

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## Renamo announces two-month ceasefire

Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the opposition party Renamo, on 3 January announced a two-month extension of the truce in Renamo's insurrection that he had initially declared on 27 December. President Filipe Nyusi raised the possibility of an extension of the truce but left it up to Dhlakama to provide details. At a Maputo press conference on 2 January, President Nyusi said he had spoken by telephone with Dhlakama, who is still in a Renamo military base in the Gorongosa. Dhlakama, he added, had taken "a calm and promising stance for the interruption of hostilities".

President Nyusi said the first week of the truce had been positive, with "a climate of tranquillity". On the first day "there was vigilance in the movement of vehicles to guarantee that it was safe", he added, "which shows that we should return trust to Mozambicans through dialogue".

President Nyusi stressed that Mozambicans want a lasting peace, without ultimatums from either side. No clashes were reported in the first week of the truce. No vehicles or trains were attacked, and it seems that the Renamo gunmen were indeed confined to their bases, as Dhlakama had promised.

In a press conference held by telephone, Dhlakama announced the 60-day extension of the truce. He added that reaching an understanding with President Nyusi was an attempt to prepare the path so that the political dialogue underway between the government and Renamo will produce fruitful results.

"When I announced the seven-day truce last week, I did not rule out the possibility of extending the period, if things went as desired", said Dhlakama. He claimed there had been "small incidents", supposedly caused by government forces, particularly in the Gorongosa area.

The 60-day extension will expire on 4 March. Dhlakama hoped that the truce will cut the number of deaths caused by military hostilities.

"From the bottom of my heart, I guarantee that Renamo fighters will not attack the positions of the defence and security forces", he said, adding that in their phone conversation President Nyusi had also promised that the government forces will refrain from attacks. He claimed that this promise of a halt to hostilities also extends to the attacks and kidnappings of Renamo members.

Dhlakama believed that the truce will allow Mozambicans to travel freely throughout the country – particularly along those stretches of road where transport has only been possible in convoys under armed escort.

There are three of these stretches, two of them along parts of the main north-south highway (EN1), as it runs through the central province of Sofala – from the Save river to the small town of Muxungue, and from Nhamapadza to Caia, on the south bank of the Zambezi.

The third is the road from Vanduzi in Manica province to Changara district in Tete. This is part of the main road from the port of Beira to such landlocked countries as Malawi and Zambia.

By the time the truce expires, the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, will have started its first sitting of 2017. Dhlakama wants the Assembly to pass a package of measures that will allow Renamo to govern the six northern and central provinces where it claims to have won the 2014 general elections.

The Joint Commission formed between Renamo and the government had been discussing a package of legislation on decentralization, but by December, there was no consensus. The international team of mediators facilitating the talks returned to their home countries. Their coordinator, European Union representative Mario Raffaelli, said they would return if they received an express invitation from the Joint Commission.

Dhlakama revived an idea put forward in early December – namely that a small working group should be formed to draft decentralization proposals. He said that the government would appoint two members, Renamo two, and a fifth would be an expert on constitutional law acceptable to both sides.

### Police seize ivory in Nampula

Police in the northern province of Nampula have announced the arrest of five Mozambican citizens in illicit possession of four elephant tusks. According to Zacarias Nacute, the spokesperson for the Nampula Provincial Police Command, the five were arrested on 4 January in the district of Lalaua.

He said the four were caught during a police patrol when policemen became suspicious of a very large suitcase the five men were carrying. When the suspects opened the suitcase, the police found the four tusks inside. The five did not possess any documentation allowing them to transport ivory, and so the police are certain that the tusks are the product of poaching.

Nacute added that the police do not yet know where the tusks came from, or where the men intended to take them.

## Maputo water restrictions begin

The Maputo Regional Water Company (AdeM) on 10 January began a programme of severe restrictions in supplying water to Maputo and Matola cities and to the district of Boane.

Each zone supplied by AdeM will receive water one day and not the next for at the least the next fortnight. This will continue for as long as the level of water in the Umbeluzi River remains critically low.

The Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area depends for its water on the Umbeluzi pumping and treatment station, and the flow of the Umbeluzi is controlled by the Pequenos Libombos dam. But the reservoir was only 14 per cent full, and more water was leaving the reservoir than entering it.

In December the government banned the use of Umbeluzi water for irrigating the banana plantations and other commercial agricultural companies downstream from the dam. The situation could worsen, depending on if there is significant rainfall in the Umbeluzi basin.

Cited by the television station STV, the director of production at AdeM, Gildo Timoteo, noted that the forecast for the 2016-17 rainy season was for normal to above normal rainfall in the months of October to December 2016. But this did not happen in the Umbeluzi basin.

