

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

215 11 June 2013 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Editors note: Apologies to my readers for the recent gap in publication; I have been doing fieldwork for two new books, and getting started on the *2013 Local Elections* newsletter, which many readers will also receive. This issue is a partial attempt to catch up on non-election matters. And just a reminder: *Mozambique New Reports & Clippings* is my own personal newsletter, and is not connected to any of the institutions that support my other newsletters. *Joseph Hanlon*

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Doctors' strike continues

The strike of doctors enters its fourth week today, Monday. Negotiations have broken down and former Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi and 83 other older doctors, including former health ministers Fernando Vaz and Helder Martins, on 4 June wrote a very strong letter to President Armando Guebuza.

National Director of Public Health, Mouzinho Saide, told TVM on Thursday that "between 200 and 300" health workers were on strike, mostly in Maputo and Matola. And hospitals in Maputo have been seriously affected.

President Armando Guebuza, just back from a visit to Asia, visited the Maputo central hospital on Saturday but made no concessions. He praised health staff still working and called on doctors to return to work.

Doctors earn a basic salary of up to \$1136 per month, less than university professors and judges, and only lightly more than senior health technicians and school heads. The doctors are demanding a 100% pay increase and other extra payments. Government has already given the doctors 15% and says there is no more money.

Talks broke down again on Friday when Ministry of Health negotiators said they would not talk to the doctors association (Associação Médica de Moçambique, AMM) because it insisted on bringing into the room another group the government does not recognise, the United Health Professionals (Profissionais de Saúde Unidos, PSU). (Noticias 8 June) AMM is also demanding that the Prime Minister lead negotiations, saying that the health ministry team does not have decision-making power.

Tension had already been increased when AMM president, Dr. Jorge Arroz, was arrested on 26 May and held for four hours.

The official doctors association, Ordem dos Medicos, issued a statement which criticised both sides. It criticised the AMM for failing to provide minimum essential service in hospitals, which it said violated the doctors code of ethics. But it went on support the AMM in its "just struggle to improve conditions of doctors" and accused the Ministry of Health of "lack of seriousness" in the negotiations. It "vehemently repudiated" the arrest of Arroz. (Noticias 31 May 2013)

The Mocumbi letter on 4 June said that "in contrast to other sectors, the work conditions in health have deteriorated substantially with a lack of basic equipment and medicines." The failure of government to respond to doctors concerns leaves them "disregarded, wronged, demoralized and angry." The letter criticises the "coercion, intimidation, sacking and repression" of the medical profession. And the letter says that in contrast to "disinformation" from the government, "minimum services are being assured in nearly all hospitals". As the longest serving doctors in Mozambique, they call on the President to intervene.

The letter is on <http://www.canalmoz.co.mz/> and on <http://www.verdade.co.mz/tema-de-fundo/35-themadefundo/37515-19o-dia-da-greve-governo-tenta-fintar-os-profissionais-de-saude>

Government salary scale

The state salary scale was published in O Pais on Friday (7 June 2013). These figures slightly underestimate income, because some officials receive housing and other allowances, there are extra allowances for technicians and doctors working outside the main cities, and doctors and teachers are paid overtime for working extra shifts. Some doctors and teachers earn additional money from private work.

The basic salary in schools, which is the same as for health technicians, goes up to \$1077 per month. University professors can earn more, up to \$1484. And judges and magistrates can earn up to \$1980.

Basic salaries, as published in O Pais, are:

Education; health technicians:	Mt 5,963-32,297;	\$ 199-1077
Doctors:	Mt 17,595-34,074;	\$ 587-1136
University:	Mt 15,956-44,517;	\$ 532-1484
Tax authority:	Mt 2043-47,453;	\$ 68-1582
Judges & magistrates:	Mt 19,430-59,412;	\$ 648-1980

The current minimum wage ranges from Mt 2500 (\$83) per month to Mt 6817 (\$227) per month, according to sector.

Delayed negotiations with Renamo

Desultory negotiations between Renamo and government continue. The fifth round of talks was postponed from 3 June to today (10 June) at the request of the government because negotiators were in Asia with President Armando Guebuza. Renamo has made four demands:

- + Revising the electoral law to give Renamo more power.
- + Reversing the marginalisation of Renamo in the military.
- + A greater participation of Renamo members in the economy.
- + Reversing the partyisation of the civil service.

Promises to protect peasant land in Pro-Savana.

