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President Guebuza pays tribute to Mandela

The death of Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of South Africa, means “the silencing of the fighting voice of a man who was an example of courage and determination in the battle to transform noble ideas into reality”, declared President Armando Guebuza.

“Nelson Mandela lives and will live forever in the hearts of all those who share his ideas of building a more just and united society, where peace, love for one’s neighbour and solidarity are cultivated”, said President Guebuza.

A voice of freedom was now stilled, he added, the voice of an iconic figure who inspired followers throughout the world.

The President said that the fact that today’s South Africa takes pride in being “a rainbow nation” is a tribute to Mandela, whose vision of diversity has enriched the country and led it towards stability and progress.

He was sure that Mandela lives on in the hearts of all who, in their daily lives, work for social and economic development and for the well-being of all people.

President Guebuza said that Mozambique had followed with hope and anxiety the news about Mandela’s state of health. He had been a victorious fighter in so many battles in his life that perhaps he would emerge victorious from this one as well.

“Unfortunately our hopes have evaporated to give way to pain and sorrow for the irreparable loss of this genius born to the South African people, and which our continent and the rest of the world also claims as their hero”, he said.

President Guebuza addressed condolences and solidarity, on behalf of the Mozambican people, to the Mandela family and to the South African people and government.

Successful National Health Week

The Ministry of Health has announced that the second phase of “National Health Week”, which ended on 6 December, reached its targets.

The main goal was to vaccinate against measles four million children aged between six months and five years, and to give them all vitamin A supplements. About 3.5 million children aged between one and five years were to be dewormed with a dose of the anti-parasite drug Mebendazole.

This phase also envisaged providing family planning advice to 221,000 women of reproductive age.

In addition, birth registration was to be offered for 140,000 children whose parents did not register them at the time of their birth.

By 5 December, the Health Ministry brigades had

reached 80 per cent of the target groups. According to the National Director of Public Health, Francisco Mbosana, all the Ministry’s provincial delegations had guaranteed compliance with the targets.

He admitted there were “specific situations of districts where not every area could be reached because of the rains that are making access difficult, but these cases have not compromised the targets”.

The Ministry’s preliminary assessment, he said, was that the work “was undertaken rapidly with the exception of the birth registration, but when we became aware of the long queues, we increased the number of registration staff, and the situation was brought under control”.

This phase involved 26,683 health workers plus volunteers in all the districts, at a total cost of \$4 million.

National Health Week is a Ministry of Health initiative, undertaken twice a year, to improve the health of women of childbearing age, and children under five years old, in order to reduce infant, child and maternal mortality rates.

Aircraft crashes in Namibia

A Mozambican aircraft on a scheduled flight between Maputo and Luanda on 29 November crashed in northern Namibia, killing all 33 people on board.

The plane was a Brazilian manufactured Embraer-190 belonging to Mozambique Airlines (LAM).

According to LAM Chief Executive Officer Marleyn Manave, the plane left Maputo at 11.26 and was due to arrive in Luanda at 14.10 local time.

Namibia’s Deputy Police Commissioner Willy Bampton, said the plane was “burnt to ashes”, and there were no survivors. The cause of the disaster is not yet known.

According to a list released by LAM, 16 of the 33 people on board were Mozambicans (including all six crew members). The other passengers were nine Angolans, five Portuguese, a Brazilian, a Chinese and a French citizen.

The Embraer was a new aircraft, acquired by LAM in 2012 under a leasing system (whereby another company buys the plane and leases it to LAM).

Up until now, LAM has enjoyed an excellent safety record. This is the first fatal accident in the history of the company, which was set up in 1980.

Renamo boycotts dialogue

In what has now become a weekly ritual, a Mozambican government delegation, headed by Agriculture Minister Jose Pacheco, on 9 December went to Maputo's Joaquim Chissano Conference Centre for another round of dialogue with the country's largest opposition party Renamo – but the Renamo delegation refused to attend.

