

Mozambique: Conflict fatigue

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With the peace process still behind schedule, the October elections look likely to be delayed to April-May 1994. The *Resistência Nacional Moçambique* (Renamo) leader, **Afonso Dhlakama**, has said the terms of the 4 October Rome General Peace Accord (GPA) should be fully implemented before elections. Opposition parties, including **Maximo Dias's** *Movimento Nacional Moçambicana* and the newly registered *Partido Popular Progressivo Moçambicana* and *Partido da Convenção Nacional* are also campaigning for a delay, arguing that one year is too short for a satisfactory campaign. On 24 December, President **Joaquim Chissano** also said a delay was necessary.

A main reason for the delay is the slow pace of demobilisation and integration of the government's *Forças Armadas de Moçambique* (FAM) and Renamo (AC Vol 33 No 25). By 1 January 1993, nearly twelve weeks after the GPA, the United Nations had provided fewer than 30 soldiers and civilians for the UN Operation in Mozambique (Onumuz), for which the UN Security Council had approved on 17 December a force of 7,500 troops, police and civilians to monitor and support the ceasefire. The military component will comprise five self-sufficient infantry battalions, each of

850 men, an engineer battalion, three logistics companies, a headquarters company, and communications, medical, air and movement control units. In addition to the 354 military observers, there will be 128 police and many civilians, with up to 1,200 international observers during the election campaign. The operation will have cost more than US\$330 million by the time its original mandate expires on 31 October.

So far, **Bangladesh, Italy, Portugal** and **Uruguay** have pledged troops towards the five battalions. **Austria** turned down a UN request. Meanwhile, the question of training the future 30,000-strong joint army continues to be disputed by **Britain** (AC Vol 33 No 23), **France** and **Portugal**. London is offering the British Military Assistance Training Team facilities at Inyanga, **Zimbabwe**, and some \$8 mn. for the job. But although Maputo is keen, Renamo is under pressure from Lisbon to refuse the offer, as one of Portugal's fears is that Mozambique will be pulled into the Anglophone sphere. British Treasury impatience could resolve the matter: as part of the squeeze on UK expenditure, it is keen to claw back the funds allocated.

The first UN deployment (two mostly Italian battalions)

will take place in January, along the Beira corridor in central Mozambique and the Nacala corridor in the north. This deployment will ensure the withdrawal of Harare's 5,000 troops (suspended on 5 November) by February and guarantee that the corridors - critical for regional food security - continue to operate. Dhlakama accepted Zimbabwe's delay when he visited Harare on 9-11 December with a Renamo delegation of Secretary General **Vincente Ululu**, Agriculture Minister **Paris Baza**, the 'Ambassador' to Kenya, **Josefate Muhlanga** and his assistant, **Albino Mazuze**. Dhlakama met President **Robert Mugabe**; and in a separate 90-minute private meeting, Chissano, to discuss Zimbabwe's withdrawal, Mozambique's police and accommodation for Renamo in Maputo.

The Nacala line is guarded by nearly 1,000 Malawian troops. They are keen to go home but political pressure in Malawi in the build-up to the 15 March referendum on political pluralism has made Lilongwe reluctant to see disgruntled and potentially pro-opposition soldiers return. Although other foreign organisations in the area, such as Lomaco's militia (Lomro Mozambique), are being successfully wound down, the French-trained militia along the line and its Foreign Legion advisors are still operational and appear in no hurry to leave.

After the October GPA, thousands of Mozambican refugees abroad and internally displaced people returned quickly to their home areas. Their desire to go home overrode any doubts they might have had about the authority of whichever faction remained in effective control locally. Roads quickly re-opened, except where mined. Road-blocks have sprung up, manned by Renamo guerrillas demanding a packet of cigarettes or a few coins. Police say road accidents have increased by 1,000 per cent since October. Since 4 October, at least 20,000 people have voluntarily and spontaneously returned from Malawi to Tsangano and Angonia districts in Tete Province. The situation in Zambezia and Nampula is similar, although parts of Niassa remain insecure.

