

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

252 23 April 2014 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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STV claims

Major government concession to allow Dhlakama to register

STV tonight (Wednesday) reports a major government concession to allow Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama to register before the 29 April deadline and thus stand for president in 15 October national elections. So far, this has not been confirmed by any other source.

Dhlakama is believed to be in a Renamo base on the Gorongosa mountain, and Renamo said he would only register when he felt safe to do so. Renamo Tuesday asked for an extension of the registration period.

But government military action in the area yesterday, Tuesday morning, upset a fine balance. In a highly provocative action, government forces attacked a Renamo base at Nhaulunga with heavy weapons and shelling. This base is about 10 kilometres from Satunjira, which had housed the headquarters of Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama until it was occupied by the army (FADM) on 21 October. In the afternoon government troops withdrew, but were then ambushed by Renamo and two government soldiers were killed.

The area has been quiet recently, before the government attack. Indeed *Noticias* this morning (23 April) reported that Vale had resumed 24 hour coal trains; night-time trains had been suspended after a 1 April attack on a Vale train.

The attacks Tuesday obviously triggered concerns about the difficulty of registering Dhlakama and there were negotiations during the day, according to STV. Finally late this evening, the government accepted a Renamo proposal which it had rejected this afternoon.

Eight registration brigades in Gorongosa district have never been able to start work because of the continued fighting in the area between Renamo and the government. STV says that government this evening accepted a Renamo proposal that the eight brigades be protected by Renamo forces, and that there would be no government military presence.

Comment: This is a major and unprecedented concession by the government. It reflects the government desire to keep Renamo and Dhlakama in the electoral process at all costs. All of Dhlakama's demands are being met, including large numbers of Renamo people in the electoral system, so that if Dhlakama loses the presidential election he will not be able to claim that the system was biased against him.

By contrast, the government is taking a very hard line on Renamo demands for a complete restructuring of the military and police. This is totally unacceptable to Frelimo, which wants a small but loyal army. So the current position is to give Dhlakama anything he wants on elections, and nothing on the military and police.

Thus, in an unprecedented action, government is allowing Renamo military to guard eight registration posts in order to allow Dhlakama to feel safe enough to register. *jh*

Chikweti gets 52,000 ha but forest issues continue

The controversial Chikweti Forests of Niassa was given an additional 52,000 hectares (ha) in Sanga and Lichinga districts by the Council of Ministers on 1 April. The company had 29,000 ha but announced in February that it would dismiss 800 workers because the government had not granted its request for additional land. The company was subject to a highly critical report by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2010, and then replaced its local management.

This is the first large land concession granted by the Council of Ministers in several months; 52,000 ha is a block 26 km long and 20 km wide. At the same meeting Ministers granted 16,700 ha in Marávia and Cahora-Bassa districts, Tete, to the JSPL Mozambique Minerais, Lda. owned by Jindal of India.

The Chikwete concession follows the release of a report on Niassa forests done for the trade unions of Finland which points to the shortage of land as being the biggest constraint on the development of the forestry industry in Mozambique. But the report also makes clear that local communities are not happy with the forest companies.

The new Finnish report (in English and Portuguese) and the earlier Ministry report are posted on: <http://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/land-and-biofuels>
Earlier reports on Chikweti are in News Reports 187, 190, 206 and 227.

The Finnish report cites company complaints that the Mozambican land law forces them to negotiation with communities, who are reluctant to cede their land. Florestas de Planalto, the Uruguayan subsidiary of the Finnish company UPM, withdrew in November 2013, after planting only 1200 ha over three years, saying it could not obtain any more land.

Indeed, the report hints that local people do not gain much from the forest plantations. The plantation companies say that worker absenteeism is between 20% and 25%. The may reflect the competition with peasant agriculture, with tree planting occurring at the same time as peak labour demand for farming. Also, the report notes that "many workers receive less than the minimum monthly salary" because they are paid by task and workers cannot reach their targets. Another problem is that two companies hire seasonal labour through labour brokers who often charge large fees to the workers.

The report also accuses the government of vastly over-estimating the employment gains from forestry. The 2009 Reforestation Strategy says that one job will be created for 4 ha planted, while the report notes that "industry standard" is one job for each 20 ha planted.

Land demands are huge. One paper factory needs at least 200,000 ha of planted forest, the report says, and all the timber companies want more land.

The report also points to the weakness and lack of initiative of local trades unions. It says that foreign investors in Green Resources expect union recognition, so Nampula Green Resources had to take the initiative to organise the trade union branch.

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The next book

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento

by Teresa Smart & Joseph Hanlon will be launched 2 July in Maputo.

Zimbabwe takes back its land

by Joseph Hanlon, Jeanette Manjengwa & Teresa Smart is now available from the publishers https://www.riener.com/title/Zimbabwe_Takes_Back_Its_Land also as an e-book and <http://www.jacana.co.za/book-categories/current-affairs-a-history/zimbabwe-takes-back-its-land-detail>

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>

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

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 theinvestor@clubofmozambique.com

Portuguese: Mozambique Hoje. <http://mail.clubofmozambique.com/mailman/listinfo/mhoje>

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