Renamo has been demanding the presence at the dialogue table of national and foreign mediators and observers, and threatened that it would not take part in any more meetings unless these observers were present.

In mid-November, the government said that, while it was prepared to admit Mozambican observers, it had no intention of extending that invitation to foreign organisations.

Renamo has simply dug in its heels and is refusing to attend any further sessions of the dialogue, unless observers and mediators, both national and foreign, are present.

Yet it was Renamo which asked for the dialogue in the first place, and supplied the agenda items. Its original request said nothing at all about observers and mediators.

Twenty four rounds of dialogue were held between May and September, but achieved nothing at all since Renamo refused to move beyond the first point on the agenda, which was the electoral legislation.

The current electoral laws were passed in December 2012, with the parliamentary groups of the ruling Frelimo Party and the opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) voting in favour and Renamo voting against.

Renamo has tried to use dialogue with the government to reverse that decision, but Pacheco's delegation has insisted that, under the constitutionally enshrined separation of powers, the government cannot dictate to parliament. It suggested that Renamo take its amendments to the electoral laws back to parliament – which Renamo refused to do without a prior "political agreement" with the government.

Since October the dialogue has simply ground to a halt, with Renamo refusing to attend meetings without "observers and mediators".

The head of the Renamo delegation, Saimone Macuiana, told reporters on 9 December that Renamo is waiting for a reply to a letter it sent to President Guebuza on 6 December, which once again demanded the presence of mediators.

He said that, once Guebuza had replied, Renamo would be willing to meet with the government delegation. For his part, Pacheco said Renamo should stop sending the government letters, and talk face-to-face instead. The government response to the Renamo letter, he insisted, would come in a meeting at the conference centre.

"Renamo is trying to turn the dialogue into an exchange of correspondence", he said. "So it is refusing to come to the Conference Centre to discuss the content of its own proposals. Dialogue is about talking, not writing. And that is the spirit we are going to maintain".

Renamo, he continued, should sit down with the government to discuss exactly how third parties could take part in the dialogue. The government has already indicated that it will accept the presence of Mozambican observers, but Pacheco wanted clarity as to the tasks of these observers.

However, the government remains opposed to bringing in foreign organisations. "Domestic matters should be treated at domestic level by Mozambicans", Pacheco insisted. Mozambicans had enough dignity and self-esteem to solve their own problems, he added.

"The government believes there is room for the participation of Mozambican observers", Pacheco said. "But today Renamo is presenting a different scenario".

How many Renamo's are there?

Renamo's Parliamentary deputies on 6 December strongly denied that there was any rift between themselves and the Renamo gunmen operating in the central province of Sofala and ambushing vehicles on the main north-south road.

The previous day, answering questions from deputies, Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina said he welcomed hearing Renamo parliamentarians speak of "the right to life", since he assumed this meant they "are clearly distancing themselves from the other Renamo which has been killing civilians, soldiers and policemen, and destroying public assets such as health centres, roads, vehicles".

Now Ivone Soares retorted "in this Republic there are not two Renamos, one in this parliament and one on the bush. There is one party, led by Afonso Dhlakama, who teaches us to fight for a plural Mozambique".

Rather than supporting the attacks taking place in Sofala, Soares said these were merely "attributed" to Renamo, thus suggesting that they are somehow a put-up job organised by the government.

In her attempt to sound reasonable, she declared "no-one should seek to come to power through armed force".

She was immediately seconded by a deputy of the majority Frelimo Party, Caifadine Manasse. "I agree with Ivone", he said. "Renamo has to understand that nobody should use Machiavellian means to reach power, I urge other Renamo deputies to follow her advice".

Soares immediately demanded the right to "defend my honour". She claimed that "if Renamo wanted to achieve power by armed force, it could have done so when it controlled 85 per cent of the country".

However, if Renamo intended to achieve power by democratic means, Manasse retorted, how could it do so "when you don't take part in elections, and are in the bush opening fire".

