

Mozambique: 4fr. Conf. v. 35 The people for peace n. 22

Following the successful elections of 27-29 October, an accommodation, rather than a formal cohabitation (AC Vol 35 No 19), seemed likely between the two contending parties as *Africa Confidential* went to press. Early indications were that **Joaquim Chissano** would retain the Presidency with about 55 per cent of the vote. His *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* looked set to gain some 45 per cent of National Assembly seats, with the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* gaining around 40 per cent.

Such an accommodation will mean the appointment of more centrist technocratic figures to key political and economic ministries, in consultation with Renamo, while Chissano's personal power will be enhanced in relation to Frelimo's Central Committee. But Chissano is unwilling to appoint any Renamo ministers or provincial governors despite Western pressure. Instead, some Renamo officials may be given executive posts in state-owned institutions.

Almost everyone agrees with United Nations' envoy **Aldo Ajello**'s assertion that the elections were 'carried out peacefully and with integrity'. Ajello made clear on 2 November that the UN 'would not support any possible claim of fraud or intimidation... that could have affected the credibility of the elections'. The elections can be counted a success. Voter turnout was higher than 85 per cent, despite Renamo's abortive boycott. Experienced election hands favourably compared the organisation of the poll to that in **South Africa**.

The election campaigns initially appeared to mark Frelimo out for a comfortable win. It had the best organised and financed campaign. Free 'Chissano' tee-shirts and *capulanas* (wraps) were distributed and the state-owned media - particularly the daily *Noticias* and weekly *Domingo* - unambiguously favoured Frelimo. The services of **Brazilian** public relations consultant **Christiano Stein**, a personal friend of Chissano's, and his Afrovox organisation provided highly-detailed voter samples and tactical advice for months before the poll. Chissano's status as elder statesman (he is 55, Dhlakama 41) was emphasised: this was Chissano the President versus Dhlakama the candidate. But Chissano proved to be a dull campaigner and attempts to get crowds to sing along with his campaign song, '*Frelimo, o futuro melhor*' (Frelimo, the better future), fell flat because few people knew the words and even fewer seemed interested in

them. The rare high moments occurred when Chissano burst into song and led the crowd in renditions of Frelimo songs of the anti-colonial struggle in the Shangaan language.

Dhlakama was a much more spirited campaigner, vociferously asserting he was the 'father of democracy'. Frelimo's constant references to Renamo's brutality during the war notwithstanding. His ability to attract a 70,000-strong crowd in the northernmost provincial capital Pemba, in Cabo Delgado (previously thought an unassailable Frelimo stronghold) shocked the ruling party. Yet Renamo's tactics were confused, an uneasy combination of appeals to traditionalism (to the chiefs, the *regulos*); to ethnicity (arguing that Frelimo was dominated by southerners - the Shangaan - who had deliberately excluded not just Dhlakama's minority Ndaou but also the country's biggest group, the Macua); and threats that only Renamo could deliver peace. Some Renamo cadres, particularly younger members not involved in the brutal guerrilla war, resented what they saw as external interference in the organisation by advisors such as **Carla Gedes** from **Portugal** and **Thomas Hausner**, a **South African**. Part of the problem is that Renamo is far from having made the transition from guerrilla army to political party (indeed, many outsiders think the possibility of a Renamo government disastrous) and its pretensions to party political status have had to be welded onto its main purpose of militarily challenging Frelimo.

The cracks started to show again when Dhlakama

After 16 years of war, Mozambicans turned out in their millions to vote for peace

announced in Beira late on 26 October that Renamo was withdrawing from the elections because its fears about potential fraud had not been properly answered by the National Election Commission, the *Comissão Nacional de Eleições*. This precipitated the following sequence of events:

26 October, evening. News of Dhlakama's withdrawal reaches Ajello and Western diplomats at a dinner party at the **German** Ambassador's house in Maputo. Visions of two years of patient diplomacy and US\$1,000 million of aid money lost, and another UN failure found, immediately

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cloud the proceedings. Ajello and **British** Ambassador **Richard Edis** hold an emergency meeting with Renamo number two **Raúl Domingos**, while emissaries are detailed to contact Dhlakama in Beira.

Meanwhile, members of the **Italian** Catholic lay community, Sant'Egidio, who have had an early warning of Renamo's withdrawal, try with some success to start new negotiations. The great fear is that Dhlakama, who initially refuses to take calls from outsiders or even from the UN, will move to Renamo's military base at Maringue and begin a campaign of 'armed negotiation'. Matters have not been helped by the Frontline States' summit in Harare the previous day, at which Chissano is accorded full presidential status and Dhlakama is comprehensively sidelined. Weeks of arduous campaigning with little sleep and then humiliation in Harare have not rendered Dhlakama amenable to diplomatic overtures. (Pretoria's Ambassador, **John Sunde**, and Lonrho's **John Hewlett**, contact Dhlakama in Beira that evening).

17 October, the first day of polling, 7.00. a.m. A call to Dhlakama in Beira by **Zimbabwean** President **Robert Mugabe** fails to improve matters. South African President **Nelson Mandela**, who is on holiday in **Saudi Arabia**, telephones UK Prime Minister **John Major** and **United States'** President **Bill Clinton** expressing the need for concerted action to bring Dhlakama back in. Oddly, on this occasion Mandela uses the US Embassy in Maputo, not South Africa's, to relay messages to his Vice-President, **Thabo Mbeki**, who is due to arrive in the Mozambican capital the next morning. It is noted that Sunde doesn't come back from the north to meet Mbeki in Maputo.

6.00. p.m. Dhlakama arrives in Maputo but initially refuses to see anyone but his own party officials. His house on **Julius Nyerere** Avenue has developed a bunker-like atmosphere. US Ambassador **Dennis Jett** is allowed in but reports little progress. A strategy then emerges to produce a statement, jointly signed by Renamo and those Western

ambassadors on the diplomatic monitoring commission, the *Comissão de Supervisão e Controlo*, acknowledging that Renamo's complaints will be fully considered before any assessment as to whether the elections have been free and fair.

Late evening. A statement is drafted by Hausner, acting for Renamo, by British First Secretary **Nick Busvine**, and Ajello's political advisor, **Eric Lubin**, which is passed from embassy to embassy over the course of the night.

28 October, 7.00. a.m. Dhlakama is in a markedly better mood, having had a long conciliatory conversation in Shona with Mugabe.

9.30. a.m. After further delays and amendments, Dhlakama and Western ambassadors sign the statement, which accepts that Renamo's concerns will be taken up seriously with the electoral commission and commits Renamo to re-enter the elections.

11.30. a.m. Having secured an additional day of voting on Saturday, 29 October, Dhlakama casts his vote in the run-down Polana primary school in Maputo.

30 October. An exhausted Ajello collapses and is taken to the **Argentinean** military hospital. He seems to make a rapid recovery.

Aware of ugly precedents, few people in Maputo are inclined to pronounce 'peace in our time'. Indeed, the tortuous process of bringing Dhlakama back into the elections proved just how fragile Mozambique's 'armed peace' is: there are thousands of undemobilised soldiers and hundreds of arms caches on both sides (AC Vol 35 No 6). Renamo's boycott also sounded a clear warning that the coming weeks of negotiation between Frelimo and Renamo over dividing the electoral spoils will be just as tortuous and contentious. The signs of hope come from the fact that concerted efforts by Mozambicans, the UN, diplomats and other outsiders prevented the elections falling apart and helped the country clear the first hurdle. The task now is to maintain this momentum ●