

Global Insight covers areas of topical interest and is meant to provide the reader with an initiation to the subject and its policy implications. The analysis is meant to be simple yet elegant, and without sacrificing depth, useful to a broad policy community. We welcome and encourage comments and suggestions.

Institute for Global Dialogue

8th floor, Braamfontein Centre

23 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein

Johannesburg, South Africa

P O Box 32571, Braamfontein 2017

Tel +(11) 339-6585

Fax +(11) 339-6616

e-mail: info@igd.org.za

www.igd.org.za

ISSN: 1607 - 2375

8Institute for Global Dialogue

All rights reserved. The material in this publication may not be reproduced, stored or transmitted without the prior permission of the copyright holder. Short extracts may be quoted, provided the source is fully acknowledged.

Issue No 10, June 2001

Mozambique: a success story in crisis

by
Chris Alden*

Introduction

Mozambique=s second elections in 1999, heralded by some observers as a sign that democracy was firmly rooted in what is widely viewed as one of Africa=s emerging economic success stories, have unexpectedly triggered a national crisis. The poll, which saw the governing Frelimo party win a second term on a narrower mandate, has been bitterly disputed by the opposition party, Renamo. Having won a majority of the votes in six provinces, Renamo=s legal challenge of the electoral process, boycott of parliament and call for some form of representation in governing structures have been met with failure. Its subsequent national campaign of protest brought temporary havoc in some areas and, following a violent response by the police, the death of dozens of its followers in jail in November 2000. Adding to the uncertain climate was the assassination of veteran Mozambican journalist Carlos Cardoso in the midst of his investigation into the multi-million dollar theft that accompanied the privatisation of a state bank. This served to highlight the frailty of the legal system, economic crimes and a rise in criminality.

The crisis in governance is threatening to jeopardise the hard fought gains of rapid economic growth and democratisation in Mozambique. While some observers would assume a partisan position and point to Frelimo arrogance or Renamo intransigence as being at the heart of the country=s problems, careful analysis of the situation suggests that the causes are deeper and reside in the nature of the post-conflict settlement in Mozambique as well as the Mozambican political actors themselves.

I. How the Peace Settlement Failed Mozambique

In many respects the crisis facing Mozambique is rooted in shortcomings of the internationally-mediated peace settlement, the accompanying electoral process and the subsequent post-conflict reconstruction of the state.

Elections without democracy

In spite of having held two national elections and deeply flawed municipal elections, in many respects democracy in Mozambique appears to retain the characteristics of an outside imposition. The unwillingness by the government to pursue the >South African solution=, that is, power-sharing (about which more is said below), can be viewed as symptomatic of the absence of >ownership= of a process that was promoted by the international community. Lacking a genuine spirit of reconciliation, the two parties have been in conflict and, in selected cases, worked beyond the legal boundaries in order to push political agendas (such as Renamo-inspired protests in northern districts).

Adjustment without prosperity

In spite of the acclaimed double-digit growth figures, Mozambique remains a country dominated by grinding poverty and deprivation. It has been under an internationally-imposed structural adjustment programme (SAP) since 1987 that encourages wholesale privatisation of state enterprises and foreign investment as the solution to the country's severe economic problems. Factors such as the high level of debt servicing have only recently been acknowledged by international financial institutions as impediments to development. It should be pointed out that while the debt issue galvanises international attention, its impact has been felt most acutely in the low levels of basic social services (sometimes non-existent in remoter areas) like primary health care and education. The cashew industry, which saw local producers of semi-processed cashews forced out of business by IMF-imposed cuts in state subsidies, is one egregious example of the undermining of local entrepreneurship by misguided policies which have the effect of favouring international business concerns over that of local. While the basic standard of living has improved since the ending of the conflict, it is difficult to say whether this is attributable to peace itself or the overall benefits of the SAP.