The Minister of Public Works, Cadmiel Muthemba, showed photographs of the trenches Renamo had dug across the main north-south highway near the small Sofala town of Muxungue. The road had been sabotaged this way twice on 14 November and once on 1 December. He warned that repairing this damage would divert money away from rehabilitating other stretches of road.

Renamo deputy Jose Samo Gudo thought that the cuts looked too straight to have been dug by hand. Machines must have been used, he said, thus implying that the government itself had dug holes in roads that it recently rehabilitated.

Renamo deputies protested that the government describes Dhlakama's headquarters at Satunjira, occupied by the armed forces (FADM) on 21 October as "a military base". They claimed it was just Dhlakama's residence.

Vaquina showed the Assembly footage shot by television journalists in Satunjira, showing Renamo members drilling and marching in military formation past Dhlakama. It reminded deputies that Dhlakama had publicly admitted ordering the first attacks against vehicles in June.

Frelimo deputy Edmundo Galiza-Matos Junior insisted "Renamo has to be demilitarized. Its men must be disarmed and integrated into society. Renamo should participate in elections, just like other parties".

As for the supposedly peaceful nature of Satunjira, Galiza-Matos recalled that Renamo general secretary Manuel Bissopo had publicly declared "Renamo is going to return to its General Staff Headquarters to implement the rules of document and impose a transitional government".

Simple residential areas are not normally described as "the General Staff Headquarters", said Galiza-Matos.

Ten civilians murdered by Renamo in six weeks

Attacks by Renamo gunmen over the past six weeks have resulted in ten civilian deaths with a further 26 people injured, according to the Defence Ministry.

Speaking at a Maputo press conference on 4 December, the National Director of Defence Policy in the Ministry, Cristovao Chume, did not reveal the losses suffered by the defence and security forces or by Renamo itself.

Almost all the Renamo attacks have occurred in the central province of Sofala. There was a further focus of tension in Rapale district, in the northern province of Nampula, where three attacks occurred.

Chume said that, in addition, to the human casualties around 30 vehicles have been targeted in the Renamo attacks. Damage varied from slight to total.

The Defence Ministry believed the attacks showed that there is still a Renamo military command giving orders. "The attacks are coordinated and they (the gunmen) are complying expressly with orders given at a high level within Renamo", said Chume.

Chume urged Renamo to end hostilities, warning FADM would not stay on the defensive indefinitely. "Our position of staying on the defensive is because we think it helps unite efforts in the context of political dialogue", he said.

However, if no understanding is reached through dialogue, and Renamo continues to launch attacks, "naturally the Mozambican government, state and people cannot continue just watching these situations", he said.

CNE announces election results

Mozambique's National Elections Commission (CNE) on 5 December announced the final results from the municipal elections held on 20 November, showing that the ruling Frelimo Party won both the mayoral and municipal assembly elections in 50 of the 52 municipalities contested on that day.

The opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), the only other party to contest all the municipalities, increased its majority in the two cities where it already had mayors, Beira and Quelimane, and mounted a strong challenge to Frelimo in several other municipalities.

In a 53rd municipality, the northern city of Nampula, irregularities in printing the ballot papers forced the CNE to run the election again on 1 December. The MDM won, but this result is not included in the figures given by CNE chairperson Abdul Carimo.

The contest was at its closest in Zambezia province. The MDM's Manuel de Araujo increased his majority in Quelimane, the provincial capital, from 62 per cent in a by-election in 2011 to over 68 per cent. In Milange, on the border with Malawi, Frelimo candidate Felisberto Mvua won with slimmest of majorities – just 50.35 per cent.

The result in Gurue, in upper Zambezia was almost as close. Frelimo candidate Jahanquir Jussub becomes mayor on 50.49 per cent of the vote. At the polling stations only one vote separated him from his MDM rival Orlando Janeiro. When the votes declared invalid at the polling stations were reclassified by the CNE, to see whether any expressed a clear choice by the voters concerned, Jussub pulled ahead, gaining an extra 80 votes.

