

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Also in this issue:

Chang refused bail; Beira flood

Special report on "democratic backsliding"

Police say anti-debt t-shirt ban is legal

Police were acting "within the limits" of the 2013 law on the police when they seized t-shirts with the slogan "I won't pay the secret debt" and even forced people to take the t-shirts off, said police spokesperson Inácio Dina at a press conference Tuesday 22 January. He said "In whose interests is it to incite collective violence, collective disobedience, popular demonstrations? I think it is not in the interests of honest and patriotic citizens." (*Lusa En 22 Jan; O Pais 23 Jan*)

As part of a new campaign calling on the government to refuse to pay the \$2 bn secret debt, CIP (Public Integrity Centre, Centro de Integridade Pública) started handing out t-shirts with the slogan "I won't pay the secret debt" on Monday. Police blocked the street in front of the office Monday and again Tuesday morning, to confiscate the t-shirts being handed out by CIP. They said wearing the t-shirts constituted an illegal demonstration.

The police had already said they were worried about opposition to the debt, in a press statement on 11 January. It said that "the General Command of the Mozambican police is concerned about a tendency to disturb public order in some parts of the country characterised by attempts to have demonstrations. The potential promoters of this attempt to agitate the people say they intend to demand justice in the face of so-called 'secret debts'." bit.ly/PRM-debt

At a 21 January press conference, CIP said it considered the police action to be "intimidation", and said there was no intention to incite a disturbance. CIP has also come under heavy attack on social media by writers aligned to Armando Guebuza, who was president when the debt was contracted.

CIP has now has now changed its campaign to post brief videos of prominent people wearing the t-shirt and making a short statement. For example retired Supreme Court Judge José Carlos Trindade said: "The debt was contracted in an unconstitutional way and outside the competence of the government. Therefore, opposing the debt is a patriotic and democratic duty." Technical University of Mozambique rector Severino Ngoenha said "the people are not responsible" for this corrupt debt.

Journalist's detention legalised, but media protests

The detention incommunicado by the army for 12 days of journalist Amade Abubcar was illegal, admits the public prosecutor's office (Ministério Público), but his continued detention now is legal

because he has now been charged with using his computer to violate state secrets and stir up the public. (*O Pais* 24 Jan)

The statement by the Ministério Público alleges that there are "strong indications that he committed those crimes", namely that his notebooks contained names of supporters of the Al-Shabaab insurgent group, and that when he was arrested he was collecting information without the knowledge of his superiors at the state-owned Nacadje Community Radio in Macomia, Cabo Delgado, where he has worked for the past nine years. He was arrested taking pictures of refugees fleeing into Macomia.

"After nearly 30 years of democracy, judicial bodies have no idea how journalists work, and have not, at the very least and as should be their duty, tried to determine the purpose of this journalist's work," said MISA-Mozambique, the local chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa. It also notes that Mozambican law gives special protections to journalists and their work.

MISA points out that it is normal for journalists to have names of their sources in their notebooks. And it also notes he is a stringer for various other publications and has his own blog, and a good journalist is always alert for new stories, so there is no reason to expect his superiors at the Nacadje to know precisely what he was doing.

MISA also criticised a social media campaign against Abubacar.

O Pais says his lawyer reports he was tortured by the military.

Detained South African Andre Hanekom dies

Palma boatyard owner Andre Hanekom died yesterday. Still held in jail, at the weekend he complained of stomach bleeding and was transferred to Pemba hospital, where he died. A South African resident in Palma, Cabo Delgado, for 26 years, Andre Hanekom, was shot and arrested by military police 24 July 2018. He was granted bail on 10 October, but the authorities refused to release him.

He was charged with funding the Cabo Delgado insurgency by giving supporters \$150 per month. The indictment against him claims police discovered machetes, bows, arrows, flares and rockets in his house. These weapons were regarded as sufficient proof of his involvement in the finance, logistics and coordination of the attacks. But those are common items which would be in a normal Mozambican boatyard. His wife Frances believes the charges against her husband had been fabricated as an excuse to seize his property in Palma port, which is becoming important to supply the gas industry.

