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President Guebuza urges churches to pray for peaceful campaign

President Armando Guebuza on 28 September urged the country's churches to pray that conflicts between supporters of rival political parties do not occur again during the fortnight left of the election campaign prior to the presidential and parliamentary elections of 15 October.

President Guebuza was speaking in Maputo during the consecration of Carlos Matsinhe as the new bishop of the Anglican diocese of the Libombos. Matsinhe is the successor to the recently retired bishop, Dinis Sengulane, a man who has been prominent in efforts to secure peace in Mozambique.

"We invite the Anglican church and other churches to pray for the elections to be a moment of festivity and coexistence between brothers", said President Guebuza.

Rather than violence, political parties should rely on the power of oratory to win support, he added. "Nothing justifies insults and the destruction of property".

President Guebuza recalled that the Anglican Church had played a role in the liberation of the country from colonial rule and in the dialogue between the government and opposition party Renamo which culminated on 5 September in the signing of a declaration on the cessation of military hostilities. Sengulane remains one of the national observers to the dialogue.

Serious clashes occurred in the election campaign when supporters of the ruling Frelimo Party clashed with the motorcade of Daviz Simango, the leader and presidential candidate of the opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) in the southern province of Gaza on 23 and 24 September. MDM supporters attempted to retaliate in the northern city of Nampula on 25 September.

The chairperson of the National Elections Commission (CNE), Abdul Carimo, described the clashes as "disgraceful", and urged political leaders to rein in their supporters and end the violence.

Frelimo campaigner kidnapped in Gorongosa

Police have arrested three people in Gorongosa district, in the central province of Sofala, accused of beating and kidnapping a supporter of the ruling Frelimo Party who had been urging people in the area to vote for Frelimo and its presidential candidate, Filipe Nyusi.

According to the spokesperson for the Sofala provincial police command, Daniel Macuacua, cited in the newssheet "CanalMoz" on 30 September, the incident took place in the village of Muziwaguengere, where the Frelimo member, named only as Mouzinho, had been campaigning.

Three people, whose names and party affiliation were not revealed, seized Mouzinho, and took him prisoner. They held him in an otherwise empty house for four days.

When the owner of the house returned, he found Mouzinho tied up inside the house and called the police. The police released Mouzinho, and found that he bore signs of ill-treatment in addition to the four days of captivity.

"Three individuals, by means of physical force, grabbed a citizen on the public highway, and took him to the house, saying that he could not campaign for Frelimo", said Macuacua.

Asked which party the kidnappers were from, he said this information had not yet been discovered. The three kidnappers have been detained, and case files opened on them.

Macuacua said the files have been sent to the district attorney's office in Gorongosa town, where the case will follow the normal legal procedures, possibly culminating in a trial of Mouzinho's three assailants.

Filipe Nyusi pledges to continue work of previous leaders

Filipe Nyusi, the presidential candidate of the ruling Frelimo Party, on 29 September declared that the voters should choose him because he is committed to continuing the project begun 52 years ago, when Frelimo was formed as a liberation front to struggle for the country's independence.

Speaking at a rally in Macate district, in the central province of Manica, Nyusi declared that he was chosen as the candidate by founders of the Mozambican nation, such as the current president, Armando Guebuza, and his predecessor, Joaquim Chissano. Nyusi was referring to the meeting of the Frelimo Central Committee in late February and early March, which elected him from five candidates for the post.

Nyusi added that it is thanks to Frelimo that Macate is now a district. It is one of 13 new districts that were created in 2013. Previously Macate had been part of Gondola district.

He urged his audience not to be swayed by the "envy" of those who spread malice and hatred towards Mozambicans who fought against colonial rule, and who allege that nothing was done to develop Mozambique in the almost 40 years of independence under successive Frelimo governments.

He retorted that at the time of independence in 1975 the only secondary schools in the country were in Maputo and Beira, and there was just one university, in Maputo. Four decades later, there are many dozens of secondary schools across the country, and 48 institutions of higher education.

Likewise most of the hospitals in the country, and most of the tarred roads exist because of the work of Frelimo governments. Those who deny this are trying to turn Mozambicans against their own development, he said.

"Here in Macate, under colonialism there were no schools, not even primary schools, much less secondary ones", Nyusi continued. "Now Macate has schools, and it will not be long before we in Frelimo set up an institution of higher education here. Here there was no hospital, but there is one now".