The other three Zambezia municipalities were also fairly close – Frelimo won Mocuba with 51.05 per cent, Alto Molocue with 52.06 per cent, and Maganja da Costa with 59.85 per cent.

The MDM also made a very strong showing in Maputo and the neighbouring city of Matola, long regarded as Frelimo strongholds. The mayor of Maputo David Simango was re-elected but saw the MDM challenger, Venancio Mondlane, cut his majority from 85.78 to 58.44 per cent. The reduction was even sharper in Matola: Frelimo candidate Calisto Cossa won with 56.53 per cent – but in 2008, his predecessor as mayor, Arao Nhancale had won 87 per cent.

The country's largest opposition party, Renamo, refused to take part in the elections. In the end, the MDM did much better than Renamo did in 2008. Renamo won 189 seats in the 43 municipalities that existed then. In those same municipalities, the MDM now has 308 seats, plus 29 in the ten new municipalities.

In only two municipalities – Macia in Gaza province and Nhamayabue in Tete – does Frelimo remain so dominant that it won all the seats in the municipal assemblies.

The CNE rejected all protests by the MDM concerning fraud in ten of the municipalities, and by MDM breakaway, ASSEMONA (Association for Moral and Civic Education in the Exploitation of Natural Resources) alleging fraud in the town of Angoche. In all cases, the MDM and ASSEMONA had not followed the correct procedure for appeals.

Appeals must be presented first at the polling station where the irregularity or fraud supposedly happened. The polling station staff are obliged by law to provide the political party monitors with a form on which the appeal can be written. If the staff refuse to follow this procedure, the political party or candidate concerned should protest either to the police, or to the immediately superior electoral body (a city or district elections commission). Only after all the avenues of appeal lower down the electoral hierarchy have been exhausted may a candidate protest directly to the CNE.

The CNE also explained, in considerable detail, why results sheets ("editais") were not available from over 30 of the 141 Quelimane polling stations. At the ten polling centres where these stations were located, disturbances broke out and threats were made against the staff by "unknown individuals armed with stones, bottles and plastic bags filled with sand".

These crowds in fact consisted of MDM supporters who had gathered on the pretext of "protecting" their votes, although the presence at the polling stations of people who have already voted is specifically forbidden by the electoral law.

The disturbances meant it became impossible to complete the count at these stations. Matters were made worse when trucks arrived bearing other people to join the disturbances.

Feeling that their lives were in danger, the polling station staff abandoned their positions. The ballot boxes and other electoral materials were later recovered by the police. The count was thus compromised, and the staff no longer had the original results sheets.

The MDM, however, claimed it did have duly signed and stamped copies of the editais. However, the CNE doubted the authenticity of these copies, noting that some of them either carried no stamps at all, were not signed by all the polling station staff, or bore illegible signatures. Indisputably genuine documents were only available from 110 polling stations for the election of the mayor and from 105 for the election of the municipal assembly.

The CNE has ordered an inquiry into the Quelimane disturbances, and the disappearance of the editais.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service – for details contact aim@aim.org.mz

Government ending contract secrecy

The Mozambican government is trying to end contract secrecy in the area of natural resources, and has asked companies to waive confidentiality in contracts signed before the legislation changed in 2011.

Answering questions in the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, on 5 December, the Minister of Mineral Resources, Esperanca Bias, said that, as from 3 December, the government has begun to publish, on her Ministry's website, the contracts and concessions signed with mining and hydrocarbon companies.

This commitment, Bias said, flowed from the law on public-private partnerships, mega-projects and business concessions, passed in August 2011. That law envisaged the publication of all contracts signed after that date.

As for previous contracts, she said her ministry has been in contact with the companies concerned to obtain a waiver of the confidentiality clauses. As a result, the South African petro-chemical giant Sasol, which operates the onshore natural gas fields in the southern province of Inhambane, has agreed that all the contracts it has signed can be published.

