



Situation Report

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MOZAMBIQUE'S 2004 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Introduction

Mozambique is often referred to as a model of economic recovery and political reconciliation, which, in comparison to many other African countries, it is. Following more than a decade of civil war, a successful peace process led to the adoption of a new constitution, which served as the basis for a democratic state. The armed opposition transformed itself into a civil political party and multiparty elections were held for the first time in 1994.

The last general elections were held in December 2004, with the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) emerging as a clear victor: its third national election victory since the start of the multiparty system. FRELIMO has now governed Mozambique continuously since independence in 1975. Its candidate, Armando Guebuza, is to become Mozambique's third president, following Samora Machel (who died in 1986 while in office) and the current President, Joaquim Chissano, who is standing down.

It is no longer taboo to draw attention to the country's regional differences and the asymmetric development pattern, which dates back to the colonial period. The southern region is growing fast in economic terms; Maputo is the financial hub, the national base of the main political institutions and home to intellectuals, writers, and urban culture, while the rest of the country lags far behind. After 12 years of peace, the majority of Mozambicans still have no access to basic facilities and services, and most receive little benefit from the current economic growth. Very slowly, the tide is turning and poverty being reduced, however.

For Mozambique's political elite, whose image was greatly damaged by corruption scandals and the related murder of renowned journalist Carlos Cardoso in 2000, challenging tasks lay ahead. Part of the challenge entails bringing people back into formal politics, as the December 2004 elections showed a poor turnout. Even more worrying, considering the historic distrust between the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and FRELIMO, was the almost complete failure of political voices aside from these two main contenders. RENAMO emerged with 27 fewer parliamentary seats than it held before the election, and no other party made it into parliament. FRELIMO will therefore meet little opposition in the next five years. Yet, will the change of presidency in Mozambique offer opportunities for a fresh approach to the country's problems?

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FRELIMO was the clear victor of both the presidential and the parliamentary elections. Armando Guebuza, winning 63.7 percent of the vote, received a mandate to become the new president of Mozambique, while Afonso Dhlakama received only 31.7 percent. In the legislative body, FRELIMO has taken 160 seats (62.03 percent of votes), and RENAMO 90 seats (28.73 percent of votes). Compared to 1999, RENAMO lost 27 seats to FRELIMO.

As the results below show, Mozambique remains a *de facto* two-party parliamentary system. None of the 18 smaller parties received the required share of the vote (five percent) to gain a seat in parliament. Even Raúl Domingos, who drew support from donors who hoped he and his Party for Peace, Democracy and Development (PDD) might create the long-hoped-for 'third force' in Mozambican politics, was unable to challenge the two giants. Even though the PDD showed itself to be active and organised during the election campaign, it only received two percent of votes. This means that Domingos lost the seat that he had previously held as an independent in parliament. As a presidential candidate Domingos won only 2,73 percent of votes, far behind Guebuza and Dhlakama.

Presidential Election Results²

Province	Guebuza	% of valid	Dhlakama	% of valid
Niassa	93,711	67.3%	39,390	28.3%
Cabo Delgado	212,980	77.6%	49,340	18.0%
Nampula	224,206	49.8%	197,815	44.0%
Zambézia	162,142	37.5%	245,826	56.8%
Tete	256,070	74.2%	76,464	22.2%
Manica	92,113	47.4%	92,161	47.5%
Sofala	75,691	26.1%	198,809	68.5%
Inhambane	142,729	83.7%	18,139	10.6%
Gaza	304,562	96.4%	5,611	1.8%
Maputo Prov	184,475	89.2%	17,782	8.6%
Maputo City	217,337	85.2%	32,845	12.9%
Africa	24,061	90.6%	1,925	7.3%
Europe	535	76.5%	149	21.3%
Total	1,990,612	64.2%	976,256	31.5%
Requalified	13,614	31.9%	21,803	51.1%
Total	2,004,226	63.7%	998,059	31.7%

While RENAMO had a majority in five provinces in 1994 and six provinces in 1999, Mozambique's largest opposition party achieved only a majority in two provinces in the 2004 election. The number of blank votes was substantially reduced this year and the number of invalid votes was also lower. FRELIMO won the two seats for Mozambicans in Europe and in Africa.

Parliamentary Election Results³

Province	Seats	FRELIMO	RENAMO
Niassa	12	9	3
Cabo Delgado	22	18	4
Nampula	50	27	23
Zambézia	48	19	29
Tete	18	14	4
Manica	14	7	7
Sofala	22	6	16
Inhambane	16	15	1
Gaza	17	17	0

Province	Seats	FRELIMO	RENAMO
Maputo Prov	13	12	1
Maputo City	16	14	2
Africa	1	1	0
Europe	1	1	0
Total	250	160	90

The Carter Center⁴ expressed concerns about a number of irregularities observed during the provincial tabulation, including summary sheet results (*editais*) lacking credibility, problems with the tabulation software, mismatched numbers of polling stations and *editais*, and mistrust between political party representatives in the provincial Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) structures. In a number of cases, Carter Center observers found *editais* with unrealistically high voter turnout, including instances of polling stations in Niassa and Tete recording a 100 percent turnout and more than 90 percent support for FRELIMO. Given the low turnout nationwide, the Carter Center said, ballot boxes appeared to have been stuffed at polling stations in the Tete districts of Changara, Chifunde, and Tsangano, as well as in the Niassa districts of Metarica and Marrupa, and in the Gaza district of Chicualacuala. This means that ballot box stuffing or falsification of the *editais* seemed to have been more common in the December 2004 elections than in 1999. A number of other observers, including the Electoral Observatory, a coalition of seven prominent Mozambican civil society groups, also cited these irregularities.

Nonetheless, it should be emphasised that all observers confirmed that the malpractice was not on a sufficient scale to account for the FRELIMO landslide victory. They all found that 85 percent or more of polling stations functioned correctly.

RENAMO claimed that the attempt of fraud had already started during the electoral registration earlier this year, with a majority of the population being excluded in the zones where the opposition has most influence. RENAMO also claimed that polling station presiding officers received orders to introduce ballot papers in favour of FRELIMO and Guebuza and at the same time to invalidate ballot papers for RENAMO and its candidate by making ink blots on the ballot papers.

