

Mozambique: Sticks and carrots

The *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo or MNR) is trying hard to win friends and influence people by showing a readiness to negotiate. On 13 November, Renamo and the government signed an agreement, Protocol Number Two, on the formation and registration of political parties after a ceasefire, which Renamo President **Afonso Dhlakama** had earlier promised for 20 December.

Protocol No. 2 was timed to coincide with the end of a European public relations campaign, opened by Dhlakama on 31 October in **Switzerland**. After visiting the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), on 1 and 2 November in Geneva he twice met the **United States** Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, **Jeffrey Davidow**, and US Ambassador to Maputo **Townsend Friedman**. Key Renamo officials, including **João Almirante**, **Raul Domingos**, the new Deputy Head of the Political Affairs Department **Agostinho Murrial** and **Vincente Ululu** also met Davidow, who pressed Renamo to act more responsibly and confirmed that any visit by Dhlakama to Washington remained dependent on tangible progress towards peace.

The most important part of Dhlakama's tour was the four-day visit to **Portugal** hosted by Portuguese military intelligence, the *Servico de Informação Militar* (SIM). The invitation had come at a 29 April Geneva meeting between Lisbon's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, **Manual Durão Barroso**, and Dhlakama. This had followed Prime Minister **Anibal Cavaco Silva**'s decision,

after consultation with Maputo, to lift the ban on Dhlakama visiting Portugal - thus allowing Lisbon to play a more direct role in the peace process. Originally due in July, the visit had been postponed because Renamo claimed to have evidence that the Maputo government intended to assassinate Dhlakama. No proof of these allegations has since materialised.

Dhlakama received an unprecedented welcome in Lisbon, meeting President **Mario Soares**, Cavaco Silva, Durão Barroso, and Cardinal **António Ribeiro**, as well as 'retornados' from Mozambique and other interested parties. Renamo wants Lisbon's support. Behind-the-scenes talks have been held on compensation and the return of property to Portuguese who left Mozambique at independence in 1975. Renamo accepts Lisbon's interest in a greater role in the peace process, especially as Portugal prepares to take over the European Community (EC) presidency next January. In turn, Portugal will try to put Lusophone Africa on the EC political agenda, thereby confirming its historical mission and influence.

Barroso is especially keen on this: having gained credit for successfully mediating the Estoril Agreements on **Angola** in May, he would like to be central to the Mozambique peace process. Lisbon officials began in May to sound out opinion on how to move the peace talks from Rome to Lisbon. Officials have also encouraged criticism of the **Italian** mediators, urging Renamo to request the change of venue.

Dhlakama used his Lisbon trip to announce that:

- a ceasefire could be reached by Christmas if Portugal became a mediator;
- following talks with **Maria Barroso**, head of the Portuguese committee of the United Nations Children's Fund and Soares' wife, Renamo would not attack the border town of Ressano Garcia, treating it as a 'peace zone', as long as the government also demilitarised the town. If successful, other peace zones would follow.

The peace zones idea is not new. Dhlakama announced in **Kenya** on 15 October that his forces would no longer attack the Limpopo corridor (**Zimbabwe's** trade route), in line with the partial ceasefire of the December 1990 Rome Agreement. A Renamo official has admitted to *Africa Confidential* that this is a gesture specially designed to please the **British** government, which has committed UK£29 million to Limpopo. Last June, the ICRC tried to get international support for setting up 'neutral safe zones' in Renamo-dominated areas, on the lines of the Kurdish model in **Iraq**. This came to nothing because of cost and the international understanding that conflict in Mozambique bears no similarity to events in northern Iraq.

Dhlakama's Rome visit also had mixed results. Though the **Vatican** received him for the first time on 11 November, Pope **John Paul II** resisted advice from the mediating Sant'Egidio religious community to meet him because of Renamo's history of brutality. Clearly disappointed, Dhlakama was received by Monsignor **Claudio Celli**, Vatican Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who urged him to reach an early peace agreement. Dhlakama was next put under similar pressure at a meeting with Italian Premier **Giulio Andreotti**, which was attended by **Mario Raffaelli**, Italian government representative at, and coordinator of, the Sant'Egidio mediation, as well as a former Under-Secretary for African Affairs. He also met Foreign Minister **Gianni de Michelis** before leaving for home via Kenya. This time round, politics and logistics stopped the visits he wanted to make to **Britain, France, Germany and Spain**.