Many soldiers from both sides waiting near the 49 assembly points to be demobilised are also returning home: with delays in demobilisation, massive 'self-demobilisation' is happening. In central Mozambique, several Renamo units self-demobilised after the local spirit medium, **Samantanje**, announced that the ancestors were declaring peace because the rains had come in December. Although the FAM are also suffering from desertions, the problem is more serious for Renamo. If desertions on this scale continue, it may be able to provide only 5,000 or so of its 21,000 troops due at the assembly points.

Self-demobilisation is a sensitive issue for Renamo. **Raul Domingos**, its team head on the Supervision and Control Commission (CSC), has repeatedly denied both that this is happening and that a surprising degree of fraternising is occurring between soldiers from both sides. Reports of Renamo and government forces sharing food and socialising are common.

The ruling *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) is also uncomfortable about the working of the peace process. Ministers and security officials are concerned about the size of Onumuz, seeing it as an infringement of state sovereignty. The anticipation of so many foreign troops arriving is

already having social consequences. Property prices in cities have risen dramatically. Mozambicans, already short of accommodation, are being asked by corrupt officials to pay \$9,000 just for the right to occupy a state-owned flat. Even ministers are redecorating their properties, ready to charge UN officials \$900-1,000 rent a month, a high price by Maputo standards.

The prospect of good profits for entrepreneurs has heightened political tensions, particularly among ex-FAM soldiers and veterans of the liberation struggle, the *Antigos Combatantes*. Recognising the danger following their September riots and a mutiny in alliance with disgruntled soldiers, Frelimo has been attempting to pacify them by, for example, selling officers new cars at a highly subsidised \$400. The army is unhappy: it feels marginalised. Government-inspired attempts to investigate corruption in the FAM have come to an end following a series of mysterious deaths. State arsenals seem to have become as important a source of supply for the weapons-trade to South Africa as they were for Renamo. The once fiery Attorney General, **Eduardo Mulembwe**, can no longer get a hearing for his campaign against corruption.

Armando Guebuza, the Minister for Transport and Communications, leader of the government's Rome negotiating team and now its team head at the CSC, is becoming more powerful within Frelimo, somewhat at Chissano's expense. Guebuza gained increased prominence in the party for his part in negotiating peace. With this weakening of Chissano's dominance, the government risks fragmenting into ethno-economic alliances.

That the ceasefire is still holding so well has surprised Renamo, Frelimo and the international community. Conflict-fatigue is largely responsible. Contrary to forecasts, even banditry has not increased. Yet Chissano is taking no chances. Having seen the success of Angola's Spanish-trained riot police in action against the *União Nacional para Libertação Total de Angola* on 1-2 November, he has twice personally asked Madrid's Prime Minister, **Felipe González**, for training for the newly created paramilitary police, the *Polícia da República de Moçambique*. Mozambique is, after Equatorial Guinea and Angola, Spain's third aid-recipient. Mozambique supplied 4,000 tonnes of seafood to Spain in 1991. Prawn-diplomacy therefore makes Mozambique strategically important for Spain, which will allocate \$4 mn. to police-training.

Frelimo's interest in specialised police-training is worrying Renamo. Concerned that the revamped police will be drawn from the intelligence services and army, Renamo wants an even greater UN presence to protect it. Much of Renamo's recent behaviour suggests that Dhlakama and his senior colleagues do not expect to win the elections. The wrangling over properties for its leaders and such luxuries as swimming pools indicates an organisation that wants to extract as much as it can from the state before elections. But when Dhlakama goes to Maputo shortly to take up residence in the former Yugoslav Embassy building, his main problem may well be Chissano's weakening position with, for instance, discontented FAM soldiers trying to capitalise on popular discontent at growing publicity about corruption and at the poor results from economic reform ●