Furthermore, Dhlakama claimed that FRELIMO, with the help of the police, carried out a widespread campaign on the night of 1 to 2 December to expel RENAMO party agents, allowing FRELIMO to swap ballot boxes for other ones filled with ballot papers in favour of FRELIMO and Guebuza. Dhlakama also claimed that more than one million votes were introduced into the computers in favour of Guebuza. Moreover, RENAMO said police were too close to polling stations, which intimidated voters and reduced the turnout. Dhlakama also mentioned that many polling stations opened late or not at all, and that the tabulation software was not credible, these last two accusations being corroborated by independent observers' reports.

During a press conference on 4 January 2005, the CNE admitted two of RENAMO's complaints: that 1,400 *editais* favourable to RENAMO had been stolen and not included in the final results (five percent of the total), and that there was ballot box stuffing in Tete province.⁵ In making its various corrections, the CNE confirmed it had given an extra parliamentary seat to RENAMO in Zambézia, the province where the *editais* had disappeared. The CNE rejected all other allegations lodged by RENAMO, however.

Following the CNE's announcement of results, Afonso Dhlakama announced that RENAMO did not recognise the results of the election. He said that no member of RENAMO elected in parliament would take his or her seat, and that he would not take his place on the Council of State. RENAMO then took an appeal to the Constitutional Council, which is responsible for validating the results.

On 17 January, the Constitutional Council announced it had rejected RENAMO's application on technical grounds. Firstly, the Council ruled that the application had missed the legally required deadline - this was denied by RENAMO. Secondly, the Council noted that the application received from RENAMO was substantially different from the application originally made to the CNE, and that as a body of appeal, the Council had no jurisdiction over a new request. This second reason for refusal - one that seems wholly justifiable on legal grounds - was, ironically, the consequence of RENAMO's attempt to make its demands less ambitious before approaching the Constitutional Council. Whereas RENAMO had earlier rejected the results outright, the party's application to the Council demanded only the 'the correction of all irregularities': namely the alleged instances of ballot stuffing, and the exclusion of certain polling stations from the final count.

On 20 January, the Constitutional Council validated the election results, paving the way for the new parliament to convene, and for Guebuza to assume the presidency. For his part, and in a somewhat anticipated fashion, Dhlakama reconsidered RENAMO's threats to boycott parliament, and "for the sake of peace and stability" as he put it, RENAMO took its seats in the assembly of the republic. On 31 January, all 250 members of parliament elected in the general elections were sworn in and President Joaquim Chissano is due to hand over the Presidency on 2 February to Armando Guebuza.

Electoral framework: Overview

The legal framework for multiparty elections has not changed fundamentally since it was introduced in 1993, although there have been some modifications. The Mozambican parliament adopted a new electoral law in June 2004, which regulated the electoral process for the polls on 1 and 2 December.

The main body in charge of elections continues to be the National Elections Commission (CNE), established in 1993 and based in Maputo. Yet, while in 1994 the CNE was composed exclusively of members nominated by FRELIMO and RENAMO, since 1999, it is composed of a chair nominated by civil society (Rev. Arão Litsure) and 18 members nominated by parties in proportion to representation in parliament (which in reality means 10 members of FRELIMO and 8 members of RENAMO).

Another change is visible in the decision-making process within the CNE: while consensus was legally compulsory in 1994, it is now only recommended. This means that the FRELIMO majority can push decisions through the CNE without the assent of other parties, a fact which attracted sharp criticism towards the CNE around the time of the 2004 election. Under the CNE is the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE), which is the implementing body.

By law, the CNE has to publish the national election results within 15 days of the elections, with copies submitted to the Constitutional Council for verification. There is no deadline for action by the Constitutional Council, except that two days after the validation and proclamation of the results, it must publish its findings in the *Boletim da República*. Within 15 days of publication, the new parliament opens, after which the new president is inaugurated within eight days.

The Constitutional Council oversees the entire electoral process, approving the presidential candidatures, validating the final results and deciding on any electoral complaints. The Council, although provided for in the constitution of 1990, did not exist until the local elections of 2003, its role until then being fulfilled by the Supreme Court. Three members were elected by parliament: FRELIMO named two, former minister Teodato Hunguana and Lucia Ribeiro, director of the law faculty of the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane; RENAMO named the lawyer Orlando da Graça; President Joaquim Chissano appointed the chairman of the Council, former minister Rui Baltazar. These four members selected their fifth colleague, João Ubisse Ngwenha, who was the director of the legislative services of the Mozambican parliament.

Since the local elections in 2003, there have been election commissions at provincial and district level with a five-year term, which are smaller than the CNE but with the same structure. The commission at provincial level has seven members, one appointed by the government and six by the political parties represented in parliament. At district or municipal level the government nominates one and the parties in parliament four members. In a move towards decentralisation in the December 2004 elections, party polling agents (*delegados de candidaturas*), who are nominated by parties and are assigned to a certain polling station, did not receive their credentials from the CNE, but from the district election commission.

The June 2004 law is similar to previous election laws, for instance by retaining the five percent threshold for political parties to enter parliament. However, a few significant changes have been introduced. Following complaints from the opposition and observers about FRELIMO using government vehicles and facilities, there is now a ban on the use by any party of the goods or property of central or local government, or state-owned or state-controlled companies. Polling staff, police and journalists may now vote at any polling station. In past years, they had been effectively disenfranchised because they were allowed to vote only at the polling station where they were registered, while their duties on election day may have taken them elsewhere.

Furthermore, the new electoral law clarifies previously confusing rules about the limits on activities near polling stations. The law provides that within 300 meters of the polling station, no voter can say whom he or she voted for or plans to vote for. Observers and journalists are not allowed to talk to voters within this area. Also within 300 meters of the polling station, no campaign poster or other material is permitted, and no one is allowed to display political symbols, or wear a party T-shirt. Exit polls were already banned during the 2003 local elections. No opinion polls may be published between the start of the campaign and the declaration of results. There is a 'quiet period' during the two days prior to voting, during which campaigning must cease.