The eighth round of peace talks in Rome, which ended on 13 November, made slow progress, with Renamo creating major difficulties over the legalisation of parties and draft electoral laws. It now appears that much of this foot-dragging was designed to buy time until Dhlakama came to Europe. The ninth round, due to start in Rome on 10 December, will discuss electoral law. Domingos has told *Africa Confidential* that, if a ceasefire was agreed, general elections could be held within a year.

Two Protocols, Nos. 1 and 2, were signed during the eighth round, and witnessed by the mediators: **Raffaelli, Don Jaime Gonçalves**, Archbishop of Beira; Professor **Andrea Riccardi** and Don **Matteo Zuppi** of Sant'Egidio. Under Protocol 1, Renamo is to recognise the legitimacy of Mozambique laws after a ceasefire, while the government of the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) will not hinder Renamo's international publicity campaigns or stop visits by Joint Verification Commission (JVC) members to Renamo areas in Mozambique.

Under Protocol 2, Renamo obtains the special guarantee it has been seeking of full recognition as a legitimate political party, once it signs a ceasefire. It will also have equal access to the media and receive state funding for its election

A small town in Zambézia

Whilst its public relations exercise continues abroad, Renamo has been trying for new gains in Zambézia. One target is **Derre** town in the western district of Murrumbala. Its strategic position for Renamo's north-south and external communications has made it a victim of so far unsuccessful Renamo attempts to capture it. But the situation remains precarious, with Renamo developing a stronghold through activity in the surrounding bush, hemming in government forces.

Nobody relaxes. An old man in Derre described to *Africa Confidential* on 30 October how 'Renamo keeps us in Derre like an animal in a sack. Anyone leaving the security of the town for food or to open farms as the rains start is liable to be killed or kidnapped. Four of us were killed yesterday and eight this morning'. As elsewhere in Zambézia, people must choose between starvation and Renamo. Only airlifts of emergency food by voluntary agency World Vision avert full-scale starvation in Derre.

Derre was recaptured from Renamo in late 1990 by a small government force. As usual, Renamo had looted all it could carry and then destroyed what survived. Since then, Derre has remained in government hands despite two concerted Renamo counter-attacks on Christmas Eve and on 30 January, and many minor skirmishes. The second main attack involved Renamo combatants from most central Zambézia bases. Its failure was a major setback. Much of the government's success here is linked to its now uncertain alliance with *Naparama*.

The continuing refugee influx to the town (880 from Renamo areas on 23-30 October) and tales from arriving *destocados* (displaced people) continue to show that, when given a choice, local people still risk discovery and possible death by fleeing the closely administered Renamo areas to government- and *Naparama*-held locations. Rejection of Renamo is not new. In the mid-1980s, Derre experienced a remarkable spirit-led resistance through **Rondao**, a local magician-chief. But like *Naparama* today, he found his magic increasingly impotent once confronted by vicious, battle-hardened Renamo fighters. Insecurity also comes from *mapangas* (freelance bandits). Although some collaborate with Renamo, others are completely autonomous. Recent *mapanga* brutality indicates how complex achieving peace will be, even after an official ceasefire.

campaign. In return, the government obtains the right to register parties, thereby again emphasising its legitimacy.

Following Protocol 1, Renamo feels more confident about its campaign for international support. On 22 October, its radio station, *Voz da Renamo*, started again: it had gone off the air just before the March 1984 N'komati Accord. Dhlakama has invited JVC members to visit him in Gorongosa.

Foundations for both Protocols were laid at a secret 22 September meeting in **Malawi** between the Italian government and church mediators, Malawian officials and a Renamo delegation under Dhlakama. He agreed to drop his bottom-line demand that a transitional government be formed after a ceasefire (on the Angolan, rather than the **Namibian** or **Cambodian**, models). After a ceasefire, international verification commissions will be expanded, followed by demobilisation of the warring factions and the creation of a joint army.