"If you elect me and elect Frelimo on 15 October, we will continue the development of this district", he pledged.

Nyusi repeated promises from earlier rallies to promote the industrialisation of Manica, so that its crops and natural resources are processed before being exported, and are thus worth more on the international market.

Industrialisation would also create more jobs for the youths of Manica and bring in more revenue to the treasury.

"You have to continue placing your trust in Frelimo and its candidate", said Nyusi, "since they are the guarantee of the country's development. Frelimo is a party with vision. It doesn't hate anybody and it is committed to working for the development of Mozambique".

Afonso Dhlakama campaigns in Zambezia

Afonso Dhlakama, the presidential candidate of the country's largest opposition party, Renamo, on 29 September promised that, if elected, he will create industry in Milange in the central province of Zambezia.

During an election rally, he said that, although Milange is the most populous district in the province, it still does not have enough hospitals or schools, and lacks any processing plants. Farmers in Milange, he claimed, can only sell their surplus crops over the border in Malawi at a low price.

Dhlakama promised that, if he becomes the next president, he will mobilise national and foreign private investment, to set up grain processing industries in Milange

which would encourage greater agricultural production since farmers would have a guaranteed market for their crops.

Dhlakama is expected to wind up his campaign in Zambezia with a rally in the provincial capital, Quelimane. According to the Renamo provincial delegate, Latifo Ismael, the rally will just rubber-stamp Dhlakama's victory in Zambezia - although both the other presidential candidates, Filipe Nyusi of the ruling Frelimo Party, and Daviz Simango of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) also believe that they will win in Zambezia.

Daviz Simango has been campaigning in the northernmost province of Niassa where he promised that, if elected, he will pay greater attention to the equitable distribution of the country's wealth.

Simango will conclude his Niassa campaign in the districts of Mecanhelas and Mandimba and then move to the neighbouring province of Cabo Delgado.

Development arouses interest of criminal organisations

The governor of the central province of Manica, Ana Comuane, warned on 25 September that the current high levels of economic growth was bringing the country to the notice of international criminal organisations - hence the pertinence of modernising the armed forces (FADM) and endowing them with more sophisticated equipment.

Comuane was speaking in the provincial capital, Chimoio, during the celebrations of Armed Forces Day, which was also the 50th anniversary of the launch of the armed struggle for Mozambique's independence.

Comuane declared that the recent modernisation of the FADM, including the acquisition of modern weaponry in order to defend the country's natural resources constituted unequivocal proof of the concern of President Armando Guebuza to build and place at the service of the country an ever more robust defence force.

This concern, she said, arose "in the context of noteworthy economic growth. The current levels of development and the prospects for further rapid growth in the next few years are exposing our country to the greed of some criminal organisations. This imposes the need for defence at land air or sea, throughout our territory".

She praised the FADM, not only for its role in the military defence of the country, but also for its assistance in rescue missions during natural disasters such as the floods which cyclically strike the country.

The commander of the Chimoio Independent Infantry Battalion, Agostinho Matusse, said that the defence of the country cannot be an improvised affair, but must be planned - which was why the FADM had mid-level and higher education institutions (such as the Samora Machel Military Academy in Nampula) "which train our cadres, endowing them with scientific knowledge and military techniques, in order to respond to the changing dynamics of the world".

"We want to express our readiness to continue guaranteeing peace, tranquillity and the defence of the country, for the well-being of society", said Matusse.

As usual in such events, the main opposition party, Renamo, boycotted the celebrations, but the second opposition force, the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) was present.

Asked to explain the boycott, the head of the Renamo central brigade in Manica, and a member of the Renamo Political Commission, Alfredo Magumisse, said it was because the ruling Frelimo Party "is unable to separate republican acts from political party acts".

Foreign Minister speaks at climate change summit

Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloï on 23 September called for joint efforts by the international community to adapt to climate change “so that the most vulnerable communities are able to cope with the impacts they are already facing”.

“At the same time we must also mitigate our emissions so as to reduce future adaptation costs”, Baloï warned.

Speaking at the United Nations summit on climate change, held in New York, on the eve of the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly, he urged the industrialised countries “to show leadership both in assisting developing countries build their climate resilience and on mitigation by increasing ambition in their emission reduction targets”.

The future climate regime to be adopted in 2015, he added, should reflect “the historical responsibilities” of the developed countries and represent “a fair and appropriate contribution to the global effort to tackle climate change”.