For the first time, Mozambicans living abroad were allowed to vote in 2004. The electoral law allocates two of the 250 seats in parliament to those living abroad: one for Africa and one for the rest of the world. In July 2004, RENAMO unsuccessfully objected to the decision of the CNE to allow Mozambicans residing abroad to register and vote. The main argument was that no evidence was presented to the CNE that the registration process could actually be monitored. Diplomatic postings in many countries are political appointments, and registration would take place in embassies, nearly all of which are staffed by people linked to FRELIMO.

Election Observation

At a practical level, the Mozambican electoral process is complex. Following the voting, the electoral law determines that there will be two counts: one at the provincial and one at the national level. After the polling stations have counted the votes, they have to submit their summary sheets (*editais*) and minutes (*actas*) to the district commission, which in turn sends them to the provincial commission. Invalid ballot papers and questioned *editais* are excluded from these results and must be checked by the CNE in Maputo. Meanwhile, the CNE does its own 'provisional count', which is identical to the provincial counts. The CNE then compares the provisional count to the provincial counts and tries to reconcile them. This is done at national level without press and observers present. Also done behind closed doors is the reconsideration of *editais* to be added to the final result.

These last two regulations on the exclusion of observers caused an international outcry before the 2004 elections, observers saying the final counting of

Mozambique's votes would not meet international standards of transparency. They claimed the procedure could shift the final results by one to two percent, which would be enough to make a difference in the event of a very close result. Some donors believed that the decision to maintain secrecy had been taken personally by FRELIMO's presidential candidate, Armando Guebuza, as he wanted room for possible manipulation in the event of a close election. There was a historical precedent for this: in 1999, some observers estimated that President Joaquim Chissano's official vote was 0,5 percent higher than his real vote.^{vi} In that year's elections, 1,874 *editais* contained errors, erasures or seemed to have been tampered with, which was about 11 percent of the total. The CNE accepted about one-third of these doubtful *editais*, and rejected the rest. RENAMO eventually walked out of the CNE because it did not accept the arbitration process.

In 2004, international observers, including 32 delegates from the EU, nine from the US-based Carter Center (headed by former US President Jimmy Carter), and one from Japan, protested against the secrecy surrounding the reconciliation process of doubtful *editais*. At first, the FRELIMO majority on the CNE refused any further concessions. However, in mid-November 2004, the CNE gave the assurance that the press, observers and party delegates would be able to examine the excluded *editais*, allowing them to confirm that the results were indeed so unclear that it would have been impossible to include them. Additionally, the CNE allowed international observers to attend the process of reclassification of invalid and disputed ballot papers (*nulos*). However, the final tabulation process was done in secret, which led to further criticism by observers after the elections in December 2004.

The number of voters

A second controversial issue concerned the number of voters. In the run-up to elections in December 2004, more than 1.2 million new voters registered, nearly double the 700,000 predicted by electoral authorities. This process included an update of the register books (*cadernos*), which included new registrations, second-issue voters' cards (for those who had lost or damaged their original cards) and transfers (for people who had changed their residence to another municipality). However, the process had been marked by significant problems, and was accepted only reluctantly by election observers.

During the local elections in November 2003 it had already become clear that the register books were in a chaotic state, after which the Constitutional Council and observers called for a clean-up. But during the registration process in July 2004, little was done to correct the problems. Since the voter registration for the general elections of October 1994, there had been three additional registrations: a totally new national registration in 1999 and two updates in 2003 and 2004. People were registered by means of hand-written entries in books, and these were then computerised. But the computerisation process had many errors, and it appeared that many of the registration books were never proofread to check for mistakes. As a consequence, many people either were registered twice or not at all.⁷

Furthermore, the numbers of voters remained uncertain. Officially, there were 10.4 million voters on the registers of the STAE, but the National Electoral Institute (INE) calculated that the total voting age population as of August 2004 was 9.1 million. According to other estimates however, at the time of the elections Mozambique had 8.1 million voters.

Confusion about different official figures caused chaos in the local elections in 2003 as the number of municipal assembly seats was based on the number of registered voters. The CNE published one list of seats on 20 August 2003 and on 21 October 2003, then changed the numbers of seats in the assemblies of eight municipalities when it announced the results on 4 December 2003. The

Constitutional Council ruled that it was not allowed to change the number of seats after the elections, and that the list published on 20 August 2003 should stand, even if it was wrong. The final, correct set of results was announced by the Constitutional Council on 14 January 2004 and published in *Boletim da República* only 12 days later.

Polling stations and their locations

There were 12,804 polling stations in the December 2004 elections, compared to 8,334 in 1999. The number of polling stations reflects both the number of voters and population density. Thus, although the Zambézia electorate is slightly smaller than that of neighbouring Nampula, it has more polling stations because Zambézia's rural population is more spread out. The division of polling stations within Mozambique was as follows:

Province:	Voters:	Polling stations:
Niassa	453,461	724
Cabo Delgado	794,270	1,391
Nampula	1,831,897	2,290
Zambézia	1,749,121	2,370
Tete	660,741	916
Manica	531,264	722
Sofala	802,149	1,039
Inhambane	579,356	786
Gaza	609,214	992
Maputo province	483,493	752
Maputo city	600,249	762
Total:	9,095,185	12,744

Additionally, there were 60 polling stations in nine foreign countries, where about 226,000 Mozambicans are living, according to the estimates of the Foreign Ministry. In South Africa, there were 40 polling stations, including some at workplaces such as mines. There were also five polling stations in Zimbabwe, four in Tanzania, three in Swaziland, two in Malawi, two in Kenya, and one in Zambia. In Europe there were two polling stations: one in Portugal and one in Germany.

However, a final polling station list with registration book numbers and numbers of registered voters was never made available to political parties or observers. This list, reportedly described by the CNE as a 'state secret', is essential because it determines the number and location of polling stations and ought to coincide with the database used for the tabulation software. The reasons for the secrecy are not clear and it is still unknown how many registered voters or polling stations existed on Election Day.

