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President Guebuza accuses Dhlakama of “manufacturing problems”

President Armando Guebuza on 6 June accused Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama of manufacturing problems to satisfy his own interests at the expense of those of other Mozambicans. Speaking at a press conference at the end of a state visit to Ireland, President Guebuza said “the problem with Dhlakama is that he is a creator of problems. He manufactures problems because he has an agenda different from that of other Mozambicans”.

Reacting to questions about the latest attacks by Renamo gunmen on the main north-south road, in the central Mozambican province of Sofala, President Guebuza said “when I was negotiating peace in Rome with Dhlakama’s delegation (between 1990 and 1992), he said he was fighting for democracy in Mozambique. But today he doesn’t even want to let us hold elections. Today he is doing everything to ensure that there are no elections in Mozambique”.

“While other Mozambicans wake up every morning, roll up their sleeves to go to work, or to study, or to go to the hospitals, Renamo remains that force which has a small group of men who wake up every morning, and roll up their sleeves to go and kill their own brothers. There are no words to explain this”, said the President.

However, President Guebuza insisted that the government would continue talking to Renamo. “We remain committed to the path we have chosen, which is that of dialogue, until we reach an end to all of this”, he declared.

Asked by a journalist of the television station STV whether there were not now more than enough reasons to justify arresting those members of Renamo who publicly proclaim war and call for the division of the country (a reference to Renamo spokesperson Antonio Muchanga and the party’s general secretary Manuel Bissopo), President Guebuza replied “I have taken note of your proposal”.

As for his visit to Ireland, the President described it as a great success, and praised Ireland for the way it has supported Mozambique’s economic development. He was more convinced than ever that Ireland wishes to help Mozambique to become economically strong and prosperous.

During President Guebuza’s visit, the two countries reiterated their determination to continue cooperating in areas of vital interest to their peoples. This desire was sealed in the signing of four memoranda of understanding, covering health, agriculture, industrial and medical technology, and cooperation between the associations of accountants and auditors.

All these agreements envisage an increase in the transfer of the know-how that Ireland possesses to students at Mozambican universities.

Renamo steps up attacks

On 6 June, for the fifth consecutive day, Renamo gunmen opened fire against a convoy on the main north-south highway, near the town of Muxungue in Sofala province.

According to a team from STV who accompanied the convoy, gunmen opened fire on one of the military vehicles protecting the convoy about six kilometres out of Muxungue.

Its radiator was holed and the vehicle had to turn back. But none of the other 1,000 or so vehicles in the convoy was hit, and nobody was injured. STV stayed with the convoy for the full 100 kilometres to the Save River and then accompanied the return convoy back to Muxungue.

The attacks on the previous four days had all resulted in casualties. Staff at the Muxungue rural hospital told STV they had treated ten people wounded in the Monday to Thursday ambushes, one of whom had died of his injuries.

A military source said ten people, both civilians and soldiers, had died in the ambushes. The bodies of people who die outside of the hospital are not taken there, and so are not in the hospital statistics.

Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama has threatened to divide the country in two. The same threat was made a few days earlier by the party’s general secretary, Manuel Bissopo.

Dhlakama was speaking from Gorongosa district by mobile phone on 6 June to a meeting in Maputo of representatives of religious congregations who were trying to persuade him to end Renamo military activities. They were given the brush-off, with Dhlakama accusing the churches of conniving with the government.

With television crews recording the proceedings, Dhlakama threatened that unless the government conceded Renamo’s demand for “parity” in the armed forces between Renamo and the ruling Frelimo Party, then Renamo would divide the country.

He could see no problem in this and cited, with apparent approval, several other “divided countries” – Sudan and South Sudan, North and South Korea, and the Federal and Democratic Republic of Germany prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Notaries in Nampula suspend work at Renamo office

The notary services in the northern city of Nampula on 5 June suspended the authentication of signatures from Renamo supporters backing the bid for the Presidency by Afonso Dhlakama following riotous and threatening scenes at the local Renamo office.

Each presidential candidate must present supporting signatures from at least 10,000 registered voters, all of them authenticated by a public notary. Under a new set of rules, a notary must personally see each and every one of these voters as they sign the form supporting their preferred candidate.

The Nampula notary services agreed to send a notary to the Renamo office on 5 June, but the head of the services, Rosario Joaquim, said the notary felt she had to leave because of the disorganisation among the crowd and the fact that she came under threat.

The Renamo members brought along forms already signed – and so the notary insisted that they sign again, on a separate piece of paper, to prove that these were indeed their signatures. Renamo immediately suspected dirty tricks, and claimed that the separate signatures would somehow be used to eliminate names from the voters' roll.

