

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

279 10 February 2015

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Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. Contact j.hanlon@open.ac.uk for the link.

Dhlakama & Nyusi agree Renamo to submit proposal to parliament

Following a second meeting with President Filipe Nyusi, Renamo head Afonso Dhlakama said they had agreed Renamo would submit to parliament a preliminary proposal for "autonomous regions" in the centre and north of the country. This means Renamo will take up its seats in parliament.

The three-and-a-half-hour meeting yesterday again took place at the Indy Village hotel and again the two leaders were in shirtsleeves.

The agreement is open to a wide range of interpretations and may just shift the dispute from the presidents to parliament.

Speaking after the meeting, Dhlakama said "The President understands our requirements and Renamo will present a preliminary proposal [*anteprojecto*] to parliament [Assembleia da República] and the agreement is that the parliamentary benches will take it seriously, because this is not a normal proposal of the opposition that is just voted down by the majority party," according to *Radio Moçambique* (9 Feb)

He continued that "it is important that the party benches know that this is an agreement between the government and Renamo, similar to what happened with the electoral law, which was negotiated outside and the party benches had instructions from their parties to approve it."

He also said "if the government is deceiving us and uses its majority [in parliament] to play with us, there will be serious consequences for the President because he will not be able to govern. There will be demonstrations. Even if they kill people, the government will fall," according to *CanalMoz* (10 Feb). In particular, the Frelimo majority cannot simply vote down the preliminary proposal.

President Nyusi, who did not speak after the Saturday meeting, did stand with Dhlakama yesterday after the meeting and made a few comments. In particular, he said "I am satisfied that we are now going down the constitutional route." He continued "Our discussions had no pre-conditions. Questions were raised" and they decided that "parliament will be the place where the will of the people is decided".

Afonso Dhlakama does not accept the results of the 15 October 2014 election, which he says were fraudulent and that he won. At first he demanded a caretaker government, then he shifted to demanding "republics" of the centre and north, and then autonomous regions of the centre and north where he says he won, and where official results give him majorities in some provinces. The proposal to parliament should concretise that demand.

Comment

Not a simple solution

Dealing with this in parliament will not be straightforward, both because the two sides are likely to differ on what has been agreed, and because of constitutional questions.

What Dhlakama says has been agreed is that a proposal will be submitted to parliament and that Frelimo must treat it seriously and not dismiss it out of hand. He goes on to argue that it should be treated in the same way as the electoral law last year, but this appears not to have been agreed.

Last year in the government-Renamo negotiations, it was agreed that Renamo could make any changes it wanted to the electoral law. These were submitted jointly by Frelimo and Renamo to parliament, and voted into law largely without change. Frelimo did instruct its parliamentary bench to accept the proposal. But the agreement yesterday is very specifically for a Renamo proposal to parliament. And Dhlakama's threat suggests there was no agreement to treat the proposal in the same way as the electoral law. That suggests further negotiations in parliament, which could stretch out over years as happened with the electoral laws.

There is also a constitutional problem. The constitution says that Mozambique is "a unitary state" and that this is one of the matters which cannot be changed by a simple constitutional amendment, but also must be approved in a nationwide referendum. This would be required to move to a full federal system with autonomous regions.

On the other hand, the constitution was flexible enough to allow the creation of elected municipalities. So the problem for parliamentary lawyers would be to find a form of regional structure, perhaps built on provincial assemblies, that would fit within the constitution.

One important aspect of the agreement between Nyusi and Dhlakama is that it will force Dhlakama and Renamo's lawyers to be much more precise in their proposals, and indicate if they expect to change the constitution or think it can be done just by parliament. jh

Other news

Simango meets Nyusi. Daviz Simango, head of the second opposition party, MDM, went to Nyusi's office (the presidencia) to meet him yesterday afternoon. The meeting appears to have been mainly for Simango to stress that MDM (Movimento Democrático de Moçambique; Mozambique Democratic Movement) should not be forgotten and must be included in any debates on major changes such as autonomous regions. (Noticias, AIM, CanalMoz, Radio Moçambique 10 Feb)

Electricity restored to north. The electricity transmission line to the north of Mozambique which was cut a month ago by floods near Mocuba was finally reconnected Sunday 9 February.

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by Teresa Smart and Joseph Hanlon

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Outside Mozambique, we have a few copies we can send from London.

Please email j.hanlon@open.ac.uk.

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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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