Baloï pointed out “despite the insignificant contributions that Mozambique has made to global greenhouse gas emissions, the country is one of the most vulnerable in the world to the impacts of climate change, being affected by extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, tropical cyclones, storm surges, changes in temperature and precipitation patterns and other phenomena such as sea level rise, saltwater intrusion and increased forest wildfires”.

“The occurrence of these events”, Baloï continued, “has caused the loss of thousands of human lives and significant destruction of public and private property, as well as social infrastructure. These losses have negatively impacted the growth of the country’s GDP and the achievement of the Government’s national objectives for poverty reduction and wealth creation”.

The government had responded by adopting, in November 2012, a National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy. This strategy, Baloï said, “aims at increasing resilience and reducing climate risk, both at the community and national level, while promoting low-carbon development and green economy through their integration in sector and local planning processes”.

The strategy also “identifies the potential for mitigation and low-carbon development in key areas, those which provide an opportunity to promote sustainable development”.

Baloï said these areas include energy “where our goal is to improve access to renewable energy, increase energy efficiency, and promote low-carbon urbanization”.

In agriculture and forestry, government action “targets low-carbon agricultural practices, reduction of deforestation and wildfires, and improved management of biodiversity and coastal ecosystems”.

The mitigation and adaptation actions in the strategy “will require significant technological and financial support, but it will also require from Mozambique a tremendous effort in strengthening institutional and technical capacities to effectively address this common challenge. And this we are committed to and prepared to do”, Baloï pledged.

The New York summit saw a significant shift in that, for the first time, China pledged to take strong action on climate change. China’s Deputy Prime Minister Zhang Gagli told the summit that China intends to make deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

President Barack Obama warned climate change was advancing faster than attempts to deal with it. He declared that the US and China have a responsibility to lead other nations. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hosted the summit, in an attempt to reach a comprehensive new climate agreement at discussions scheduled for Paris next year.

Memorandum signed for two new hospitals

Two new hospitals, costing €23 million (US\$29.5 million) will be built in the central province of Sofala by 2015, under an agreement signed in Maputo on 23 September by the Mozambican, Dutch and French governments.

The agreement envisages the construction of a new general hospital in the provincial capital, Beira, and a rural hospital in Marromeu district, on the south bank of the Zambezi. Work on building both hospitals will begin in 2015, and should be concluded by 2017.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by Health Minister Alexandre Manguêle, Dutch ambassador Frederique de Man, and the director of the French Development Agency (AFD), Virginie Dago.

The Beira General Hospital, intended to take the pressure off Beira Central Hospital, will cost €12 million, provided as a soft loan from the AFD. The new hospital will have capacity for 240 beds.

The Marromeu district hospital, with 140 beds, will be financed with a Dutch grant of €11 million.

Speaking immediately after signing the memorandum, Manguêle said the two new hospitals are crucial and will play a fundamental and strategic role in improving health services. He added that the government has guaranteed the allocation of skilled staff, including specialist doctors, nurses and laboratory and X-ray technicians.

De Man stressed that “after the end of this phase, the embassy will always be available to support, in a continuous and innovative way, the use of hospital equipment”, she said.

Dago added she was convinced that the new health units “can have an important impact on the access of the public to health services. We are working with the Ministry of Health to define the best way of implementing hospital construction, responding to the needs of the population”.

Kidnappers sentenced in Beira

The Sofala Provincial Court, sitting in the central city of Beira, on 23 September sentenced three people to between 16 and 20 years imprisonment for their part in the attempted kidnapping of the son of a local businessman a year ago.

The abortive kidnapping happened in September 2013 at the Cinderella private school in Beira, where the gang tried to seize the son of Mohammed Akhbar (better known as “Papu”). The kidnapping was foiled because a school worker intervened to defend the boy.

The gang was then involved in a car chase with the police and three of them were arrested when their car overturned.

The court sentenced Muidi Tharakral and Mohammed Richar, both of Indian nationality, to 20 years. They were regarded as the leaders of the gang. Papu’s driver, a Mozambican named Manuel Jose Baer, accused of facilitating the attempted kidnapping, was sentenced to 16 years.

The two Indians will be expelled from the country after they have served their prison term. They must also pay the child’s family compensation of US\$2 million, converted into meticaïs at the exchange rate of the day. The child himself is to receive five million meticaïs (about US163,000) in compensation for the psychological damage caused.