Renamo nevertheless remains cautious about a formal commitment to peace. It has asked both Washington and Lisbon to help more directly in negotiations and 'to offer safeguards' for its post-ceasefire survival - for example, funds to transform it into a political party and for election campaigns. Renamo is trying to encourage funding by saying it wants to sign a ceasefire before Christmas, to take immediate effect.

Progress towards peace is partly due to international pressure on Renamo. Both Britain and the USA will give Dhlakama an entry visa only when more progress is made. An 11 October EC appeal to Renamo singled it out as the main culprit in delay. Behind the scenes, Washington and London are also pursuing initiatives with Zimbabwe and Kenya to push things forward. Talks between British Foreign Secretary **Douglas Hurd** and President **Joachim Chissano** during Hurd's brief 20 October visit to Maputo centred almost entirely on how to achieve peace. British and US interest in rapid resolution of the conflict is not just humanitarian. Washington's and London's commitment to Mozambique goes far beyond its geo-political importance. In line with their advice, Maputo has liberalised, democratised and privatised. Only peace will provide them with the dignified exit and the savings they seek.

South Africa has also been trying to play a more active role. Although the ESKOM agreement seems to have met difficulties, with logistics payments to Renamo not meeting rebel expectations, contacts continue (AC Vol 32 No 13). These include a secret 8 June meeting in Kenya between President **F.W. de Klerk** and Dhlakama. De Klerk urged Dhlakama to be serious in talks with Maputo and to stop arms trading with South African crime syndicates. He had already discussed Mozambique with President **Daniel arap Moi**. There are allegations that some Kenyan officials have been involved in arms procurement for Renamo via South African dealers.

Yet the main factor in the talks continues to be the extent to which the war runs in Renamo's favour. The late August statement ruling out more peace talks until an (improbable) conference on Southern African peace was designed to give Renamo time to make the military gains it needed (AC Vol 32 No 18). Between 9 August and 19 September, Dhlakama remained in the bush, beyond mediators' reach. He was needed to lead military operations in Zambézia against

Naparama and its 20,000 adherents. Renamo's 19 September recapture of Lalaua is significant not only for its location and air-strip but also because it demonstrated beyond doubt to the local residents that '*Naparama*'s magic is not as strong as that of the *matsanga*' (Renamo). Once *Naparama* had fragmented, Dhlakama could feel confident about participating in the peace process, knowing his forces were once more making strategic gains throughout Zambézia.

Talking to *Africa Confidential* on 14 November, Domingos reflected Renamo's determination to re-establish its credentials as the dominant military player on the rural stage. While Renamo now recognised the small urban political parties such as the *Partido Liberal e Democrático de Moçambique* (PALMO) or the *União Nacional Moçambicana* (UNAMO), and their right to register for elections, he said, this was not true for the *Naparamas* and other neo-traditional movements which 'are instruments of Frelimo used against us. They play no political role in Mozambique and will need to be destroyed'.

Naparama's problems are not, however, due only to its encounter with Renamo's crack units. It had become over-extended. By maintaining a string of girlfriends, demanding high fees for vaccination with protective magic, and setting up a beer distribution network, its leader, warrior prophet **Manual António**, is provoking a loss of popular faith in the power of his taboos and magic. Consequently, the morale of *Naparama* has suffered, especially when faced with experienced Renamo units. But out of its decline a rival and more puritanical group called the '*Mukuepas*' has arisen. Still numbering only a few hundred people, it attracts supporters by promising that peace will return through the acceptance of complicated taboos and magic vaccination. The *Mukuepas* are a reminder to government, and in particular to Renamo, that peace is what wins support in rural Mozambique. This contrasts with Dhlakama's 24 October statement in Nairobi that, 'It is usual in Africa to negotiate while fighting because the government is never a voluntary party to negotiations. We cannot abandon the armed struggle'. Renamo believes it must capture as much territory as possible before signing a serious ceasefire agreement. As happened in Angola, some of the fiercest fighting of the war could take place in its final months ●