

Renamo condemned for violating Rome accord

Throughout March, the Renamo bandits continued to attack the Limpopo rail corridor, linking Zimbabwe to the port of Maputo, in flagrant violation of the agreement signed between the Mozambican government and Renamo in Rome on 1 December.

The international Joint Verification Commission (JVC), which is monitoring the Rome agreement, met on 8 March and strongly condemned the Renamo actions. The JVC stressed that "deliberate violations of the agreement are considered by the international community as a serious attempt to hinder the ongoing peace process as well as a demonstration of bad faith by the violating party."

It rejected "attempts to justify deliberate violations", and reminded Renamo that "on the basis of international practice, the commission is the body to which the parties are committed to address their complaints".

The JVC appealed to Renamo "to refrain from acts and declarations contrary to the letter and spirit of the Rome agreement", and urged it to cooperate fully with the commission.

At the time of this meeting, the latest confirmed violations of the accord were five attacks against the Limpopo Corridor in late February and early March. "It was not necessary to visit the places attacked in the Limpopo Corridor", the JVC Chairman, Italian ambassador Manfredo di Camerana, told AIM. "In these cases Renamo declared that it was responsible, so there was nothing to verify".

JVC "very concerned"

He said all members of the JVC were "very concerned" at the Renamo behaviour. "We don't understand why Dhlakama took such a position. It's unacceptable", he said. (Interviewed by the *Voice of America* radio station Renamo commander-in-chief Afonso Dhlakama admitted that he had given orders

to resume attacks on the Limpopo Corridor, and threatened to do the same to the Beira Corridor within 30 days).

"If you sign an agreement, you cannot deliberately violate it, especially if you have established an international commission. You have to respect the countries that are on the commission", said Mr di Camerana. "We are not an instrument of the Mozambican government. We are an instrument of the peace process, and Dhlakama should understand that".

The Renamo leader "has to take the JVC seriously, and not treat it as a joke", added the ambassador.

Renamo justified its attacks on the Limpopo Corridor with a claim that Zimbabwean troops were still stationed at 52 separate places outside the corridors in violation of the Rome accord. (The Rome accord restricts Zimbabwean forces operating in Mozambique to the Limpopo and Beira Corridors).

By early March, the JVC had investigated 18 of the places on Renamo's list and had found not the slightest evidence of any Zimbabwean presence.

The places investigated were Boane, west of Maputo; Guro, Catandica, Sussundenga, Rotanda, Mavonde (on two occasions), Espungabera,

Machaze and Macate, all in Manica province; Chemba, Chibabava, Machanga, Divinhe, Buzi, and a bridge over the Buzi river in Sofala province; Mutarara and Changara in Tete province; and Quelimane, capital of Zambezia province.

"On the basis of what our military experts told us, it was reported that no Zimbabwean troops had been in these places for a long time", said Mr di Camerana. (These military experts include Italian colonels seconded to the JVC, and military attachés from the embassies of several of the other countries represented on the commission).

Renamo had complained that the Verification Commission arrived well after they had made their complaints. But Mr di Camerana told AIM "you cannot withdraw a couple of hundred troops within



Italian ambassador Manfredo di Camerana, Chairman of the Joint Verification Commission (AIM/Ferhat Momade)

Renamo attacks in the Limpopo Corridor

The following is a list of known violations of the Rome accord committed by Renamo in March.

March 6: Renamo bandits derailed a train in the **Limpopo Corridor**, about 170 kilometres north of Maputo, thus violating once again the agreement signed in Rome with the Mozambican government on 1 December. The bandits sabotaged the line by unscrewing 36 sleepers. A train carrying empty freight wagons up the line for delivery to National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) hit the loosened track, and the locomotive and one wagon came off the rails.

Mid-March: Renamo massacred 23 people and injured several dozen others in a raid on the small town of **Maluana**, on the main north-south road, about 50 kilometres north of Maputo. They looted every shop in the town, as well as the local health centre and maternity ward.

At the same time, a second bandit group attacked workers' quarters at the **Maragra** sugar plantation, some 30 kilometres further north, and murdered eight workers.

Both places are in the Limpopo Corridor, and so these attacks are also violations of the Rome agreement.

March 16: Renamo bandits murdered three people, two railway workers and a soldier, in an

ambush against a train in the **Limpopo Corridor**, thus once more violating the Rome accord. The attack took place 143 kilometres north of Maputo. Five other people were seriously injured, but Renamo did not manage to derail the train, which returned to the town of Magude.

March 18: Renamo violated the Rome agreement again, by murdering nine people in an ambush against a truck at **Bobole**, 40 kilometres north of Maputo, in the Limpopo Corridor.

March 20: In a further violation of the Rome agreement, Renamo sabotaged the railway in the **Limpopo Corridor**, at the same spot as the 16 March ambush, by unscrewing 134 sleepers, forcing a temporary closure of the line.