Peace without security

The proliferation of small arms and concurrent rise of criminal gangs, both products of the flawed demilitarisation programme, underscored the failures of the international peace process in putting into place the necessary conditions for lasting peace. The UN peacekeeping operation, with its mandate to oversee disarmament and demobilisation, was notably lax in fulfilling its responsibilities as it did not manage to collect hundreds of thousands of light weapons. As it has come to be known subsequently, these have fuelled the illegal weapons trade between Mozambique and South Africa and contributed to the regional spiral of violence. Furthermore, there is evidence that the absence of adequate provisions for middle ranking officers within the demobilisation scheme, whose education and Frelimo's intransigence on the question of power sharing may have, as ministers are keen to point out, a basis in legal principle but it looks increasing like a missed opportunity from the perspective of domestic stability. Fear has been

stature made them unlikely candidates for the UN's 'hoo, seeds and off to the machamba' approach to reintegration, have drifted into the ranks of criminality. With skills and knowledge to manage military-style operations, these criminal gangs are credited with serving as the 'middleman' for stolen automobiles, drugs and other clandestine activities as well as, in the process, developing a network with their regional and international criminal counterparts.

II. How the Political Parties are Failing Mozambique's Peace

While the international settlement's shortcomings set the parameters for failure of the post-conflict peace building, the actions of main political parties but especially, given its position of responsibility, the governing Frelimo party have served to exacerbate problems inherent in the peace process.

Winner takes all

Unlike South Africa, there was no 'grand compromise' that accompanied the negotiations in Rome or the build up to the elections in 1994. This was in spite of the fact that the international community sought assurances in advance of the elections that Renamo would have a place in the government and, after early tepid promises of consideration by President Joachim Chissano, Frelimo adopted the hard line approach on power sharing that would remain its position to this day. Indeed, it is clear that the government entered into the peace negotiations in Rome with the expectation that, once Renamo's military orientation had been dispensed with through demilitarisation programmes, the opposition would not coalesce into a political force of any consequence. While Renamo certainly has experienced difficulties in developing its political programme and party apparatus, rather than collapse, the time in opposition has given it an opportunity to hone its parliamentary skills and begin to build coalitions with other opposition members, a process that culminated in the fielding of the Renamo-Uniao Electoral ballot in the 1999 national elections.

growing within Frelimo about the emergence of 'third way' politics, that is, a party or movement which could tap into popular dissatisfaction with both major parties even to the point of the leadership expressing private concern about the

intentions of Graca Machel=s foundation activities and presumably Cardoso=s proposed Movement for Peace and Democracy as well. The polling of independent candidates in the truncated local elections of 1998, which involved 33 designated municipalities and were conducted in spite of a Renamo boycott, managed to underscore the level of discontent within the urban and semi-urban bastions of traditional Frelimo support. Renamo=s electoral support in the 1999 national ballot, building upon its performance in 1994, brought renewed calls by its leader Afonso Dhlakama for Chissano to appoint Renamo governors to those central and northern provinces in which a majority of the population had voted for Renamo. A case in point was the situation in Sofala province, where Chissano could have settled on an ex-Frelimo governor who had quit the party and ran as an independent in the 1998 municipal elections B as a compromise candidate who would conceivably have met Renamo=s concerns half way.

All of this posturing on the part of the government, of course, gives credence to Renamo=s position as aggrieved outsider and fuelled the wave of protests in the central and northern provinces this year which culminated in imprisonment and death. That being said, the spectacle of Dhlakama sacking his once-trusted aide, Raul Domingos, and one of the most respected members of the party for his alleged contacts with Frelimo suggests that autocratic tendencies are a feature of intra-party politicking. Furthermore, there remain legitimate concerns about the ability of Renamo to manage the complexities of governance as well as exhibit tolerance of democratic and legal procedures (witness the storming of district offices in the North). The inclusion of a new educated class of politician in the provincial offices as well as amongst parliamentarians suggests that there may be greater capacity than in the past (though, of course, this capacity has never been seriously tested).

Political entrepreneurship and South over North

The >winner takes all= approach to political power has its corollary in the economic sphere. The weakness of the legal system, already notorious for its case backlogs and court delays, was further highlighted by the apparently deliberate mismanagement of the investigation

The spectacle of self-enrichment by some senior Frelimo party members in the wake of the privatisation of state assets B in which officials are brought on as board members of banks, multinational corporations and investment companies B has introduced a degree of economic disparity within society not seen since the departure of the Portuguese. Perhaps the most shocking aspect of this phenomenon, especially given the historical roots of the independence struggle amongst the peasantry in the North, is the overt alienation of the peasantry from the land by government officials. The brazen manner in which the government colludes with international investors to set about disenfranchising the small farmers is illustrated by two examples in the area of tourism. In the first instance, an American billionaire, James Blanchard, was given the right to develop the Inhaca peninsula, which B in addition to scotching an apparently completed arrangement with South African forestry and paper multinational, Sappi -- threatened to summarily displace local peasant farmers. More recently the environment minister, John Kachimila and South African real estate investors have announced the development of a luxury resort (in which the minister has admitted a significant stake) in the Vilanculos area next to the marine parks of Bazaruto islands which will require clearing out the area=s original inhabitants.