Furthermore, in all parts of the country there were polling stations that did not open, or opened only after long delays, especially in rural areas. In some instances heavy rain was the cause, as in the case of 43 polling stations in Cabo Delgado and 33 polling stations in Zambézia. In other cases, register books were missing or were sent to the wrong polling station.^{viii} There were reports throughout the country of some people having trouble finding their polling stations, claiming they were not at the place where the person registered. However, the electoral law allowed people to vote if they had a valid voter's card for a particular polling station, even if by error their name did not appear on the register. In addition, persons who had lost their voter's card but had a valid identity card could still vote if their name could be found on the register.

Software problems

The tabulation software used during the general elections of 1999 caused many

problems, and predictions of a further computer-related crisis in 2004 proved to be correct. Just as in 1999, the software was written by STAE staff. As this task began only in September, the testing and auditing of the software could only be done at the last minute, a week before the elections and in a space of only four hours. The Mozambican firm Soluções took on the task of auditing and reported to the CNE in November. Soluções was mainly concerned about the lack of security of the system, which appeared to allow the introduction of false *editais*. Soluções insisted that a much tighter password and security system be introduced.⁹

Once the CNE decided to implement the recommendations, which included ending open access to the system, STAE computer staff were reluctant to cooperate and sometimes were even obstructive, and it was increasingly left to Soluções to implement the changes.¹⁰ STAE computer staff input the underlying databases of polling stations and registers books. This was done at the last minute, in part because the last minute clean-up of register books, and was not completed until two days before polling began.

STAE technicians distributed the software to the provinces only two days after polling closed, which meant provincial counting started late. Problems soon began to appear. For example, there were register books bearing identical numbers in different provinces, and this had to be corrected. But the biggest problem was that the databases proved to have been input hastily and without proper checks, and therefore contained a huge number of errors. Valid *editais* were rejected when the register numbers did not correspond to the incorrect register numbers in the database. Hundreds had to be input manually, which was in breach with the new security system, or sent to the CNE in Maputo. Since the system in Maputo had also crumbled, the results were announced only on 21 December, four days after the legal deadline.

Election campaigns

No donor funds were available to political parties, but the government allocated 45 billion meticaís (about US\$1.8 million), as called for in the electoral law. The amount was disbursed in the same way as in 1999: one-third for presidential candidates, one-third for parties currently holding seats in parliament based on the proportion of seats held, and one-third for parties standing for parliament based on the number of candidates. Funds were disbursed in three parts: half was given on 16 October, with the rest delivered in two instalments, each of 25 percent. Each additional instalment, however, was given only after a party justified its expenditure of the previous one.

The 43-day formal electoral campaign was generally peaceful and often festive in atmosphere, but there was some tension and a few incidents of intimidation and violence early in the campaign, especially in Nampula, Gaza and Tete provinces. Also, the historic antagonism between FRELIMO and RENAMO manifested itself, particularly in the opposition stronghold of Sofala province. The province accommodated RENAMO's military headquarters in the district of Maríngué during the closing years of the war of destabilisation. Even though all government and RENAMO troops were supposed to have been demobilised and disarmed in 1994, under the terms of the 1992 General Peace Agreement, RENAMO has kept its Maríngué force operational. The group of perhaps between 50 and 150 men supposedly serve as bodyguards to protect their leader's home, despite the fact that Afonso Dhlakama now lives in a government house in Maputo. Repeatedly, the government offered to incorporate the men into the police force, but Dhlakama has refused.

The problem of the illegal armed forces in Maríngué has dragged on for a decade now. The government has been tolerant, since it could have sent in riot police to disarm the RENAMO men forcibly, and dismantle their base. It has so far declined

to do so. However, political competition has intensified in the province since RENAMO, for the first time, claimed Beira in the local government elections in November 2003. During 2004, there were several reported cases of political violence throughout the province, such as beatings of local officials and policemen, housebreaking and random shootings, allegedly perpetrated by the RENAMO troops in Maríngué.

Early in August, former defence minister Alberto Chipande declared that the RENAMO armed men based in Maríngué were no longer interfering in FRELIMO's political work. On the grounds that the FRELIMO team he led to Maríngué had been able to do its work without harassment, Chipande praised the RENAMO forces for their supposedly peaceful attitude, and even declared that they would be allowed to stay there. On 11 August, however, RENAMO's security forces ransacked the police command in the nearby town of Inhaminga and beat up the local first secretary of FRELIMO, Quisito Paulino, and his wife. The sequence of events remains unclear. According to the police account the RENAMO raid on the police station preceded the attack against Paulino. Yet, according to reports in the Maputo daily newspaper *Notícias* it happened the other way around. The police arrested two of the five people who had attacked Paulino after which 25 RENAMO armed men broke into the police command and freed the detainees.

RENAMO admitted its men had beaten up Paulino and his wife, but said this was in retaliation for an earlier incident in which Paulino had allegedly ordered the beating of the Inhaminga RENAMO delegate. When the armed RENAMO group went to the police command demanding the release of the two arrested members, the police handed them over without any violence, RENAMO said.

The police then sent reinforcements to Inhaminga to help recapture the two freed prisoners. This led to clashes on 12 August. The police fired teargas canisters to disperse a RENAMO crowd while a riot police vehicle patrolled the area. In response, the armed RENAMO members opened fire. RENAMO initially claimed that it had killed three policemen 'in self-defence', but the following day the general command of the police announced that only one corporal in the riot police had lost his life. The town remained heavily guarded over the weekend. The administration of Cheringoma district also met with the most influential traditional leaders of the region, and asked them to persuade Inhaminga residents who had fled into the bush to return. The two RENAMO members who were accused of beating up Domingos remain in police custody.

There are allegations that Dhlakama has also urged citizens in six of Sofala's districts to contact him should they feel that local administrators or police are 'committing abuses', so that he can send his security men to seize them. However, it is important to be aware of possible bias, particularly towards the ruling party, in reports of the alleged incidents. RENAMO rejected such allegations as a strategy by FRELIMO to try and discredit RENAMO and its leader ahead of the 2004 polls. RENAMO's justification for its members' actions is that they have merely acted in response to FRELIMO provocation, and the party has accused the government of deliberately trying to discredit Dhlakama prior to elections.

FRELIMO was, in turn, accused of buying voters' cards in Sofala: an accusation denied by the ruling party. Dhlakama is adamant that those affected are supporters of RENAMO.