March 25: Eleven people were missing, feared dead, after a Renamo ambush against a truck at **Bobole**, in the Limpopo Corridor. The ambush constituted a further violation of the Rome agreement.

March 31: Renamo murdered five civilians and wounded a sixth in a pre-dawn raid against **Madjecuane** village, in Chokwe district, Gaza province. The village is inside the Limpopo Corridor, so the attack was a violation both of the Rome accord, and of Renamo's own unilaterally-declared Easter "truce".

the space of a few weeks without leaving some evidence".

"The movement of a large number of soldiers is visible - they have premises, they have vehicles", he said. "These places are all small towns. Some evidence would be left behind".

Mr di Camerana criticised Renamo for providing nothing more than a list of placenames with no specific information on alleged violations by the Zimbabwean forces. "If Renamo gives us concrete details, then the JVC could intervene immediately", he said. "But we can't work just on the basis of a list".

Just a pretext

"We sometimes have the impression that this is all just a pretext to create problems for the commission", he added.

The investigations had been suspended, since Renamo had said it was "not necessary" to visit the other places named in their complaint, given the time that had passed. "They say they will present us with another list with more details, but they haven't given us anything yet", said Mr di Camerana.

The ambassador described as "nonsense" attempts by Renamo to redefine the corridors so as to

exclude the main towns through which they run. He pointed out that it was only on 14 January, six weeks after the agreement had been signed, that Renamo had suddenly announced that it considered towns such as Maputo, Beira and Chimoyo as lying outside the corridors.

"We cannot accept the idea that we have lots of little corridors", said Mr di Camerana. "The Limpopo corridor starts in Chicualacuala on the border and ends in Maputo, where the train stops. It's exactly the same for the Beira corridor - it runs from the Zimbabwean border at Machipanda to Beira without any interruption".

On 9 March, Mr di Camerana, accompanied by the head of the three-man Renamo team on the JVC, Pascoal José, flew to Rome, at the request of the Italian government and Catholic Church mediators, for discussions with Dhlakama himself.

Prior to this meeting Dhlakama held court, first in Nairobi, and later in Rome itself, with a string of western and South African journalists. These interviews made depressing reading, since they showed that the bandit chief had no interest in reaching a speedy ceasefire.

Thus Dhlakama told the Johannesburg *Star*, in an article published on 6 March, that "Renamo cannot accept a ceasefire until the political

problems have been solved because the government will use the ceasefire to rebuild to fight Renamo."

Dhlakama proposed what would evidently be a lengthy process of negotiation while the war dragged on. "First, there must be agreement on the political problems", he said. "Secondly, we must discuss the details of the transition period. Thirdly, comes the ceasefire, and lastly we demand the presence of an independent organisation to supervise the country while we have elections".

"No possibility" of peace this year

Dhlakama saw "no possibility" of any agreement before the end of 1991. This amounted to a pledge by the Renamo leader to go on waging war against Mozambican civilians for at least another nine months.

Despite the immense amount of time and effort put into discussing the new pluralist constitution last year, Dhlakama alleged that the Mozambican government is "not serious" about multi-party democracy.

He then attacked all other political parties in the country as "creations of SNASP" (the Mozambican

security service), thus illustrating that in reality it is Renamo that opposes pluralism and wishes to reduce Mozambican politics to a conflict between itself and the Frelimo Party.

In a dispatch published on March 7, the Reuters news agency quoted an interview with Dhlakama in which the bandit chief claimed that "the Zimbabweans are all over the country, often disguised as government troops". He put the number of Zimbabweans at an extraordinary 25,000. (According to Mr di Camerana, the Zimbabweans' own figures are just 5,000 troops - 3,000 in the Beira Corridor, and 2,000 in the Limpopo Corridor).

The Renamo leader made a similar accusation on the Portuguese service of *Radio France International* on 15 March, saying that there were Zimbabwean troops "hidden in Maputo, with Frelimo uniforms". (Frelimo is a political party and does not have any uniforms: presumably Dhlakama meant Mozambican army uniforms.)

There could be no ceasefire without an overall political agreement, he insisted, because the war was caused by "ideological differences".

During Dhlakama's stay in Rome, a high-ranking US diplomat, Jeffrey Davidow, a deputy assistant Secretary of State, met with him, in an attempt to persuade the bandit chief to respect the Rome accord. He did not succeed: Dhlakama was only

Elections may be held without Renamo

President Joaquim Chissano admitted on 21 March that, if the war continues, Mozambique may have to hold its first multi-party elections without the participation of Renamo.

Speaking in the Cape Verdean capital, Praia, he said that the Mozambican government was working "tirelessly" to ensure that general elections take place in conditions of peace, and as soon as possible. But he admitted that it might be necessary to organise elections without any agreement with Renamo on ending the war.

"If our opponents do not see any need to change, we may perhaps be obliged to hold elections under conditions that are not very favourable for the participation of everyone", he said.

The Frelimo Party believed that those Mozambican

citizens living in areas under government control had the right to elect their own leaders. But he added "we are going to work so that all the people, all the parties, may participate, because the current situation cannot go on for ever".