And while much is made of the flow of FDI into Mozambique, the bulk of it is directed towards a handful of projects in the Maputo area or southern provinces. The result of this process has been to exacerbate the existing divide between the urban southern provinces and the central and northern provinces. According to the UNDP Human Development Report 1999, Maputo city has a level of human development comparable with a country like Botswana while the provinces in the centre and north are equivalent to Sierra Leone. This economic disparity (which to some extent mirrors ethnic divisions) has translated into political divisions, which themselves had been a contributing factor in the civil strife of the 1980s, and is therefore all the more worrisome.

Justice for all?

into the assassination of Carlos Cardoso. With indications that the case threatened to reveal links between top Frelimo officials and criminal elements, it has only been the outrage and

organisation of a coalition of Mozambican elites and international supporters that have kept the case falling victim to the usual instances of lost paperwork and other examples of shoddy police work. The contrast between the response of the government to Cardoso and that of the detention and asphyxiation of 80 Renamo supporters in Montepuez, Cabo Delgado province B where the inquiry seems to have stalled B is sadly reflective of the influence of the donor and foreign community within official circles. Lacking a commitment to providing all Mozambicans with recourse to open inquiries and due process, governing officials essentially act to fully erode the already fragile faith in democracy.

III. Policy considerations

International level

This is an opportunity for the international community to exercise a supportive role in conflict prevention measures. Here the logical partner is SADC if it chooses to take up this position. Support could include diplomatic assistance and/or financial incentives (in keeping with the incentive-based approach to the 1992-1994 peacekeeping mission) linked to specific outcomes such as a public hearing on deaths in Cabo Delgado. Exercising conditionalities (threats, sanctions etc) would not be appropriate and are less likely to achieve expected results as positions are solidly entrenched amongst the Mozambican parties. Longer term measures could include continuing capacity building of the legal system and municipal government structures.

The continental and regional level

SADC should encourage a return to dialogue between Frelimo and Renamo towards a concrete resolution of their dispute over the elections and post-elections, as well as the deaths in detention. In particular, SADC should promote the idea of third party mediation or arbitration between the two parties. If this route is pursued, SADC should obtain a commitment from the government and Renamo to abide by the decision of the appointed arbitration. This could also include an offer to establish a SADC team to re-open the inquiry into the deaths in Cabo Delgado with a promise to ensure recourse to the justice system (sentencing) and compensation if the inquiry findings warrant it.

If SADC is unwilling or unable to provide the necessary means to encourage mediation, then discrete bilateral discussions on the part a country trusted by the Mozambican parties (or, indeed, neutral Mozambicans) could be mooted.

The domestic level

The Mozambican government should commit itself to facilitating an open and fair investigation into the deaths in Cabo Delgado as well as to continue the process with regard to the Cardoso assassination. In the case of the former it should work together with Renamo officials and gain their support and acceptance of the process before proceeding further with any investigation. Following any inquiry, appropriate measures should be taken towards any perpetrators of criminal acts within the framework of the law.

All Mozambican parties should commit themselves to cooperating with any regionally-inspired efforts to mediate their dispute over the elections and post-electoral representation in government.

***Chris Alden lectures in International Relations at the London School of Economics**

Suggested Reading:

Chris Alden, Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State (Palgrave) 2001).

Paul Fauvet, >Mozambique: growth with poverty=
Africa Recovery, 14:3, Ecosoc, United Nations, New York 2000.

Joseph Hanlon, *Peace without Profit: How the IMF blocks rebuilding in Mozambique* (James Currey 1996).

UNDP, *Mozambique: National Human Development Report 1999* (Maputo 2000).