Since Sofala is a long-established opposition stronghold, RENAMO's concern with maintaining its influence there is not new or surprising. However, RENAMO's success in Beira in the local government elections has, perhaps, served to raise the political stakes for both parties in the province. The cause for concern is that the reported incidents of violence, whether or not they are accurate, serve to highlight both the ongoing distrust between the two main political parties, and

the need for continuing efforts to establish a culture of political tolerance in Mozambique. The existence of RENAMO armed forces in Sofala could threaten not only law and order and local government authority, but also the possibility of co-operation between the two parties to ensure a stable political environment in the province.

Introduction

It took a revolution in Portugal itself for Mozambique to gain independence, as the dictatorial regime of Salazar held on stubbornly to its overseas territories long after other European colonial powers had started to withdraw from the African continent. Immediately after the change of power in Lisbon in April 1974, the new Portuguese regime began negotiations in Lusaka with the sole national liberation movement, FRELIMO, resulting in an agreement on 7 September 1974 after which an interim government was formed. Mozambique became formally independent on 25 June 1975. Samora Machel became its first president while Joaquim Chissano took up the position of prime minister.

FRELIMO established a one-party state, declared itself officially Marxist-Leninist at a party congress in 1977, and implemented a radical programme of socialist policies. State farms and co-operatives replaced private land ownership. All other institutions were nationalised too, including mission schools and church clinics. Independent Mozambique's constitutional system provided for a structure of indirectly elected bodies, with lower assemblies electing higher tiers. The People's Assembly was the ultimate source of sovereignty, but candidates for this body were selected from above, under a system known as 'democratic centralism'.

FRELIMO's mission included support for outlawed opposition movements in neighbouring countries. The African National Congress (ANC) was permitted to operate from the south of Mozambique, close to the border with apartheid South Africa. In March 1976, FRELIMO closed its borders with Rhodesia and began to support the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) headed by Robert Mugabe. Sanctions taken against Rhodesia and assistance to the ZANU guerrilla fighters resulted in retaliation by Ian Smith's Rhodesian government. In the late 1970s, the Rhodesian intelligence service created RENAMO, an armed opposition that was assigned to destabilise the borderlands so as to obstruct ZANU's Mozambique-based operations.

RENAMO was soon operating deep inside Mozambique. As the fall of the minority regime in Rhodesia began to appear inevitable towards the end of the 1970s, the rebel movement was adopted by apartheid South Africa. RENAMO nevertheless lacked a clear vision for Mozambique's future or a coherent ideology beyond a fierce anti-communism and hostility to FRELIMO. The government's socialist development projects were the particular subject of brutal RENAMO attacks, which included large-scale, systematic violence against civilians.

Yet it would be incorrect to portray RENAMO simply as a violent apolitical movement operating on behalf of hostile foreign forces. RENAMO found fertile ground in the countryside where the socialist doctrines of FRELIMO were unpopular. In particular, the undermining of traditional structures of authority and the marginalisation of peasant communities as a result of the development model adopted by FRELIMO fuelled RENAMO's campaign. The rebel movement claimed it waged war in the name of the ancestors to re-establish traditional values in Mozambique, and made use of supernatural beliefs and a system of indirect rule through traditional leaders for its military purposes.

By the middle of the 1980s Mozambique was facing a deep crisis. The socialist government programme proved to be unrealistic. The value of the Mozambican currency (metical) fell rapidly. Shops soon were empty. The humanitarian

situation deteriorated, not just as a result of the war but also because of prolonged drought, which led to widespread famine in the early 1980s.

Peace and reform were identified as the most urgent needs. Negotiations with Pretoria led to the Nkomati Accord of March 1984, in which Mozambique committed itself to curbing ANC activities in the country in exchange for the termination of South African assistance to RENAMO. The accord did not result in any improvement in the security situation and in fact the civil war intensified, as covert military aid to RENAMO continued.

The centralised economy could no longer survive and its main proponent, President Samora Machel, was killed in a mysterious air crash in 1986. His successor, the pragmatic Joaquim Chissano, was even more convinced that the halting of international support to RENAMO would mean the end of the war. In 1987, the new president, strengthened by a collation of neighbouring countries, was able to persuade Malawi to cut its ties with RENAMO. A year later, Chissano met South African President PW Botha, and the two leaders revived the Nkomati Accord.

International pressure, the reduction in support for the warring parties after the end of the Cold War, and war weariness left little option but a peaceful solution to the conflict. In July 1990, the first peace talks between RENAMO and FRELIMO started, initiated by the Mozambican churches. These talks were accompanied by changes in the constitution, the separation of party and state, and greater political freedoms including a provision for multiparty elections, overturning the centralist orientation of previous years. An intense process of negotiations in Rome was interspersed with continued military skirmishes until the warring parties signed a peace agreement in October 1992, paving the way for the first democratic elections.

1994: Presidential and legislative elections

Mozambique's first democratic elections took place one year later than initially scheduled, on 27-29 October 1994. The preparations were undertaken in three phases: voter registration, voter education and the electoral campaign. Voter education, which covered both electoral education (how to vote) and education for democracy (why vote), proved to be a difficult task. The high rate of illiteracy amongst Mozambicans and the lack of good communications networks throughout the country substantially hampered the effectiveness of voter education campaigns. Although methods using dance and theatre were often employed with good results, the rural areas were much less targeted than the urban areas.

A further issue was the funding of smaller opposition parties, which needed financial support if they were to be able to compete with FRELIMO and RENAMO. Ten smaller parties ran alongside the two giants, and 10 presidential candidates contested the election in addition to Chissano and Dhlakama. Eventually, the small opposition parties each received 100 million meticaïs (about US\$15,000) from the government and an additional US\$100,000 from the international donor community. Campaigning was not an easy task, however. In RENAMO-controlled areas, political activities by parties other than RENAMO itself were not allowed until the end of the demobilisation process a few months before the elections. Some opposition parties also accused the government of harassment in the areas it controlled.

During the election campaigns, FRELIMO emphasised continuity and its experience in governance, while the opposition campaigned on the need for change. The opposition parties, including RENAMO, based their campaign on the mistakes made by FRELIMO during its 19 years in power and on the need for a more even distribution of power and resources to the central and northern regions of the country. They called for the establishment of a government of

national unity after the elections: a concept that found interested ears within the international donor community and the Mozambican churches. However, FRELIMO refused to consider this option, arguing that the party that won the election should determine the composition of the new government.