“We don’t know what will happen in the coming days”, said Timoteo, “but the forecast now is that there will not be much rain up until March (regarded as the end of the rainy season), and so it will not be possible to recover our normal water storage capacity at the Pequenos Libombos”.

If the current situation continues, he warned, “we shall have to consider new forms of management, and even think of going two days without water”. That is, each part of the AdeM area would receive water on one day, but not for the next two days.

Timoteo admitted that, with the growth of Maputo, AdeM has not been able to keep up with the demand. New sources of water are needed in addition to the Umbeluzi.

He said AdeM is looking into the possibility of extracting ground water from high ground in the city, such as the Maxaquene and Desportivo slopes, and the area where the bridge over the Bay of Maputo is currently being built. This ground water is being analysed to check whether it is fit for human consumption, Timoteo said – if not (for example, if it is too brackish), it might still be used in other activities.

## Over 700 hectares of crops inundated in Gaza

More than 700 hectares of crops have been inundated in the southern province of Gaza due to heavy rains upstream in the Limpopo river basin.

Visiting the flooded area on 6 January, the Gaza provincial governor, Stela da Graca Pinto, said that at least 190 hectares has been saved through the use of pumps to evacuate the flood waters.

She believed that the overall impact of the rains was highly positive, since they had broken the drought that struck the Limpopo Valley in 2016. “These rains have brought hope”, she said, stressing that the province will be able to meet and perhaps surpass the target laid down for agricultural production this year.

She admitted that the flood wave travelling down the Limpopo “has brought some problems. But we must not allow ourselves to be shaken. We shall continue to work together to overcome the difficulties”.

She urged Gaza farmers not to be disheartened, and to continue working to increase their production.

## Annual inflation over 25 per cent

Inflation in Mozambique in December, based on the consumer price indices of the three largest cities (Maputo, Nampula, and Beira), was 3.47 per cent, according to the latest data published by the National Statistics Institute (INE).

This pushed the final inflation figure for 2016 up to 25.27 per cent. While this is the highest annual inflation rate for well over a decade, it is lower than had been feared a few months ago. In October the governor of the Bank of Mozambique, Rogerio Zandamela, had warned that by the end of the year inflation could reach more than 30 per cent. However, harsh monetary policies imposed by the central bank, notably a dramatic increase in the benchmark interest rates, appear to have led to a recovery of the national currency, the metical, and to lower inflation than expected.

As usual, food and drink were responsible for most of the December price increases. Key increases were in the prices of tomatoes (47.7 per cent), coconuts (22.6 per cent), groundnuts (10.2 per cent), fresh or frozen fish (4.9 per cent), maize flour (3.6 per cent), and butter beans (5.5 per cent).

This year prices increased every month, except May, when these was a slight price fall (minus 0.22 per cent). This is unlike the regular pattern of previous years, when prices rose for the first three or four months of the year, then fell in the middle of the year, as the harvest came in, and then rose again at the end of the year and the festive season.

## Cross-border movement fell sharply this festive season

The number of people entering and leaving Mozambique during the 2016-17 festive season fell sharply in comparison with the two previous years.

The authorities had launched “Operation Salama” on 14 December to ensure a peaceful environment over the holiday period. This operation came to an end on 9 January, and in the closing ceremony held in Boane the General Director of Mozambican Customs, Aly Mala, said that about 400,000 people, and 116,000 vehicles had crossed the country’s borders during this period.

This is less than half the 900,000 people whom the immigration authorities had expected to cross the borders.

Over the same period in the 2015-16 festive season, 690,000 people entered or left the country, and the previous years the figure was about 700,000. The decline between 2015-1 and 2016-17 was 42 per cent.

Mala blamed this sharp reduction on the international financial situation, and on the insurrection by the opposition party Renamo.

As for public order during the festive period, the commander of public order and security in the police force, Xavier Tocoli, told the ceremony this had been the calmest Christmas and New Year period for several years, and there had been no significant disturbances.

## Deputy Interior Minister dismissed

President Filipe Nyusi on 4 January relieved the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Jose dos Santos Coimbra, of his duties.

As is normal with presidential dispatches, no reason was given for this decision. So far no replacement deputy interior minister has been appointed, nor has Coimbra been given any other position.

### Dedicated electricity line for new hospital

Mozambique's publicly-owned electricity company, EDM, has announced that it will build an independent, medium voltage transmission line exclusively to provide power for the country's newest health unit, the Quelimane Central Hospital, in Zambezia province.

The new line will be five kilometres long and will cost over 28 million meticaís (about US\$400,000). The director of EDM's Quelimane distribution area, Maria Quipico, said the money is available, and EDM is beginning to mobilize the materials necessary to build the line.