National and international pressure has forced the government to make new guarantees around the Japanese-Brazilian-Mozambican Pro-Savana project in the Nacala corridor. In response to a question at a press conference in Yokohama, Japan, President Armando Guebuza on Sunday 2 June categorically denied that land grabbing could take place; "we do not want to take land from farmers. On the contrary, the objective is to make available, with title, land for farmers and to make this land more productive for the benefit of the farmers themselves." He was reacting to the president of the National Peasants Union (UNAC) at a press conference in Yokohama where he said there is a "serious and imminent threat of land grabbing and the forced removal of communities". (Noticias 3 June, AIM 2 June)

Plans around Pro-Savana remain vague and confused. It was originally presented as a plan to replicate the joint Japanese-Brazilian development of the cerrado in Brazil. It was argued that the Nacala corridor was identical to the cerrado and that up to 10 million hectares was available for foreign investors. This is still being repeated in some presentations.

But there are two problems with this. First, the cerrado had highly acid soil and was not intensively farmed by local people, and required major interventions to be developed for large scale soya production. The Nacala corridor is nothing like this, with good soils and a high population. It is unlikely that large tracts of land could be given to foreign investors without displacing existing farmers. Second, contrary to what is claimed by its proponents, the cerrado programme did displace large numbers of peasants and is still embroiled in controversy with the Brazilian landless movement. Thus proposals for huge Brazilian farms in the Nacala corridor created a response from local peasants that has built into an international campaign.

It seems highly unlikely that Pro-Savana can go ahead as originally planned if peasant land is protected.

Personal Comment 1

Strikes, status, and widening gaps

"During my visit I witnessed the very high standards of comfort in some areas of Maputo city, contrasting dramatically with the harsh reality in bigger areas of the capital", the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepulveda, told a press conference 16 April.

"If not addressed urgently, such marked disparities and high levels of social exclusion may pose a threat to social stability, as foreshadowed by protests in Maputo in recent years," she warned.

This message has been repeated by a string of high level visitors to Maputo. When the ex-president of Brazil, Luiz Lula, was in Maputo in November he said: "No Mozambican can feel proud to open their car door and see a hungry person looking for something to eat in the rubbish."

The UN representative suggested that the response would come from Maputo residents who "survive in dire conditions sometimes equivalent to those experienced in rural communities". In fact, the response has come from groups claiming a privileged position.

Doctors have been on strike for more than three weeks demanding a doubling in salary. One of Renamo's key demands is more money. The Forum of Demobilised Soldiers has had several confrontations with riot police as it has attempted to demonstrate in front of the Prime Minister's Office to push its claim for a pension for all demobilised troops of 20,000 meticaís (\$650) a month (AIM 12 March 2013) – more than the current starting salary of a doctor. And in March a group of civil servants with master's degrees wrote a letter to the government demanding extra salary, and threatening to strike. (CanalMoz 12 April 2013)

Ostentatious wealth has become much more common in Maputo. The daily O Pais (31 May 2013) did a feature on "the new market in luxury housing". In the new Xiluva condominium, the most expensive flat is \$1 million, and 12 of 18 flats are already sold. In the Maputo Bay condominium, houses cost \$300,000-500,000. No one on an ordinary salary can afford such houses.

But a widely circulated letter in support of the doctors says that the government has enough money to provide houses of that value to senior officials of state companies. For high officials, government stresses the importance of internationally comparable salaries, and not how much the state can

afford. Members of parliament have given themselves new luxury cars. "Technicians don't have cars for their work, because cars serve the families of the chiefs", the letter says. "Frelimo officials at all levels only wait for the opportunity to put the hand into the that public treasury money bag."

It is clear no one on an ordinary government salary can live what is seen as the new Maputo upper middle class life style. For some, the state provides cars and houses. Older doctors have private practices and even private clinics. Ex ministers and other former officials are given well paid sinecures. But a younger generation, especially in Maputo, sees the older generation hogging the privileged positions and extra sources of income, while they cannot afford a flat.

There is also an issue of social status, which is increasingly linked to wealth and income. Doctors point to the very high social status they had in colonial times, and that their salaries now rank them lower than university professors and judges.

The growing gap between rich and poor has not, recently, triggered protests from the poor. Instead it is the better off. It is young doctors in Maputo. It is people in the civil service who have master's degrees which they expected to give them a special status, and has not. It is senior people in Renamo who see their Frelimo counterparts becoming wealthy while they remain poor.

