

AFRICA

No takers for the role of Mozambique peace-maker

MOZAMBIQUE is in search of a peace-maker as the nightmare of violence, death and destruction — comparable to the suffering of the peoples of Cambodia and Sudan — continues unabated.

In the streets of the capital, Maputo, there is a growing fear that inhabitants may share the fate of the rural populations. The city has become an artificial island in a sea of decay, kept alive only by the inflow of international money. As conditions become more desperate in eastern Europe, Russia and the other republics of the Soviet Union, these resources may dry up.

The outlook for a political solution is bleak. Italy and the Catholic bishops who brought the rebel movement Renamo to the negotiating table have few options left to push the peace process ahead.

The peace talks in Rome have reached a stalemate. Renamo leader Alfonso Dhlakama, outmanoeuvred

at the negotiating table by President Chissano's swift concessions to turn Mozambique into a non-socialist multi-party system, has chosen to stall.

Outsiders are sometimes overwhelmed by the difficulties in dealing with him and his entourage in the negotiations. His psychological and intellectual set-up and that of his entourage are extremely difficult to judge. Apparently they strongly dislike being confronted with sophistications of a protracted negotiating process. More than once, Dhlakama and his team simply dropped out of the process, knowing they could always go back to violence.

In Namibia, Nicaragua, Angola and

The outlook for a political solution in Mozambique are bleak unless a peace-maker can be found.

By WINRICH KUHNE

other countries the decisive and timely application of pressure on all or one of the contending parties have been a crucial element for success. There seems to be no international actor who is able and prepared to play a similar role in the case of Mozambique. Italy lacks the political will as well as the leverage to be more than a facilitator. Arap Moi's Kenya is playing a dubious role, motivated by strange dreams

of becoming one of the dominant powers in sub-Saharan Africa, together with South Africa and Nigeria. Zimbabwe will remain on the sidelines as Renamo will never trust her. Pretoria's officials keep international experts guessing how much of South African involvement with Renamo is left. Whatever the truth, it seems that even the military and politicians in Pretoria — apart from not being acceptable as peace-makers — do not have enough leverage left to decisively influence Renamo's behaviour at the negotiating table. The same holds true even for Washington, which is busy with other problems anyway.

One reason for the lack of outside

leverage is somewhat paradoxical. Although violence and destabilisation in Mozambique was engineered from outside, it has gained a life of its own and now can survive without substantial outside assistance. Mozambique is often depicted as a case of chaos. This is only partly true. One of the achievements of Renamo and its outside mentors is that they have structured violence and intimidation into a self-sustaining system that is keeping a crude balance between destructiveness and recuperating enough resources for its survival. Renamo is no longer in need of substantial supplies of weapons, ammunition, food etc from outside. Its war is fought with knives, axes, primitive rifles, AK 47s etc.

On a recent international workshop on "Cooperation and Security in a Post-Apartheid Southern Africa" in Maputo, there was general agreement on the need for an urgent internationalisation of the peace-process to stop the nightmare in Mozambique. Why not single out Mozambique as an urgent and appropriate case to intensify cooperation and security and to develop, in close cooperation with the UN, her own conflict resolution and peace-keeping capabilities? A post-apartheid South Africa as the dominant regional power would be the natural leader of such a regional initiative. However, the people of Mozambique cannot wait until a new constitution is in place in South Africa. Why not get the ANC and the other democratic forces involved now? They, the government in Pretoria and the Frontline States could agree on a regional peace-initiative. It may not only help to control the "forces of darkness" in Mozambique but also those in South Africa. The present difficulties with the peace-convention notwithstanding, the experience South Africans are presently accumulating in national and local dispute and violence-monitoring would certainly be of value in such an initiative. And it would demonstrate to the world that the region is able to get its own house in order.

Of course, the initiative would have to be conducted in close cooperation with the UN in New York to have a chance to succeed. If the region is not able to get its act together Mozambique can only hope Washington will pick up the pieces once through with Angola.

● Winrich Kuhne is a Senior Fellow at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Eberhausen, Germany.