Currently, the hospital draws electricity from a 100-kilometre long transmission line, which also supplies power to nearby beach resorts such as Zalala, and the small town of Macuse. "Any disturbance along this line affects the hospital", said Quipico.

President Filipe Nyusi inaugurated Quelimane Central Hospital on 26 October. It is the largest hospital built in Mozambique since independence in 1975, and is the fourth health unit to enjoy the status of "central hospital" (the others are in Maputo, Beira, and Nampula).

The hospital has state-of-the-art equipment, but much of this depends on a reliable source of electricity. The hospital director, Ladino Suade, warned, shortly after the hospital was inaugurated, that the power currently supplied is not of good enough quality to feed the equipment installed there.

But this problem should be solved within a few months. Quipico expects all the material required for building a dedicated transmission line to the hospital to arrive in January, and she believed the line will be functioning by the end of June.

### Deputy Governor of Central Bank sworn in

President Filipe Nyusi on 3 January urged the new Deputy Governor of the Bank of Mozambique, Victor Pedro Gomes, to make every effort to help stabilize the country's economy.

At the same ceremony, President Nyusi swore into office four deputy vice-chancellors for the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) and for the Lurio University (Unilurio), based in Nampula. The two deputy vice-chancellors for the UEM are Armindo Daniel Tiago and Amália Alexandre, while those for Unilurio are Sonia Maria Ataíde Maciel and Marcelino Liphola.

### Tax Authority surpassed 2016 target

The Mozambican Tax Authority (AT) announced on 30 December that in 2016 it collected 173 billion meticaís (about US\$2.46 billion, at current exchange rates) in tax revenue. This is a 4.8 per cent increase on the tax collection target for 2016 of 165 billion meticaís.

Addressing a Maputo press conference, AT Chairperson Amelia Nakhare declared "We can state: Mission Accomplished! 2016 was not an easy year in terms of tax collection activities, because of our economic structure and the shocks deriving from the external and internal macroeconomic conjuncture, which significantly affected collection capacity".

The AT statistics show that southern Mozambique, notably Maputo City, contributed more than 60 per cent of overall revenue. Nakhare explained that this is because of the role of the customs services at Maputo Port, far and away the largest of Mozambique's ports, and because of the high concentration of major taxpayers in the capital.

Nakhare stressed that what is most important in tax

collection is not the amount of money raised, but efficiency.

"We measured the efficiency rate, and we found that currently, the highest efficiency rate is not in Maputo City", she said. "We have the greatest efficiency in Gaza and Inhambane provinces, even though they have less ambitious targets".

"Collecting more does not mean being more efficient", she added. "Being efficient means, above all, being closer to the taxpayer, and having the capacity, together with the taxpayer, for better fiscal planning".

The northern provinces were the least efficient area in tax collection, Nakhare said, though she recognized that, as from October, the port of Nacala has become more efficient in collecting revenue.

As for the prospects for 2017, Nakhare said the AT intended to increase its capacity to monitor the country's borders, to reduce smuggling and thus increase revenue. This would mean increasing the size of the AT's fleet of vehicles, and training people currently classified as "auxiliary" tax officers to work on border inspections.

### Vilanculos murder: three more charged

The Attorney-General's Office (PGR) has announced that it is charging a further three people in connection with the murder, on 11 April, of prominent Maputo prosecutor, Marcelino Vilanculos.

A statement from the PGR on 29 December gave very few details. It said that two of the new suspects, both men, are still at large, while the third, a woman, is under arrest. Her detention was formalized on 16 December. The statement does not name any of the three, or explain their roles in the assassination, beyond stating that the three are accused of "moral and material" responsibility for the murder.

The first three suspects were detained earlier in the year, but one of them, Abdul Tembe, who allegedly drove the car used in the assassination, escaped from the Maputo top security prison on 24 October.

Subsequently, nine prison staff, including the prison director, Castigo Machaieie, were detained on suspicion of colluding in the escape.

The investigations into Tembe, and the two people who were arrested with him, Amade Antonio and Jose Countinho, have been completed, and the prosecution is waiting for the Maputo Provincial Court to set a trial date.

A separate case file has been opened for the three new suspects.

Vilanculo, a man with a reputation for great integrity, was murdered outside his home in the southern city of Matola. The motive for the crime is not yet publicly known, but he was the lead prosecutor in several sensitive cases, including some of the kidnappings of businessmen that have plagued Mozambican cities since late 2011.

He was known to be investigating Danish Satar, accused of being one of those behind the kidnappings, who was deported from Italy to Maputo by Interpol in December 2015. Danish Satar is the nephew of one of the country's most notorious murderers, Momad Assife Abdul Satar ("Nini"), one of the men found guilty of ordering the November 2000 assassination of the country's top investigative journalist, Carlos Cardoso.