Thirty per cent of the shares in the Sasol Inhambane subsidiary, Sasol Petroleum Temane, are held by the Mozambican Hydrocarbon Company (CMH – which is an affiliate of the publicly owned National Hydrocarbon Company, ENH). CMH therefore earns 30 per cent of direct revenues from the exploitation of the natural gas. Bias said that, since the start of production in 2004, CMH has received \$454.8 million as its share from the revenues resulting from the sales of natural gas and condensate.

She added that the Mozambican state has so far received \$179 million in taxes from Sasol – \$37 million in taxes on production and \$142 million in corporation tax on profits.

As for the controversial fiscal incentives granted to the early mega-projects in the mineral and hydrocarbon area, these have either expired or are about to expire. In the case of Sasol the extraordinary tax benefits ended in 2011, and for Kenmare, the Irish company operating the titanium bearing heavy sands deposits at Moma, in Nampula province, the benefits end in 2016.

The first of the coal mining companies to sign a contract with the government, Vale of Brazil, negotiated a 25 per cent reduction in corporation tax. Bias said this would come to an end five years after the Vale mine begins to show a profit.

Later contracts with mining companies are covered by more recent legislation. Bias said the only benefits they enjoy are exemptions from customs duties, value added tax and consumption tax on the import of goods and equipment in the first five years of project implementation.

EU fishing agreement to be renegotiated

The Mozambican government intends to renegotiate its fishing agreement with the European Union, particularly with regard to tuna fishing.

Fisheries Minister Vitor Borges told reporters on 28 November that a team of Mozambican officials had gone to

Brussels to tell the EU fisheries authorities of the Mozambican government's plans to ensure that tuna fishing in Mozambique's Exclusive Economic Zone should be undertaken mostly by Mozambican vessels.

"The Strategic Plan for the Development of the Tuna Fishery (PEDPA) banks on the development of a national fleet so that, in the next 15 years, this activity comes to be dominated by Mozambicans", said Borges.

The current agreement with the EU expires in 2014, and the government intends to renegotiate it, in order to protect the entry into the business of the Mozambican Tuna Company (EMATUM) and guarantee its sustainability.

Borges was speaking after a debate in parliament, arising from requests by the two opposition parties, Renamo and the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), for information on the deal whereby EMATUM is purchasing 24 fishing vessels and six patrol boats from a shipyard in the French port of Cherbourg.

Justifying the purchase, Borges and Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina told parliament that currently, of the 130 vessels licensed to fish for tuna in Mozambican waters, only one flies the Mozambican flag.

The only benefit Mozambique derives from this arrangement is the million dollars a year which these vessels pay in licence fees. But the government expects EMATUM to bring in \$90 million a year, rising to \$200 million when the fleet is fully operational.

EMATUM will not have exclusive rights over the tuna stocks. Borges said that there are tuna fishing proposals from a further five Mozambican companies currently being analysed by his Ministry.

Terms for Macuse Port agreed

The Mozambican government on 3 December approved the terms under which a new port at Macuse, on the coast of the central province of Zambezia, and a railway linking Macuse to the Moatize coal basin in Tete province will be leased to a private operator.

The operator has already been chosen. The Thai group ItalThai Engineering, won an international tender launched earlier this year.

The Moatize-Macuse railway will be 525 kilometres long and building it will cost about \$3.5 billion.

The Macuse port and railway are of vital importance as an alternative route to the sea for coal exports from Moatize. Currently, the coal companies depend on the Sena railway from Moatize to the port of Beira, which can currently handle no more than 6.5 million tonnes a year. But the projection for coal exports is that they could reach 100 million tonnes a year by 2025.

Work is under way to upgrade the Sena Line to increase its capacity 20 million tonnes by late 2015.

Another alternative is a railway across southern Malawi that will link up with the existing northern line, and carry coal to a new terminal at Nacala-a-Velha. This railway is being financed by the Brazilian mining giant, Vale.

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