The general elections were monitored by approximately 2,300 UN observers provided by individual UN member states, a range of UN offices, the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), the European Union, the diplomatic community in Maputo, NGOs working in Mozambique, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Association of European Parliamentarians for Southern Africa (AWEPA). The cost of the operation in 1994 was estimated as US\$294.8 million.

A serious threat to the process occurred when RENAMO threatened to withdraw from the voting on the eve of the elections, alleging preparations for widespread fraud on the part of the government. The crisis was solved after tense negotiations between Dhlakama and donor representatives. The incident did not affect the course of events: the elections were characterised by an exceptionally high turnout. Around 87 percent of the 6.3 million registered voters cast their ballots, of which 91.4 percent were counted as valid.

Chissano won the presidential election, receiving 53.31 percent of the votes, against 33.73 percent in favour of RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama. Interestingly, Chissano proved more popular than his party, whereas RENAMO emerged stronger than its leader. FRELIMO failed to score an absolute popular majority in the legislative elections, winning only 44.33 percent of the vote, which came as a great shock to the party. RENAMO effectively became the leading opposition party, its candidates securing 37.78 percent of the parliamentary vote. Of the minor parties, only the UD (*União Democrática*) qualified for representation in the legislature.

Both FRELIMO and RENAMO showed that they are the only parties with national reach, although both possess regional strongholds: FRELIMO in the south and far north and RENAMO in the centre (Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambézia and Nampula). RENAMO fared particularly well in Sofala, where it got more than 80 percent of the vote. The importance of this victory was enhanced by the fact that Sofala's capital, Beira, is the second city in the country.

Different explanations for RENAMO's electoral success, so soon after the war had ended, quickly emerged. According to some, RENAMO gained political support because the party was able to attract highly educated people who hoped that their RENAMO membership would lead to a speedy political career. Also, at the time of the elections, RENAMO controlled about one third of the country. International donors delivered emergency aid and food in these areas having sought the approval of RENAMO, and not of the government. Furthermore, having failed to secure a pre-election deal on 'power sharing' or a government of national unity to guarantee that RENAMO had a place in the executive, international donors (in particular the United States) and the Catholic Church urged people to vote for RENAMO. Only a strong opposition, they believed, would keep Mozambique on the road to peace. And it was peace, and not so much RENAMO or FRELIMO, that the population voted for.

After the elections, FRELIMO adopted a winner-takes-all position. The argument was that the electoral results had given FRELIMO the right to govern alone and that one of the central characteristics of democracy was precisely the existence of an opposition. RENAMO accepted FRELIMO's arguments, perhaps out of the strategic conviction that during its five-year mandate FRELIMO would fail to meet expectations, while with the passage of time, the memories of RENAMO's cruelty during the war would fade away as the organisation built a new image.

1998: Local elections

Following the first democratic elections, Mozambique became a favourite among the international donor community. ONUMOZ was widely portrayed as an

overwhelming success in that it contributed to a reasonably stable and quick transition from war to peace, and to the organisation of peaceful and fair elections, which marked the symbolic birth of Mozambique as a multi-party democracy. It soon became clear, however, that the world community had celebrated prematurely. In 1998, during the first local elections, the old enmities between FRELIMO and RENAMO resurfaced.

Power relations remained a sensitive issue in the country, and decentralisation was suggested as a viable solution. Devolution would not only bring citizens closer to state institutions proponents of the decentralisation model argued; it would also enable power sharing without having to create a government of national unity. Mozambique had always been a very centralised country in which all civil servants, even in the smallest locality, were appointed by the central government. In fact, the country had adopted a legal framework for local government reform in 1994, which proposed to turn all 128 districts into municipalities¹¹, constituting a radical break with the past. However, in 1997 FRELIMO's parliamentary majority made it possible to repeal a law whose most relevant feature was the establishment of district municipalities linking urban and rural areas. This would have meant the dilution of an overly centralised political system, which practised a two-tiered administrative system: one for rural areas and one for urban areas.

The new law that was eventually promulgated promised to start by holding municipal elections in the existing 33 urban municipalities, and only after this was done would the elections be extended to rural areas.¹² Hence, full participation was hindered by the new law, as the local government system left the majority of the rural population out, remaining subject to continued rule by officials appointed from Maputo.¹³

The first municipal elections were a sobering experience for the Mozambican polity as a whole. On the eve of the poll, RENAMO and 15 smaller opposition parties decided to abstain from participation, arguing that the government was bent on fraud. Only 14.48 percent of the registered voters turned up and the inevitable result was that all 33 municipalities where elections were held elected FRELIMO candidates as mayors. The ruling party achieved absolute control over the new municipal authorities.

1999: Presidential and legislative elections

Following the mistrust that surrounded the conduct of the 1998 local elections, greater efforts were made to ensure that the presidential and legislative elections that took place from 3 to 5 December 1999 were run in a transparent and accountable manner. The Mozambican parliament passed new electoral legislation to pave the way for the creation of a new CNE to oversee the 1999 elections.

Chissano was re-elected with 52.29 percent of the vote, against 47.71 percent for Dhlakama (who in 1994 had secured only 33,73 percent of the presidential vote). In the parliamentary poll, FRELIMO consolidated its majority with 48.54 percent of the vote, against 38.8 percent for RENAMO.

RENAMO was seriously disappointed. The former rebel movement complained that FRELIMO had again corrupted the electoral process. On 22 December 1999 Dhlakama appealed against the election results. His case was based on 23 complaints focussing mainly on irregularities during the counting, and mistakes and numeric discrepancies in the officially published tabulation sheets. The principal problem concerned the re-classification of votes in the district commissions. Many votes that had been considered valid at local level, were considered null when they came to be analysed at district level. The justification was that voters had not filled in the form properly, or had marked the vote in the

wrong place. The opposition also claimed it had not been able to conduct its election campaign in Tete because of FRELIMO aggression in the province.