Joaquim said that in reality the Renamo members were trying to force the notary to recognise signatures of people who were not physically present, and, under the current rules, the notary could not do that.

Renamo complained that people in Nampula who had supported Daviz Simango, leader of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), did not have to sign separate pieces of paper. Joaquim said this was because the MDM supporters did not bring pre-signed forms: instead they signed the forms in front of the notary. They did not bring in forms that might have been signed by people who were not present.

The forms used, both by Renamo and the MDM, are based on the model provided by the Constitutional Council, the highest body in matters of electoral law, which must validate all presidential nomination papers.

The notary services in Nampula said they are prepared to cooperate with Renamo in authenticating the signatures provided Renamo is properly organised.

Daviz Simango delivers nomination papers

The leader of the opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) and Mayor of Beira, Daviz Simango, on 5 June delivered his nomination papers as a candidate for the 15 October presidential elections.

The chairperson of the Constitutional Council, the country's highest body in matters of constitutional and electoral law, Hermenegildo Gamito, accepted the papers. They included Simango's full identification, proof that he is a registered voter, copies of his birth certificate and criminal record certificate, a declaration that he accepts nomination and is eligible to stand, and a document appointing his election agent, Jose Manuel de Sousa.

He also delivered 19,060 supporting signatures from registered voters, all authenticated by a public notary.

The MDM had complained about difficulties in notarising signatures because of the new demand that each supporter must be seen personally by a notary, rather than have the notary compare the signature on another document (generally a voter card) with the signature backing the candidate. Nonetheless the MDM collected the signatures

with plenty of time to spare – the deadline for delivering nomination papers is 21 July.

Simango told reporters that it had been "extremely complicated" to collect the notarized signatures, "but today we are able to deposit all the signatures".

Each presidential candidate must deliver a minimum of 10,000 signatures, and a maximum of 20,000. The Constitutional Council must now check all the signatures against the data base of registered voters, eliminating any that are invalid – for example, anyone who is not a registered voter, has signed up twice for the same candidate, or has supported two or more different candidates.

Asked about his prospects, Simango said "I've participated in many elections, sometimes under very adverse circumstances. It's the people who put candidates into power and decide who should be the next president".

As for the current ambushes by Renamo gunmen against vehicles on the north-south highway, Simango said "nobody has the right to take the lives of others. We urge all Mozambicans that the right path is development, and we can only have development with peace".

Simango is the second candidate to deposit his papers with the Constitutional Council. The first was the candidate of Frelimo, former Defence Minister Filipe Nyusi.

First Lady launches cancer prevention campaign

Mozambican First Lady Maria da Luz Guebuza on 4 June launched the third global campaign to mobilise resources for the elimination of cervical, breast and prostate cancer.

The launch took place in London during the high level meeting on Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the infectious agent responsible for most cases of cervical cancer, which reaffirmed the pledge to continue advocacy so that no woman, child or man will die of these cancers because of lack of access to information, prevention or treatment.

Speaking at the ceremony, Maria Guebuza stressed that commitment to this struggle seeks to reverse the international statistics which show an increasing number of cases and of deaths from these cancers.

"Our ambition is to have a bright future for children, offering them a variety of services which makes it possible to diagnose cancer at an early stage", said Guebuza.

In Mozambique cervical cancer accounts for 31 per cent of all diagnosed cancers followed by breast cancer (10 per cent). The country has 112 health units offering basic screening and treatment for pre-cancerous lesions, and five reference units for dealing with more advanced cancers.

Guebuza reiterated the importance of the support given by the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunisation (GAVI) to Mozambique and the African continent, most recently in introducing the vaccine against HPV for adolescent girls.

She added that in May the Mozambique Health Ministry launched a pilot project of HPV vaccination in three districts, aimed at vaccinating 8,300 girls aged between 10 and 13. She hoped that in 2016 it would be possible to expand this programme to national level.

The seventh conference on cervical, breast and prostate cancer was held in Mozambique in July 2012, which adopted the "Maputo Declaration" on mobilising efforts to increase the levels of screening, prevention and treatment.

Three launch events were then held to promote universal access to prevention by 2020 - in New York in September 2013, in Seoul in May 2014, and now in London.

Triton discovers more graphite

The price of shares in the Australian company Triton Minerals increased by over sixty per cent on 4 June as the company released details of its latest geological observations on its Balama North Project, in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado.

The company revealed that it has once again found “very significant graphitic mineralisation over a considerable thickness at the Nicanda Hill prospect on the Balama North Project”.

Triton states that “these latest drill results continue to confirm the Company’s belief that the Balama North Project can potentially host a market leading and world class graphite deposit. It is anticipated that this drilling will provide the necessary data to estimate a Mineral Resource for this prospect by early 2015”.