Danish Satar was released from preventive detention on 6 June, but three days later he too was kidnapped in the Maputo neighbourhood of Sommerschild. He has not been heard of since, and police suspect that this was not a genuine kidnapping at all, but merely a way of spicing Satar out of the country.

## Police kill four suspected kidnappers

The Mozambican police on 28 December killed four suspected kidnappers in a shoot-out in central Maputo, according to the spokesperson for the Maputo City Police command, Orlando Mudumane.

The drama began with the attempted kidnap of two businessmen on Avenida do Trabalho. The kidnapping failed because police were already in the vicinity, and gave chase to the gang. Mudumane said there were seven would-be kidnappers, using two cars. The pursuit ended in Rua dos Desportistas near the Maputo waterfront.

Here the police fired upon one of the vehicles and all four occupants were killed. The police estimated that the dead men were between 22 and 35 years of age. In the car, the police found two AK-47 assault rifles and two pistols.

The other three gang members, in the second vehicle, fled and their current whereabouts are unknown.

Mudumane said the police were able to foil the kidnap plan, because they had been following the suspects for several days. He described two of those killed as "dangerous criminals" who had taken part in robberies in the central provinces of Sofala and Tete.

## Switch to low sulphur diesel in June

The Mozambican government on 29 December confirmed that everything is in place for the switch to low sulphur diesel as from next June.

Currently, the sulphur content of the diesel Mozambique imports is 500 parts per million (ppm). This is to be replaced by diesel with only 50 ppm of sulphur.

Moises Paulino, the national director of hydrocarbons and fuel in the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, said the purpose of the change was to reduce pollution and improve environmental conditions.

The advantage of switching to low sulphur diesel, he added, would be felt not only in terms of a cleaner environment but also in greater efficiency of vehicle engines.

Engine performance improves because 50 ppm diesel has cleaner and more effective combustion properties than 500 ppm diesel. Also, the low sulphur diesel causes less wear and tear and therefore prolongs engine life.

The switch to low sulphur diesel is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Eventually, there will be a further shift, to diesel with a sulphur content of only 10 ppm.

## WWF to assist with conservation efforts

The Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) on 20 December in Maputo signed a memorandum on biodiversity conservation.

The agreement was signed by the permanent secretary of the Ministry, Narci Premegi, and by Anabela Rodrigues, the Mozambique director of WWF.

According to Premegi, the agreement seeks to strengthen

the conservation of biodiversity and of the marine ecosystems in the Mozambique Channel, including the sustainable exploitation of marine resources.

There has been great concern at fishermen using such inappropriate gear as mosquito nets, which catch marine organisms indiscriminately, including juvenile fish and larval crustaceans, threatening a collapse in the fisheries concerned.

Rodrigues said that WWF regards conservation as a fundamental activity for ensuring sustainable development. It will ensure the reproduction of fishery resources by establishing marine sanctuaries where fishing is not permitted, and will also focus on the conservation of turtles, sea birds, sharks and corals.

She was optimistic about preserving Mozambique's mangrove forests, particularly in the centre and north of the country. The mangroves are nurseries for many species of fish and crustaceans.

Rodrigues added that conservation will only be effective when it becomes an integral part of the culture of all Mozambicans.

## Heavy losses for EDM in Maputo Province

The Maputo Operational Area of Mozambique's publicly-owned electricity company, EDM, suffered losses in 2016 of about 600 million meticaís (about US\$8.5 million, at current exchange rates) due to vandalism and the theft of electricity.

According to the EDM director of client services, Neves Xavier, the theft of power through illegal connections occurs mainly in urban areas, while the destruction of electricity installations occurs mainly in the expansion areas of the Matola municipality.

"We have this question of clandestine connections", said Xavier. "We are dismantling networks of illegal power connections almost every day".

In Matola, destruction is often caused by traffic accidents when vehicles hit electricity pylons. "Motorists are responsible for this vandalism", said Xavier. "When the weekends come, it's always a challenge in Matola to make the rounds and see where pylons have been hit".

To make matters worse, it is often impossible to identify who did the damage, since the same night the owners of the vehicles remove them.

Xavier promised that in 2017, EDM will step up inspection throughout Maputo province. He urged members of the public to denounce all cases of clandestine connections and destruction of electricity infrastructures.

"We are also urging all those individuals and companies who tow away damaged vehicles not to remove them without EDM authorisation if they find that the vehicles have damaged pylons", he added. "We are also cooperating with the police, so that when a vehicle that damaged a pylon is identified, the police immediately contact EDM".

When EDM itself identifies the vehicle, it contacts the police so that proceedings can immediately be started against the motorist concerned, Xavier added.

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