

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

224 22 July 2013 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Increasing activity hints at possible Renamo-Frelimo accord

Increasing activity suggests that a settlement between the government and Renamo might be possible in the next three weeks.

Renamo's two main demands are money and changes to the electoral law. Both are on the agenda of a special session of parliament (AR, Assembleia da República) to be held 1-15 August. The session will consider budget amendments to reflect a large increase in income due to capital gains tax payments on the sale of gas production rights. Part of this will be spent on reconstruction after floods earlier this year, but it would be easy to insert discreet budget lines which directly or indirectly gave money to Renamo or key figures within the party and its military leadership.

The leaders of both sides, Frelimo and national president Armando Guebuza and Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama, have taken very inflexible positions which would make agreement impossible. But both Renamo and Frelimo are divided with some wanting more serious negotiations. The government-owned daily *Notícias* has had several interviews with Frelimo figures saying concessions are necessary.

There have weekly talks between government and Renamo; the 12th round took place today. So far, government has insisted that any changes to the election laws be submitted by Renamo to parliament; Renamo notes that its previous proposals to the AR have all been rejected by the Frelimo majority, so it insists on a joint submission to the AR. But in an interview in *Notícias* Friday (19 July), Teodoro Waty, a Frelimo lawyer and head of the parliamentary constitutional affairs committee, contradicted the official line and said that President Armando Guebuza could and should submit an agreed election law proposal to the AR.

And last week the negotiations for the first time moved to details of the electoral law, and partial agreement was reached on some minor technical changes. But Frelimo continues to reject Renamo's main demand - for "parity" between Frelimo and Renamo on all electoral bodies.

A surprise visitor to Maputo last week was Bethuel Kiplagat, who as Permanent Secretary in the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1983-91) was a backer of Renamo and close advisor of Dhlakama. Formally Kiplagat came as head of an African church delegation, and his visit was given coverage by government news agency AIM and by *Notícias*.

And there have been several visits to Dhlakama's headquarters in Sanjundjira, Gorongosa, by journalists and political figures.

Thus there are hints of messages being carried back and forth, and of back channel negotiations.

However, Dhlakama and Guebuza still refuse to meet face to face. Both say they want such talks, but each insists the other come to them. Guebuza has announced a meeting of the Council of State for next Monday, 29 July. The Council was set up at the behest of Dhlakama and includes him as leader of the opposition. But the meeting will be in Maputo and Dhlakama refuses to attend. The Council might have provided a useful context for discussion, but a majority of members are aligned to Frelimo, and Dhlakama probably does not accept being in that position.

However, considering the rigidity of both leaders, it may be easier for intermediaries to reach an agreement.

Analysis

Can agreement be reached?

Positions and perceptions remain very far apart, and negotiating goals on both sides are unclear. Is an agreement possible?

The head of the Electoral Observatory, Rev Dinis Matsolo, said after a visit to Sanjundjira, said "the leader of Renamo is preoccupied with a revision of the electoral laws, with the question of depoliticization of the state, and with economic questions." After the attacks on the road and on police and military camps, government now puts a high priority on disarmament

Dhlakama's third demand could be resolved if Frelimo wants to. Renamo's military leaders are particularly concerned that they have not benefitted, while they see a Frelimo elite becoming relatively wealthy. Money could be agreed and Renamo and its leaders could be given shares in state and Ministry of Defence companies. In the era of privatisation, a whole series of regulatory bodies, from water to insurance, were created; these are largely sinecures, and they could be enlarged and Renamo allowed to appoint. An issue here will, however, be who retains the patronage power; Dhlakama will want to be seen to be dispensing the largesse to his supporters, and will not want it seen as in the gift of Guebuza.

In part, the other three issues are all intertwined. Many people argue that Frelimo never fully moved away from the attitudes of the one-party state. Frelimo has increasingly become the party representing the interests of the state apparatus (which is mainly teachers and health workers) and it seems likely that most civil servants are genuinely supporters of Frelimo. But since the election of Guebuza in 2004, there have been an increasing number of complaints that grants, licences, contracts, promotions etc require Frelimo party membership, and even of party dues being automatically deducted from teachers' salaries. Is this any worse than in other predominant party states, where one party has been in power for a long time, such as Sweden, Japan, India and Mexico in the 1980s?

In parallel, Frelimo at the time of the peace accord in 1992 took a step which was highly praised then, to opt for a small, weak, inexpensive military. Frelimo wanted to avoid the possibility of a military coup, the plague of many African countries. But it also wanted to ensure that this small military was totally loyal, which left little space for Renamo veterans - who could have been offered alternatives in military and security companies, but were not.