The concession sits next to the Balama Graphite and Vanadium Project run by Syrah Resources. According to Syrah, Balama contains far more graphite than the known reserves in the rest of the world.

Syrah is at a more advanced stage of exploiting the resources than Triton. It has already entered into an agreement to supply the China Aluminum International Engineering Corporation (Chalieco) with between 80,000 and 100,000 tonnes of graphite per year. Another deal, with British company Asmet, will see it sell between 100,000 and 150,000 tonnes per year at a price of us\$1,000 per tonne. Furthermore, it is in discussion with a third major company and is due to announce the details later this month.

Syrah expects to be one of the world’s lowest cost producers and plans to recoup the mine’s hundred million dollar development costs in its first year of production, which could be in 2016.

If Triton does have the graphite deposits that the initial findings suggest, Mozambique will become the world’s major source for the mineral, given its low production costs and access to markets through the port of Pemba.

Graphite is a form of carbon highly valued due to its properties as a conductor of electricity. It is used in batteries and fuel cells and is the basis for the “miracle material” graphene, which is the strongest material ever measured, with vast potential for use in the electronics industries.

ADB Fast Track Fund supports projects in Mozambique

The Agriculture Fast Track Fund of the African Development Bank (ADB) has awarded grants of over US\$1.33 million to what are described as two “high value agriculture infrastructure projects” in Mozambique.

US\$797,500 will go to a sugar cane project, run by the non-for-profit organisation, EcoFarm, in Chemba district, in the central province of Sofala.

According to the ADB, “EcoFarm works with 1,150 farmers owning 50 per cent of the sugar cane estate and expects to create 1,000 jobs. The project seeks to add US\$1.2 million of disposable income to the area”.

The remaining US\$555,000 has been granted to an Integrated Poultry Production and Distribution project run by the Brazilian company Odebrecht, which is building the new international airport at Nacala in the northern province of Nampula.

Mozambique is one of six pilot countries benefitting from support from this fund. The others are Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

First coal exports from Nacala in December

Transport Minister Gabriel Muthisse on 4 June reiterated that the first exports of coal from the new port under construction at Nacala-a-Velha, in the northern province of Nampula, will take place in December.

Muthisse, speaking in the western city of Tete at a meeting of his Ministry’s Coordinating Council, said that the Nacala-a-Velha coal terminal will have the capacity to store 1.45 million tonnes of coal.

Nacala-a-Velha is opposite the existing port of Nacala on the other side of Nacala Bay. It will be connected to the Moatize coal basin by a 900 kilometre long railway running through southern Malawi, and financed by the Brazilian mining company Vale.

The government has signed a concession on the new port and coal traffic along the railway with the Integrated Nacala Logistics Corridor (CLN), a consortium that is 80 per cent owned by the Brazilian mining giant Vale, and 20 per cent by Mozambique’s publicly owned port and rail company, CFM.

According to CLN officials, the entire project will cost US\$4.4 billion. The coal terminal at Nacala-a-Velha will be able to export 18 million tonnes of coal a year. By 2015, the rail line should have the capacity to move 11 million tonnes of cargo a year, rising to 18 million tonnes in 2017.

France and Mozambique sign power station agreement

The Mozambican and French governments on 30 May in Maputo signed an agreement whereby France will provide US\$52 million to finance the participation of the Mozambican public electricity company (EDM) in the construction of a gas-fired power station at Ressano Garcia, on the border with South Africa.

The project, co-financed by EDM and South African petrochemical company Sasol, is budgeted at US\$270 million. It will draw on natural gas from Pande and Temane, in Inhambane province that will fire a new station at Ressano Garcia, producing 175 megawatts of electricity.

The agreement was signed by Finance Minister Manuel Chang and by the executive director for operations of the French Development Agency (ADF), Jean Marc Gravellini.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chang said the French funding will guarantee the participation of EDM in the capital of the new power station. The new station, he added, will make use of a local resource, the Inhambane gas, and will provide electricity at the lowest possible cost.

It would also reduce substantially the energy dependence of southern Mozambique on South Africa. Currently, power from the Cahora Bassa dam on the Zambezi for Maputo and the rest of southern Africa must pass through South Africa. Furthermore, at peak times EDM is obliged to import power generated in South Africa.

“This will allow EDM to develop experiences in structuring public/private partnerships, which will be precious for the perspective of future investments in electricity generation and transmission”, Chang said.