The Supreme Court investigated the counting process and, on 4 January 2000, rejected all the complaints, thus validating the results. A seven-month boycott of parliament by RENAMO followed, while FRELIMO accused the former rebel movement of undermining the peace process. In fact, Dhlakama threatened to form separate governments in the six provinces where his party had won the majority vote, and indicated publicly that he intended to paralyse the country and to make it ungovernable if a power sharing agreement could not be reached. In 2000, RENAMO moved from verbal attacks to nationwide demonstrations. Riots broke out in Montepuez in Cabo Delgado province, after the police opened fire on demonstrating RENAMO supporters, an incident in which at least 45 people lost their lives, including seven policemen. Shortly afterwards the suspected agitators, some 100 RENAMO supporters, were confined in a tiny police cell and died eventually of asphyxiation: an incident that indicated the neglect of human rights and absence of the rule of law. Both parties showed a disregard for democratic process, and behaved in a spirit of struggle.

2003: Local elections

As RENAMO did not participate in 1998, the local elections of 19 November 2003 were the first inclusive ones. Turnout was still relatively low, although it varied regionally - from a low of 15 percent in the district of Nampula to highs of 46 percent in Mocimboa da Praia and 47 percent in Motize. Nationwide, only 27.56 percent of the more than 2 million registered voters cast their ballots in one of the 33 municipalities. The government party retained a firm hold on local politics in 28 districts, including Maputo.

RENAMO received a small majority of votes only in the province of Sofala: 49.98 percent against 45.64 percent. Out of 33 municipalities, RENAMO mayoral candidates were elected in only five. In Beira, Daviz Simango of RENAMO was elected with 53.45 percent of the vote. Three opposition victories were registered in the port of Nacala, in Angoche and Ilha de Moçambique, all in the province of Nampula. In the province of Sofala, João Agostinho of RENAMO won by a single vote in the small town of Marromeu, while FRELIMO controlled the municipal assembly.

Six small parties and citizens' lists won seats in municipal assemblies, the same number as in 1998. The Independent Party of Mozambique (PIMO) won its first ever victories, with single seats in Nampula, Cuamba and Angoche, and 0.18 percent of the total votes. The Democratic Institute for Peace (IPADE), the grouping led by former RENAMO politician Raúl Domingos, won single seats in Beira and Dondo. Only two of the five local citizens' lists that won seats in 1998 stood again in 2003, but they did badly. In Nacala, the Organisation of Independent Candidates of Nacala Port (OCINA) was reduced from 11 seats in 1998 to just one in 2003. In Maputo, the Together for the City movement has five seats, compared to 15 in 1998.

The outcome of this local election showed that newly established political parties still had little say in Mozambican politics. If these results are taken as indicative voting trends in the parliamentary elections, they suggest that only FRELIMO and RENAMO would be able to secure the five percent of the total vote necessary to gain seats in the legislature: a trend that was confirmed by the results of the 2004 general election.

In the days after the local elections, RENAMO reacted with outrage to its unexpectedly poor showing. 'We do not recognise the results, and demand that the elections be annulled', RENAMO secretary-general Viana Magalhães declared on 4 December 2003. International observers had noted 'irregularities' during the

election process, and almost 20 percent of the ballots were considered invalid. The CNE had made mistakes in the initial announcement of seat distribution to winning parties, and the corrected results published on 11 December still contained errors. The Constitutional Council had to request clarifications from the CNE, which were forwarded on 18 December. Yet, the international observers, including delegates from the Carter Center and the European Union, considered the elections generally to have been 'free and fair'.

RENAMO nevertheless submitted protests to the CNE on irregularities noted during the electoral process, which allegedly favoured FRELIMO in almost half of the municipalities. The CNE published a deliberation addressing each complaint and the reasons why all were rejected. In most cases, the CNE stated that the irregularity had no influence on the final results, or that there was no material proof for the opposition's claims. RENAMO was still not satisfied with the CNE's arguments and submitted appeals to the Constitutional Council concentrating on the non-compliance with article 100 of the electoral law. FRELIMO also submitted appeals concerning the legality of certain RENAMO candidates. The Constitutional Council rejected all appeals and validated the results on 15 January 2004. Eventually, RENAMO refrained from further action, and returned to politics.

The next local elections in Mozambique will take place in 2008. The intention is to increase the number of municipalities in the future, but it is not yet clear how and when this will happen. The Assembly of the Republic, however, recently approved a constitutional amendment that allows for elected provincial assemblies from 2008. These provincial assemblies will relate to the provincial governments in much the same way as the Assembly of the Republic relates to the president and central government. Governors, however, will continue to be appointed by the president rather than elected, which means that perhaps half the provinces could find themselves with a governor from one party, and an assembly controlled by another party.

Conclusion

When one analyses the results from the four elections prior to the December 2004 presidential and legislative elections, it is clear that FRELIMO obtained far better results in 2003 than in 1994 and in 1999, even in provinces previously dominated by RENAMO. In 2003, FRELIMO received 71.02 percent of the valid ballots cast, while in 1994 its presidential candidate Joaquim Chissano received a mere 53.66 percent and in 1999 no more than 52.3 percent.

In 1994, legislative candidates representing RENAMO won the majority of the seats in five provinces, a number that increased to six in 1999. In fact, in several of those provinces, RENAMO was able to secure more than two-thirds of the seats. However, in the 2003 local elections only 26.55 percent of the electorate voted for RENAMO, which shows a sharp decline of support for RENAMO in local level politics.

As general turnout was much lower than during the presidential and legislative elections, however, it would be unwise to draw too many conclusions from the 2003 local elections about long-term trends. The same is true of the first local elections held in 1998, as RENAMO as well as 10 smaller parties decided to abstain from participation. Moreover, the local elections excluded more than half of the Mozambican electorate, specifically the rural population, who may have different political preferences from those of urban voters.

What is worth noting about the 2003 vote is that, once again, it took place in an environment of profound distrust between the major contenders. The numerous legal, political and technical measures that were taken to guarantee transparency, freedom and fairness did not prevent allegations of fraud being made throughout the process.