The protests are coming from groups who accept the gap between the rich and poor, but say they deserve to be on the rich side of the gap. They claim to have a privileged right to share in the wealth which they see to be available – because they are doctors, because they studied for master's degrees, because they signed the peace accord in 1992 and agreed to end the war, or because they risked their lives in wars.

In the letter in support of the doctors, the writers note "in the time of Machel, despite the limits on liberties, leaders respected the people and worked hard. What the people lacked, leaders also lacked. Everyone sacrificed. This does not happen now."

The current response to the growing gap between rich and poor has not been from the poor. Instead, it has become a battle between groups claiming privileged status, who want a bigger piece of the cake. Doctors and Renamo are at the front – but others are queuing behind them to claim a share.

And will there be a response from the poor, who are so far forgotten in sharing out the spoils?
Joseph Hanlon

[Personal Comment 2](#)

Public services and a privileged generation

More people are commuting to work in Maputo standing up in the back of open trucks. As people move further out of the city to try to find building plots, there are not enough *chapas* (mini-buses) and the city bus company cannot keep its buses on the road. Without adequate public transport, more people have cars – initially not too expensive and imported from Japan. But the roads are full of potholes, which is hard on those cars – and there are no paved roads in many places – so you really need a 4X4.

Rubbish is not collected very often (except near elections) so you need to live in a gated community far away from the rotting rubbish and people picking through the piles. Education quality is poor, so of course your children have to go to a private school.

While state services are poor, the private alternatives cost money. For the post-war generation of the past two decades, there have been huge opportunities. Well paid jobs with NGOs and embassies, extra benefits for houses and cars from high level state employment, and doing

multiple jobs – teaching at two universities or doing private medical practice. And corruption adds to the pot. Money is available for the private alternatives.

But once you are driving a 4x4 you don't care about the quality of public transport or roads – your main concern is somewhere to park. Private schools and private health mean you care less for the public services. Underpaid school teachers, commuters standing in the rain in open trucks, and piles of rubbish matter less. A privatised elite does not lobby for public services.

But the new generation of doctors, researchers and civil servants is not finding it so easy. Key posts are still held by those who obtained them 20 years ago, or even by veterans of the liberation war 40 years ago. Consultancies and second jobs are harder to find. The best land and housing is already allocated; there are no more houses to be handed out by APIE and new houses are very expensive.

So far, the younger generation is pushing for money and for more access to land, housing and other benefits so they can join the privatised world that does not need public services.

In part, they look at the potential money from coal and gas, and say that will fund the expansion of the elite to include them. But it will be a decade before that money is significant, and the new generation has young families that need money now for private services.

The older generation had a unique opportunity to gain wealth and status in the post-war period, and has created a private world that does not need public services. The younger educated generation has a choice: press for public transport, paved roads, rubbish collection and better schools, or press for more money so they can ignore poor public services? *Joseph Hanlon*

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The new book

Zimbabwe takes back its land

by Joseph Hanlon, Jeanette Manjengwa & Teresa Smart is now available from the publisher <http://www.kpbooks.com/Books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=295374>

Now in paper at a reasonable price

Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique?

by Joseph Hanlon & Teresa Smart

is now available in **paperback**, for £17.99 (+ p&p)

from the publisher <http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=13503>

and on Amazon.co.uk for £17.09

Just Give Money to the Poor:

The Development Revolution from the Global South

by Joseph Hanlon, Armando Barrientos, and David Hulme

Most of this book can now be **read on the web**

tinyurl.com/justgivemoney

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Also on the web: Previous newsletters and other Mozambique material are posted on tinyurl.com/mozamb

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NOTE OF EXPLANATION:

This mailing list is used to distribute two publications, both edited by Joseph Hanlon. This is my own sporadic "News reports & clippings", which is entirely my own responsibility. This list is also used to distribute the *Mozambique Political Process Bulletin*, published by CIP and AWEPA, but those organisations are not linked to "News reports & clippings"

Joseph Hanlon

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Mozambique media websites:

Noticias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O Pais: www.opais.co.mz

Macauhub English: www.macauhub.com.mo/en/

Savana: www.savana.co.mz

Canal de Moçambique: www.canalmoz.co.mz

AIM Reports: www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news

Carlos Serra Diario de um sociologo: <http://oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com>

Good daily newsletters:

English: Mozambique Investor. Send e-mail to joaquim.fale@clubofmozambique.com

Portuguese: Mozambique Hoje. Send e-mail to moçambiquehoje@clubofmozambique.com

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