were still reports of the

South African military collaborating with Renamo, Mr Cohen admitted "we cannot be a hundred per cent sure that there are not some activities".

As for the fundraising and other support for Renamo carried out by ultra-right groups inside the United States, Mr Cohen said "any violations of US law will be investigated thoroughly". But he claimed not to be aware of any such breaches of US law.

Mr Cohen announced that US aid to Mozambique in 1991 would amount to approximately 110 million dollars, making it the largest such programme in sub-saharan Africa. In addition, the US would provide between five and 10 million dollars to Mozambique to help offset the increased costs of imported fuels due to the Gulf crisis.

"They had obviously been stripped of their clothes first and then shot", he said. "It appeared the driver had tried to escape. There were bullet wounds all over his body".

A few days later, four more bodies were found; again, their clothes had been removed before they were murdered.

These attacks resulted in a suspension of all international traffic using the 358 kilometre road for more than two weeks. As a result dozens of trucks were stranded at the Zimbabwean and Malawian borders waiting to cross.

According to road hauliers in Harare, in the year prior to the Rome agreement, the control exercised by the Zimbabwean escorts was so complete that there had been no Renamo ambushes in the Tete corridor at all. On average, 150 trucks a day passed through the corridor.

The big loser in this was Malawi, which had been sending 60 per cent of its exports through Tete. Since Renamo had also restarted attacks on the railway from Malawi to the northern Mozambican port of Nacala, it was clear that the bandits were putting a squeeze on Malawi. It was suggested that this was Renamo's way of forcing the Malawian government to provide it with base facilities from

which to launch a rainy season offensive into central Mozambique.

The normally well-informed Harare-based, Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) reported that on 15 January talks began inside Malawi between Renamo and a Malawian delegation, believed to be led by John Tembo, Treasurer-General of the Malawi Congress Party and one of the most powerful men in the country. Tembo is also the co-chairman of the Mozambique/Malawi Joint Defence and Security Commission.

SARDC also claimed that two years ago "Malawi made a still secret agreement with Renamo under which the bandits agreed not to attack Malawi's vital trade routes through Tete and to the Mozambican Indian Ocean port of Nacala".

An unnamed Western diplomat told SARDC that the Malawians were "furious" about the ambushes in the Tete Corridor. "They feel that Renamo has abrogated its agreement with them", he said.

But the Malawians promptly denied both that there had ever been any such agreement, and that any talks were under way with Renamo. Tembo himself described SARDC's claims as "an obvious malicious attack on me personally and the integrity of the government of Malawi".

Malawi's ambassador in Maputo also claimed the report was "false", and he alleged it was designed to create difficulties between the Mozambican and Malawian governments.

Although strictly speaking the Tete and Nacala Corridors do not fall within the terms of reference of the JVC, the commission issued an appeal on 18 January calling for an end to attacks on these routes.

The appeal was made by those members of the JVC not directly involved in the war, and urged the parties involved "in the spirit of the Rome agreement" to desist from any hostile act, not only in the transport corridors, "but in Mozambican territory as a whole, in order to assist a rapid return to peace".

The JVC was also wrestling with its financial situation. Although it was working out of offices provided freely by the Mozambican authorities, other expenses, needed to cover travel to and from the corridors, communications and accommodation for its members, were quite substantial. As of mid-January, the JVC had a budget of just seven million dollars, every last cent of which had been provided by the Italian government.

At the end of January, the Mozambican negotiators returned to Rome for the fifth round of talks with Renamo. The meeting was dominated by acrimonious exchanges over the report presented by the JVC, which clearly indicted Renamo for repeated violations of the December agreement. Thus the meeting never reached the points on the previously agreed agenda concerning "political questions".

#### **No advance towards a ceasefire**

The meeting lasted from 26 to 30 January, and broke up without the slightest advance towards a general ceasefire. Surprised by the aggressive intransigence shown by Renamo, the Italian government and Catholic Church mediators expressed a sense of complete frustration. "This wasn't just an unproductive meeting - it was counter-productive", declared one of them to AIM's correspondent covering the talks.

The JVC's report, presented by Mr di Camerana, said that there had been 14 official notifications of violations of the agreement. By late January, the JVC had investigated eight of these, reaching the conclusion that Renamo had probably been responsible for at least six of them.

In the other two cases, the JVC said it did not have enough evidence to warrant any conclusions.

Renamo reacted violently to this report, denying responsibility for any violations, and accusing the JVC of acting in a partial manner and favouring the Mozambican government. This was despite the fact that Renamo itself has three representatives on the Commission, and that four of the countries sitting on the JVC (the United States, Portugal, Kenya and Zambia) were chosen by Renamo.

Even more serious, Renamo handed the JVC its own report in which it claimed that the Zimbabweans had not completed their redeployment into the two corridors. "On the contrary", declared the Renamo report, "Zimbabwean platoons remain outside the corridors with indications that they intend to remain for ever in the country, disguised as Mozambican troops".

Renamo asserted that Zimbabweans pretending to be Mozambicans were to be found in no less than seven of the country's 11 provinces - Inhambane, Gaza, and Maputo in the south, Manica, Sofala and Zambezia in the centre, and Tete in the north-west. (In point of fact, there have never been any Zimbabwean forces in either Inhambane or Zambezia.)

Both the JVC and the Mozambican government asked for evidence to back up these remarkable claims. But far from providing any proof, Renamo issued an ultimatum - either the Mozambican government guarantee the "total and effective" withdrawal of the Zimbabweans to the corridors, or Renamo would "take measures".

In fact, shortly before this round of talks, the JVC had investigated the largest barracks in Mozambique, at Boane, 30 kilometres west of Maputo, for any sign of hidden Zimbabweans. They had found not a scrap of evidence of Zimbabweans disguised as Mozambicans.

#### **Defining the corridors**

Other serious differences concerning the very definition of the two corridors also put Renamo on one side of the fence, and the Mozambican government and the JVC on the other.

According to the JVC, "the corridor is a continuous strip of land between two determined points. In the case of the Beira Corridor, one of these points is Beira City, and the other is Machipanda, on the border with Zimbabwe. The Limpopo Corridor has as its extreme points the city of Maputo, and the Zimbabwean border at Chicualacuala".

For the JVC, "it is thus understood that Beira, Maputo, Chokwe and other towns situated along the corridors are integral parts of the corridors, according to the administrative definition of these areas".

The Mozambican government has approved the JVC's definition unreservedly. But in Renamo's document, the corridors are not continuous - Renamo demanded the exclusion of the towns from the definition of the corridors. Thus the towns would remain in a situation of war - despite the fact that the corridors in their strictest sense (the railways and roads) pass right through them, and it is in the towns that the JVC had established its observation points.

Renamo's refusal to provide evidence for its accusations, and its frontal disagreement with the JVC look very much like a denial of the authority of the JVC, even though the composition of the commission had been fully accepted by Renamo in December.