He also admitted that it might be necessary to postpone the elections, which were originally scheduled for 1991. The last elections in Mozambique, held under a one-party system, took place in 1986, and in principle there should be elections every five years. "We therefore made efforts so that we might be at peace this year or earlier, but this has not proved possible", said Mr Chissano.

On his return from a visit to Germany in late March, Foreign Minister Pascoal Mocumbi also said that multi-party elections would be held

regardless of whether or not Renamo ends its war.

He told *Rádio Mozambique* that Mozambican citizens could not be expected to accept the existing parliament indefinitely just because Renamo was refusing to agree to a ceasefire.

"If it is not possible to reach a ceasefire agreement with Renamo, then we will have to find ways of allowing the people to choose their representatives in the country's ruling bodies, and to enjoy the rights that the present constitution confers on them", said Dr Mocumbi.

He said it was always preferable to hold elections in peace rather than war. "But if the other side wants to continue acting in a violent and terrorist manner, then what shall we do?", he asked.

prepared to promise to leave the Beira Corridor alone; he would make no such pledge over the Limpopo Corridor.

Mediators condemn violations

On 20 March, the four official mediators (Mario Raffaelli, representing the Italian government, Andrea Riccardi and Matteo Zuppi of the Roman Catholic lay charity, the Santo Egidio Community, and the Catholic Archbishop of Beira, Jaime Goncalves) issued a brief statement on their meeting with Dhlakama. This said they had expressed "profound concern in relation to the attacks carried out on the Limpopo Corridor", and restated their "full confidence" in the JVC (which Dhlakama had earlier insulted, calling its work "nothing"). The mediators said they were sure of the JVC's ability "to make evaluations", and agreed "on the need to do everything possible to strengthen the efficacy of the verifications".

Dhlakama appears to have changed tactics, and no longer listed vast numbers of places where Zimbabweans were supposed to be stationed. Instead, he said that Renamo considered as violations of the Rome agreement the Zimbabwean presence in three areas - Chimoio airport, Mapai and Combomune. Nobody disputes that there are indeed Zimbabwean troops here, but both Zimbabwe and Mozambique believe that there is no violation involved. Chimoio is on the Beira corridor, but its airport is just two kilometres outside the corridor limits; but if Zimbabwean troops are to fly in and out of the corridor, they obviously have to use the existing airports.

Mapai and Combomune are both stations on the Limpopo railway. But the small localities by these names are just outside the corridor limits - however the Zimbabweans need to go there in order to pick up water (there is very little water readily available in this semi-arid part of the country). It was believed that this problem had been well understood and accepted by all sides as far back as December. When, in mid-January, Renamo presented the JVC with its list of places where the Zimbabweans were supposedly stationed outside the corridors, this did not include Chimoio airport, Mapai or Combomune. So at that time Renamo did not consider the Zimbabwean presence there to constitute violations.

Mr di Camerana returned from Rome on 22 March with a tentative date of 8 April for the next round of direct talks between Renamo and the government (later postponed to 15 April, to 26 April and finally to 2 May). He said that the start of the talks was conditional on completing the installation of a communications system in Malawi that will allow more rapid communications between the Renamo delegation in Rome and bandit commanders inside Mozambique.

Renamo to upgrade its JVC representation

The ambassador said that, at the request of the mediators, Renamo would increase the size and upgrade the status of its representation on the JVC. Up until then there had been three Renamo officers on the JVC, who claimed to be unable to take any "political" decisions. They had also not been informed by the Renamo leadership of key decisions, including the orders to resume attacks on the Limpopo Corridor.

Renamo will now send a political representative to take part in the work of the JVC, as well as what Mr di Camerana called "three or four military experts".

Towards the end of the month, Renamo suddenly announced a unilateral three day truce over the Easter period. There has been quite a tradition of such announcements of unilateral "ceasefires": there was one during the Pope's visit to Mozambique in 1988, another was announced the following year, allegedly to allow the distribution of food aid, and Renamo has also sometimes announced truces over Xmas. These all have one thing in common: they are phoney. Such "truces" are exclusively for foreign consumption: inside Mozambique the war and the killing has gone on as usual.

So it was not surprising that the Mozambican government reacted with scepticism. Foreign Minister Pascoal Mocumbi described the Renamo "truce" as "immoral".

"It's the same as saying to someone 'I won't kill you today or tomorrow, but I'll kill you later'", he said.

"What the Mozambican people are interested in is an end to the war, and the normalisation of life for everybody", continued Dr Mocumbi.

A positive approach would have been to use the Christian festival of Easter as an opportunity to declare "a definitive end to hostilities", or at least to allow Mozambican refugees in neighbouring countries to return to their villages. Dr Mocumbi also suggested that Renamo could have taken up a proposal made in the past by religious leaders that they announce an end to all attacks on civilian targets. "I would have considered such an attitude as positive", he said.

New constitution

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