There is already one gas fired power station at Ressano Garcia, operated by the company Aggreko, which can generate 232 megawatts.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service – for details contact pfauvet@live.com

Maputo Ring Road two thirds complete

Almost two thirds of the Maputo Ring Road (excluding the new bridges) is now complete, according to Paulo Fumane, chairperson of Maputo-Sul, the state company in charge of the construction.

On 1 June, the final day of President Armando Guebuza's "open and inclusive presidency" in Maputo city, Fumane told the President that "between 60 and 65 per cent" of the ring road has been finished. However, that figure excludes bridges – if they are included, the percentage falls to 45 per cent.

President Guebuza was visiting the roadworks and received a briefing on progress. The ring road is intended to relieve congestion in Maputo.

The Ring Road will be 74 kilometres long and is budgeted at US\$315 million. The contractor is the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC). Parts of the road are already open to traffic.

Fumane said most of the road will be complete by December. However, work on the bridges will not be concluded until April 2015, four months behind schedule.

President Guebuza visited three of the six sections of the Ring Road, stopping at key points to hear detailed explanations from Fumane.

Maputo-Sul is also in charge of building the bridge over Maputo Bay, linking the centre of the city to KaTembe, and the reconstruction of the roads from KaTembe southwards, to Ponta de Ouro on the border with South Africa.

President Guebuza also visited the hotel and tourism training pilot project, installed in the Maputo Commercial Institute. This project forms part of the Integrated Professional Reform Training Programme (PIREP). The director of the Institute, Gina Mangane, said that his year the project will train 152 pupils in the hotel and tourism industry.

Alleged kidnapper arrested

The Mozambican police have arrested a 30 year old man, named as Gabriel Baptista, in connection with the kidnapping of a Maputo business woman in October.

The victim, one of the owners of an ice-making business in the Maputo neighbourhood of Malanga, was abducted in broad daylight outside the establishment. She was held in a house in Matola, but was able to escape by scaling a wall.

The police raided the house, but by the time they arrived the kidnappers had fled, leaving behind two AK-47 assault rifles. The police detained two young men and a woman at the house who all denied any connection with the kidnapping.

Baptista was arrested in the Alto-Mae neighbourhood and police say he has confessed to taking part in the kidnapping.

Police spokesperson Emidio Mabunda said "in the talk we had with the detainee, he ended up confessing his involvement in the abduction. In its investigations, the police coordinates with the local communities and with intelligence in order to neutralise the kidnappers".

Prices fall in May

The National Statistics Institute (INE) announced on 6 June that the rate of inflation in Mozambique in May, as measured by the consumer price indices for the three largest cities (Maputo, Nampula and Beira), was negative, at minus 0.38 per cent.

May was the first month of the year in which prices fell. In April prices had risen by 0.12 per cent and in March by 0.91 per cent. The accumulated inflation in the first five months of the year was 2.02 per cent, down from the January-April figure of 2.42 per cent.

Foodstuffs accounted for almost all the decline in prices in May. The most significant price falls were for unmilled maize (20.8 per cent), cabbage (8.8 per cent), tomatoes (7.5 per cent) and coconuts (4.4 per cent).

The price of charcoal, still a significant fuel in Mozambican cities, fell by 0.8 per cent. There was a very slight fall, of 0.04 per cent in the transport division of the consumer price index.

There were differences between the three cities. The sharpest deflation was in Maputo where prices in May fell by 0.62 per cent. In Beira and Nampula, prices fell by 0.20 and 0.09 per cent respectively.

Taking the entire January to May period, Maputo experienced inflation of 3.38 per cent, while in the other two cities it was less than one per cent (Beira 0.76 per cent, and Nampula 0.68 per cent).

Rising sea level in Maputo Bay

The rising sea level is a harsh reality in the Bay of Maputo, with coastal erosion eating away at the Xefina archipelago, reports the daily newspaper "O Pais".

The archipelago consists of three islands; Xefina Grande, Xefina Pequena and Xefina do Meio. The largest, Xefina Grande, is just five kilometres from Maputo's Costa do Sol beach.

In 1942 the Portuguese colonial regime installed artillery on Xefina Grande to defend the coast against possible attack. Those cannons were 600 metres from the shoreline. Today, the five cannons have practically been swallowed up by the sea.

According to a fisherman named Paulo Mangaze, who accompanied the "O Pais" reporters, up until 2000 Xefina do Meio was joined to Xefina Grande. In the floods of 2000, the island was split in two.

Mangaze refused to take his boat right up to the sinking cannons, because there were once houses here that are now under water and could pose a threat to boats.

Xefina was once used as a prison. Mozambican nationalists and railway workers arrested after a 1926 strike were incarcerated here. About 30 people still live on Xefina Grande – even though the island has no school, no shops and so source of fresh water.

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