Nyusi: Foreign observers should not criticise elections

Foreign diplomats should observe this year's elections without "interfering with internal affairs" of Mozambique, President Filipe Nyusi told an ambassadors' reception yesterday. Previous elections, he said, have seen such tendencies appear in observers' reports - something he said "we hope...doesn't happen this year." (*Zitamar* 24 Jan)

Complaint about declining quality of boot-licking

The recent vitriolic social campaigns against critics of the government brought a response from Juma Aiuba, a Nampula columnist for *Carta de Moçambique* (23 Jan). "These new sentinels of the regime are sabotaging Frelimo. They are grand incompetents. They don't have the capacity to boot-lick anyone." They assume all you have to do is insult, and not make an argument, he wrote.

Aiuba preferred the "G-40", the group of safe columnists and social media writers who backed former president Armando Guebuza. The G-40 "were organized. They had a doctrine. They talked

shit, but in an organized, eloquent and studied way. There was a discursive coherence in the cunning words. Even, with a little luck, they could convince you. They could be mistaken for serious people."

The new cohort are not organised and act on their own. "These new guys vulgarize the role of boot-licker. The lack professionalism. I prefer G-40s. They were good guys at what they did. These recruits are not funny, they are very square. They cannot even be trainee boot-lickers."

<https://cartamz.com/index.php/textos-de-juma-aiuba/item/773-infelizmente-ja-nao-se-fazem-lambe-botas-como-antigamente>

Comment

Is Mozambique suffering 'democratic backsliding'?

In the past 25 years, the number of coups in the world has halved, but the number of democracies has not increased. Indeed, social scientists see an increase in the number of elected governments becoming more authoritarian. It is a phenomenon that has come to be called "democratic backsliding."

Speaking at a seminar yesterday at London School of Economics, Prof Stephan Haggard used the concept of "democratic backsliding" to analyse Trump's US, Erdogan's Turkey, and various other industrialised countries. But it became clear that the concept applies also to Africa, and perhaps to Mozambique. Haggard looked at the way a reduction of "checks on executive power cumulate into a 'competitive authoritarian' regime, defined as one in which the political playing field has been tipped decisively against meaningful challenges to incumbents." That seems a danger in Mozambique.

Haggard cites Oxford Professor Nancy Bermeo, who writes that the "more common form of backsliding occurs when elected executives weaken checks on executive power one by one, undertaking a series of institutional changes that hamper the power of opposition forces to challenge executive preferences. The disassembling of institutions that might challenge the executive is done through legal channels Existing courts or legislatures may also be used, in cases where supporters of the executive gain majority control of such bodies. Indeed, the defining feature ... is that institutional change is either put to some sort of vote or legally decreed by a freely elected official - meaning that the change can be framed as having resulted from a democratic mandate."

Haggard continues: "Once executives had been delegated enhanced powers by pliant legislatures, the dismantling of horizontal checks, the weakening of political and civil liberties, and more frontal attacks on the opposition proceeded in a parallel but typically incremental fashion. The independent judiciary and media were typically among the early targets, because weakening them proved crucial to subsequent moves. Elected autocrats also quickly sought to control the agencies of law enforcement and to turn them against opponents and dissenters. The absence of checks further tilted the political playing field by deepening the potential for corruption, which in turn allowed the executive to pay off cronies and clients while persecuting private sector opponents. Governments ultimately reshaped voting laws, undermined independent monitoring of elections, and attacked opposition parties and civil society groups in order to minimize the risks of electoral defeat."

Bermeo points to "packing electoral commissions, changing electoral rules to favour incumbents and harassing opponents."

Finally, Bermeo notes that "democracy is put together piece by piece, and can be taken apart the same way [through] incremental backsliding." In the new post-coup era, democracy is dismantled brick by brick, and no single brick seems that important.