Two other co-defendants, Jamaludheneen Paleyadil and Joao Francisco, were acquitted.

In a separate case, Muidu was found guilty of burning down a shop in the Beira neighbourhood of Chaimite, and was sentenced to pay compensation of 600,000 meticaïs to the owner.

ADB approves grant for governance and growth

The board of directors of the African Development Bank (ADB) has approved a US\$29.36 million budget support grant to finance the first phase of the Economic Governance and Inclusive Growth Programme (EGIGP) in Mozambique.

According to the Bank, the grant is the first of three general budget support operations for 2014, 2015 and 2016. In total, these are budgeted at US\$59.73 million.

The programme aims to promote inclusive and sustainable growth by improving transparency and accountability in public finance, developing the management of natural resources and enhancing the environment for the private sector.

The Bank stresses that the grant is in support of the Mozambican government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PARP) and long term private sector development strategies.

It states that "EGIGP underscores the fact that Mozambique needs to translate the high economic growth rates experienced in the past two decades into inclusive and sustainable dividends".

Among the government bodies that will receive direct financial support are the Administrative Tribunal, which is the highest audit body in Mozambique, and the General Inspectorate of Finance.

Joint Operating Centre for Maputo Corridor launched

A consortium of four transport operators from Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa on 22 September launched a Joint Operating Centre (JOC) for the Maputo Corridor.

The Centre has been set up to provide a seamless flow of cargo services. It will enhance the operational efficiency of the companies involved in the corridor: Mozambique's publicly owned port and rail company, CFM; South Africa's Transnet; Swaziland Railways; and the Maputo Port Development Corporation (MPDC).

The JOC will focus on the integration of planning and operations, and managing all cross border operations.

Even before its official launch, the JOC has been reducing delays. According to Transnet, it has been responsible for a 24 per cent reduction in the time it takes freight to cross the Komatipoort border from South Africa into Mozambique. Transnet also states that the JOC has reduced dwell time at Maputo Port by 57 per cent.

Rail exports through Maputo Port have grown rapidly over the last year, from 2.6 million tonnes per annum (mpta) to 4.5 mpta. The number of freight trains carrying iron oxide to the port has increased from ten per week to 18.

In September last year it was revealed that seventy per cent of cargo passing through the port was transported by road due to the limitations of Mozambique's rail network. It is the aim of the JOC to use the current railway resources as efficiently as possible and to integrate investment plans.

ENH signs memorandum on subsea technologies

Mozambique's National Hydrocarbon Company (ENH) signed three memorandums of understanding in Maputo on 18 September with the French engineering and construction company Technip, aimed at the transfer of technology and the training of technical staff.

The first memorandum, signed by ENH Chairperson Nelson Ocuane and the chairperson and director of subsea operations of Technip, Hallvard Hasselknippe, seeks to establish cooperation in the area of subsea technologies for the training of Mozambican engineers and students.

The second memorandum was signed jointly with the director of the Engineering Faculty at Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University, Alberto Tsamba. It seeks to benefit Mozambican students in the areas of subsea technology and the development of natural gas projects.

The third agreement was signed by Hasselknippe and the managing director of ENH-Logistics (ENHL), Eduardo Naiene. It will establish cooperation between ENHL and Technip in the creation of an Engineering Centre in Mozambique.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Ocuane said that the development of liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in Palma, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, will create around 700,000 jobs by 2035.

"One of the fundamental requirements for guaranteeing a greater participation by Mozambicans in these opportunities is to ensure that they have the necessary technical skills", he continued. "Hence we stress the importance of training human capital as a fundamental instrument for guaranteeing the inclusive development of the hydrocarbon industry".

Alberto Tsamba said that the Engineering Faculty was enthusiastic about the memorandum, "and we are renewing our hopes that Mozambicans will participate with their labour, knowledge and intelligence in exploiting and transforming the country's natural resources, thus contributing as irreplaceable actors in the development of Mozambique".

For his part, Hasselknippe said that the question of local content had always been a matter of strategic importance for Technip.

"We are prepared to establish a long term partnership developing local content in Mozambique. We are committed to developing skills and knowledge and transferring technologies locally", he said.

Technip is a Paris-based company which is active in 48 countries and operates a fleet of ships specialised in the installation of pipelines and other subsea constructions.

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

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