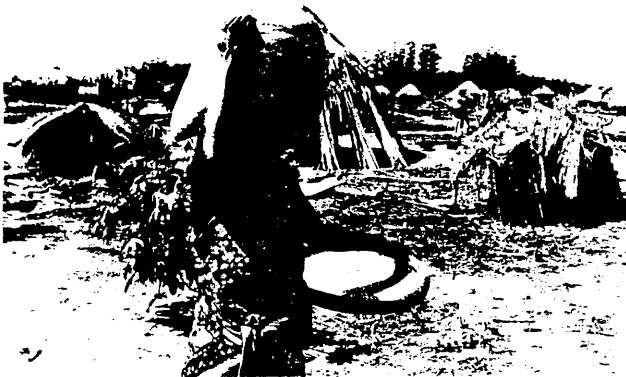


Peace process faces high hurdles



How long can she wait for peace

Mozambique's general elections are a year off, but already the peace process has had more than a double-dose of trouble

After seven months of near paralysis, in mid-May the moment of truth was fast approaching for Mozambique's peace process. Up to then, not one key element of the general peace accord signed by Mozambique's government and the opposition 'Renamo' rebels on October 4, 1992 in Rome to end 17 years of civil war was achieved, beyond a cease-fire.

Troops on both sides were still armed and at large, and the formation of a joint, new national army had not even started. Renamo was boycotting all committees meant to supervise implementation of the peace accord, none of which were working.

Yet Aldo Ajello, head of the Onumuz U.N. peace-keeping mission to Mozambique, confidently claimed the obstacles were nearly removed and that the real, practical work of securing peace was about to begin.

The stalemate had numerous causes. Italian ambassador to Mozambique, Manfredi di Camerana, whose country helped mediate the peace accord, blamed the snail's pace on slow bureaucracy at the U.N. - whose five battalions of peace-keeping troops were

still just arriving by May.

Mr Di Camerana suggested this delay made it impossible to discuss concrete issues, (like demobilisation and investigating ceasefire violations), though in terms of the peace accord, Onumuz could have used more authority to keep the process moving.

The peace accord states: "government undertakes to assist in securing the (logistical) facilities Renamo needs to carry out its political activities - to the extent resources permit, (and for this), shall seek support from the international community".

Yet in March, Renamo withdrew from all the peace-supervising committees in Maputo capital, alleging inadequate logistical conditions (housing, transport and food) for their members.

In an ill-tempered reply, cited by the government's daily *Noticias*, Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano said "we never promised Renamo anything at all", and for those who thought government weak, warned "if war returns we'll defend ourselves".

Meanwhile, Renamo leaders freely admitted they were after material gains. "We want the whole of our cake," said

the unabashed secretary for foreign affairs, Jose de Castro.

According to the Portuguese News Agency, LUSA, Renamo leader Alfonso Dlakama claimed in April that Italy had promised to help Renamo get US\$15 million to finance its transformation from a guerrilla group to a political party. "Not one Renamo soldier will be sent to assembly points (for demobilisation) till we get the promised money," LUSA quotes Dlakama. This topped Renamo demands that none of its troops would be demobilised till at least 65 per cent of the armed U.N. peace-keeping force was in the country.

International donors generally recognized that in Mozambique's situation as a former one party state and among the world's poorest nations, financial support to political parties is needed to give multi-party democracy a chance. Yet their own internal law makes it hard to finance foreign political groups.

By mid-May, Italy was still the only country to actually make money available to Renamo to the tune of US\$390,000, and another US\$5 million in waiting, according to a Onumuz source. The source added that France and Sweden had also pledged money towards funding political parties.

The same source said none of this money was "accessible", since trust funds still had to be set up to administer it, while Renamo only presented an itemised budget in May and still had no qualified financial officer to execute it.

Nonetheless, Renamo's leadership began drifting back to Maputo in mid-May, raising hopes that with the "political funds" promised, with over 4,000 U.N. observers (of 7,000 expected) in the country, and the offer of hotel rooms for Renamo from the British-based multinational, Lonrho, the committees could soon be working again and the peace process underway.

The hurdles ahead however still look daunting. Under the peace accord, troops from both sides should gather at 49 assembly points for demobilisation. Only 13 of these had been approved and none are ready to open. Key peace accord committees, to monitor the police and intelligence services and the National

Elections Committee are still to be set up. The elaboration of a new electoral law is at a standstill, since Renamo boycotted discussions till they had "more time".

Another viper's pit of problems, still to be unearthed, is the issue of territorial control, meant to be negotiated through the so-far non-existent committee for national administration.

In the early months of 1993, war veter-

ans and soldiers demobilised from government's army before the peace accord, staged riots to demand unpaid wages, food, and for transport money home from their barracks. According to the president of the Association for War Demobilised, Julio Nimoire, this is a warning of things to come if ex-soldiers' needs are not satisfied - especially in a country of over 15 million people where

less than 300,000 have formal employment

In the medium term, the key issue for calm seems to be food security. With normal rains and decent harvests this year, the prospects for peace seem fair, although 950,000 people (not including returned refugees) will still need international food aid, according to the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organisation. □