Many of the points raised by Haggard and Bermeo seem relevant to Mozambique. The reports of the past few days above show how law enforcement agencies can intervene in biased ways. The researchers talk of corruption and paying off cronies, and the \$2 bn secret debt has become symbolic of this. Haggard talks of undermining independent monitoring of elections and President Nyusi warns off international election monitors. Bermeo points to packing election commissions which became an issue in municipal elections last year. And the courts rubber-stamped blatant ruling party electoral fraud, with an interpretation of the law that is nonsense - Renamo can only protest about exclusion from an election commission meeting at the meeting from which it is excluded.

Is this enough to argue that "democratic backsliding" is occurring? Perhaps a test will be the parliament session opening 28 February, which must approve revisions to the electoral laws and provincial decentralisation. Hopefully Renamo will table changes to the parts of the electoral law that made it impossible to protest against fraud. Will Frelimo, with its parliamentary majority, allow such changes? *jh*

Background material:

Nothing refers directly to Mozambique, but these contain the background and discussion on backsliding:

Robert Kaufman and Stephan Haggard, "Democratic decline in the US", October 2018, free on line <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718003377>

Stephan Haggard LSE ppt 23Jan2019 bit.ly/Haggard-Backslide

Nancy Bermeo, "On Democratic Backsliding", Journal of Democracy 27 (1) 2016.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0012> Knowledge is not free, and readers must have university access or pay a charge. For Mozambican students who cannot afford it, send a note to j.hanlon@lse.ac.uk and I can arrange a copy.

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Other news

Chang won't be sent home

Mozambique's request to South Africa to send former Finance Minister Manuel Chang back to Mozambique instead of to the US was rejected by South Africa. Prosecutor Elivera Dreyer said there was no Mozambican arrest warrant for Chang. She also revealed that Chang is not charged in the secret debt case, and the request to return him relates to bribes received from Odebrecht for the Nacala airport contract.

No bail for Chang

Manuel Chang was refused bail this morning at a special hearing in Kempton Park, Johannesburg.

Chang's lawyers proposed that he be given bail and reside in Malelane in Mpumalanga, South Africa, 45 km from the Mozambique border. Prosecutor Elivera Dreyer said the danger of flight was too high, due to the closeness to Mozambique and because Chang has a diplomatic passport as a member of parliament.

His lawyers justified the location by the need to have special exercise and medication for his diabetes. But prison authorities said they had all the food, sports facilities and medical assistance needed for prisoners with diabetes.

But the key to the bail refusal was judge Sagra Subroyen's demand to see details of his bank accounts in Mozambique, Portugal and South Africa. Dreyer says he is wealthy and could easily flee. Chang's lawyers refused to supply financial details, in part because - like all trial documents -

it would be available to the press, so Chang was sent back to jail, saying the next hearing will be 31 January.

Floods in Beira

There have been major flood in Beira and other areas of Sofala caused by Cyclone Desmond which passed Beira going up the Mozambique Channel just at high tide; 273 millimetres of rain fell on Beira on Tuesday. In many places water was up to 1 metre deep, and 20,000 people have taken refuge in accommodation centres.

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"Mozambique News Reports & Clippings, number XXX", DATE, bit.ly/mozamb, accessed XXX.

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Background reading

Special reports

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Portuguese - Pt - CIP - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroina>

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng

Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>

Special report on four poverty surveys: bit.ly/MozPoverty

2018 Constitution - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

Minimum wage and exchange rates 1996-2018 -- <http://bit.ly/MinWage18>

\$2bn secret debt - in English

Kroll - Full report on \$2bn debt - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz-full>

Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>

Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>

Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt

Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Election newsletters are on <http://bit.ly/2H066Kg>

Eight books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)

Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014)

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)

Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996)

Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991)

Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

Two more will be available shortly to download:

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)
Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013)
Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)
Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)
Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

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Mozambique media websites, Portuguese:

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O País: www.opais.co.mz

@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>

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

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique: <http://clubofmozambique.com/>

Zitamar: <http://zitamar.com/>

Macauhub English: <http://www.macauhub.com.mo/en/>

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

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