Raul Domingos, Renamo negotiator of the peace accord, in an interview on *O Pais* today (22 June) argues that the police, security services (Serviços de Inteligência e Segurança do Estado, SISE), the military (Forças de Defesa de Moçambique, FADM) and especially the riot police (Força de Intervenção Rápida, FIR) are purely at the service of Frelimo and not Mozambicans in general. And many people note that past election violations by Frelimo were rarely prosecuted.

This seems to have been unofficially recognised, because Dhlakama and Renamo have been

allowed to retain a small armed force, more than 20 years after the peace accord.

The result is a genuine and deeply felt distrust of the state by Dhlakama, Renamo and other opposition figures. Domingos asked how we can demand that Renamo disarm when Frelimo is still so strongly militarised.

And this distrust extends to the electoral process. The government has tried to create the Election Technical Secretariat (Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral, STAE) as a professional civil service body that could run fair elections. But the distrust runs deep. An earlier head of computer services in STAE may have manipulated results, and in past elections polling station staff have invalidated opposition ballots and stuffed the ballot boxes, with impunity.

Earlier this year (16 April) a headline in *Notícias* said "Frelimo 'orders' victory in the municipalities". Some in Frelimo who are police or civil servants will feel that such an "order" overrides all other considerations, and that they have been ordered to go ahead with preferential treatment for Frelimo, obstructing the opposition, or even fraud if necessary.

Many critics, including this Bulletin, have argued for increased transparency to combat fraud and bias. But Dhlakama believes strongly that the only solution is to put in an equal number of his people - "parity" between Frelimo and Renamo at all levels, including election commissions and STAEs. This caused huge disruption in past elections, and would be strongly opposed by the international community.

That leads to the other big issue, the new opposition party the Mozambique Democratic Movement (Movimento Democrático de Moçambique, MDM). It started with a group of energetic people expelled by Dhlakama from Renamo, and now has elected mayors in two cities, Quelimane and Beira. Dhlakama has failed to turn Renamo into a political party, and with better organisers, more dynamism, and more appeal to younger people, MDM has the potential to become the main opposition party.

Dhlakama's view is to ignore the MDM and to want to go back to the 1992 peace accord and renegotiate it (or, in his view, insist that it be carried out). In his view, it is still just the two armed parties, Frelimo and Renamo. But MDM and civil society are not willing to wind the clock back.

Renamo has been boycotting the electoral process and telling its supporters not to register (which appears to be having some impact, at least in Nampula and Zambézia provinces). Frelimo hardliners are happy to spin out the negotiations and hope the boycott continues through national elections next year. And *Notícias* Director Rogério Siteo, in a thoughtful article last week (15 July) after attending a Dhlakama press conference, suggests one motive for Dhlakama to want to continue the boycott. If national elections next year go ahead without the main opposition party, then any Frelimo victory would, in Dhlakama's view, be illegitimate, and the only way forward would be a government of national unity - rewinding the clock back to 1992 when Renamo failed to gain such a government in negotiations.

On MDM, the divisions matter. Hardliners on both sides simply want to ignore or marginalise MDM. So far, those in Frelimo looking at electoral numbers want Renamo in the elections in order to split the opposition vote. This would force second rounds for mayors in several cities. The antipathy between Renamo and MDM is so great that neither would tell its supporters to vote for the other, which assures Frelimo mayors in all cities.

Teodoro Waty in his *Notícias* interview last week floated an interesting alternative: that a deal with Renamo could involve local elections being postponed from 20 November this year to take place at the same time as national elections in October next year, to allow more time to negotiate changes in the electoral law. This would work strongly against MDM, which needs to elect more than 5 mayors this year to boost its national credibility and present itself as a serious alternative in national elections next year. It also needs elections this year to train its militants, staff, and observers.

So with both Frelimo and Renamo divided on whether they want a deal at all, is agreement possible? If there is an agreement, it might look like this:

- + Money and sinecures for Renamo (perhaps not public).
- + Additional Renamo members on election commissions (but not parity).
- + Election commission chairs to be reselected (except CNE, where Sheik Abdul Carimo would remain chair).
- + Renamo and Frelimo to name deputy directors to all STAEs.
- + Renamo and Frelimo allowed to name one person each to registration and polling station teams.
- + An additional registration period.
- + Various non-controversial technical changes to the electoral law, including allowing recounts.
- + Postponing local elections from this year to next year.
- + A working group on depoliticising the state and security forces.

But I would not bet on any agreement being reached in the next few weeks.

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 publishers

https://www.rienner.com/title/Zimbabwe_Takes_Back_Its_Land

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and on Amazon.co.uk for £17.09

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The Development Revolution from the Global South

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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

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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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