Taking a longer historical view, this lack of trust can be seen to have been present at every step of Mozambique's democratic process since 1994. In that year, RENAMO decided to withdraw from the peace process in the run up to the elections and allegedly only money brought them back - even though, of course, the official explanation is that 'diplomatic pressure' convinced them. During the local elections of 1998, again on the eve of the elections, RENAMO decided to boycott, but this time there was no diplomatic pressure brought to bear, and RENAMO was therefore not part of the local elections. A year later, in 1999, the rejection of all the complaints of RENAMO about the general election process led to a months-long boycott of parliament and violent clashes, bringing the political relations between RENAMO and FRELIMO to a low point. Furthermore, the allegations hindered fundamental progress in building confidence among the electorate that everyone was playing by the same rules, which is a basic indicator for the consolidation of democracy.

As Ira Baptista Lundin has pointed out, not all aspects of the Mozambican conflict were properly settled when the war ended, and have resurfaced as power struggles in formal political arenas, a phenomenon that suggests an unequal situation in political life:

Where a monolithic reality previously existed, the inclusion of other political forces implied less space for action for some of those who were included in the past, even if the presence of the opposition in parliament could be regarded, at times, as symbolic in the light of the power of the majority vote. Not a single proposal made by the opposition was approved between 1994 and 1999.¹⁴

The period around the turn of the millennium, in particular, indicated that democracy was not yet consolidated in Mozambique. FRELIMO benefited from the disbursement of state funds and other resources for its campaign, as well as from biased reporting by the state-controlled media. RENAMO claimed that the December 1999 elections had been rigged, and refused to take up its seats in parliament until October 2000. Brazão Mazula calls this period a phase of destabilisation.¹⁵ According to him, democratisation, which prevailed between 1990 and 1994, corresponds to a phase of 'real democratic cohabitation' during which a democratic culture was established. This was done by involving all parties in programmes of national reconstruction, with the objective of strengthening their ownership of the development process. In fact, democratic cohabitation created an expectation among Mozambican citizens that they would now be entitled to debate topics of vital national importance before the taking of political decisions.

However, from 1994 to 1998, there was a return to centralisation and concentration of power in Mozambique, with the government attempting to co-opt opposition forces. There was a revival of old, largely arbitrary, mechanisms of central government decision-making and an administrative bifurcation that placed a wedge between cities and rural areas, deepening the political exclusion of the rural population. The outcome was a strong reaction from RENAMO, which rejected FRELIMO's moves to assimilate and/or co-opt the opposition.

This tension led to a scenario of destabilisation, triggered by conflicting perceptions regarding the elections of 1998 and 1999. It was marked by a 'continuously unstable state, confused by inter- and intra-party struggles, without any benefit to society', with the various parties perceiving that there was nothing to negotiate about. This phase spells a militarisation of politics, though not to the extent of triggering a new civil war simply because there was no social base prepared to accept armed conflict. Furthermore, this analysis implies that, after the democratisation process started, the Mozambican state became weakened and unstable; society became divided by struggles between parties and within parties. Nevertheless, FRELIMO did not abandon its hegemonic and centralist

orientation. Thus, Mozambique has an electoral democracy, but not a consolidated one. As Ostheimer explains, Mozambique lives in a situation of 'democratic minimalism', which is becoming permanently entrenched.¹⁶

Democratic Minimalism?

Only 3,3 million of 7,6 million potential voters (43 percent) cast their votes in the December 2004 elections, according to AWEPA.¹⁷ This low turnout contrasts with 1994, when 87 percent of the registered voters went to the ballot boxes. According to the Maputo-based newspaper *Savana*, the poor showing can be seen as a 'yellow card' for Mozambique's political elite, a rejection of all political parties.¹⁸

Contrary to expectations, voters did not opt for alternatives. Opening the political sphere to non-FRELIMO and non-RENAMO political actors did not modify who the main contenders for power in Mozambique are: the country has in effect a two-party system clearly centred on the competition between FRELIMO and RENAMO, a dichotomy of political identities deeply rooted in the country's past conflicts.

Of the two rivals, FRELIMO seems to have a more loyal electoral base than RENAMO, as the latter has been losing votes continuously and has become weaker with each successive election. Social marketing expert Juarez da Maia argues that RENAMO is the primary cause for the high abstention through its 'strategy of defeat'. By constantly stressing its claim that it was denied power through fraud in 1994 and 1999, it created the image that there is no point in voting because FRELIMO will win no matter what. Accordingly, RENAMO has undermined its own image and has contributed to voters' apathy.¹⁹

Moreover, it has been argued that Dhlakama failed to create solid party bases in the run-up to the December 2004 elections, while FRELIMO's presidential candidate Armando Guebuza spent more than a year travelling around the country rebuilding the party grassroots and ensuring its fidelity to him. The results suggest that the party did indeed successfully mobilise its core supporters. RENAMO, by contrast, has no effective mobilisation structure; Dhlakama runs the party in a personalised way, and has dismissed those capable of creating a party machine because he feared they would challenge him. But elections in 2003 and 2004 show that people will vote only when a party urges them to do so.

RENAMO's transformation into a political party was one of the priorities after war ended. An important feature of ONUMOZ was the establishment of a trust fund of US\$17 million to help RENAMO become a political party. As there would be no investigations of allegations about war crimes, and national reconciliation meant no more than the political compromise between the two partners in the peace process, the transformation of the rebel movement into a political party became a critical necessity for peace to last. The process has been bumpy at best. Before the fund was set up, in early March 1993, RENAMO suspended its participation in the different commissions that were created according to the peace agreement, and moved to its headquarters in Maríngué. Dhlakama refused to move to Maputo on grounds of safety, and was using his military power as a bargaining tool to force the government and the international community into concessions. RENAMO maintained administrative structures in the areas it controlled as it incorrectly interpreted the peace agreement as authorising the existence of two administrations until the elections.

ONUMOZ succeeded in convincing Dhlakama to return to the peace process by saying that the international community was prepared to assist RENAMO's transformation. The resources were made available by foreign donors, though they were to be a temporary measure only. As the transition was completed, and

it became clear that RENAMO would not go back to the bush, the newborn party was left to fend for itself. Even though RENAMO now receives some funding from the state, lack of money is often cited as one of the reasons for its relatively weak party structure, especially at the local level outside its strongholds. In the south, for instance, RENAMO's branch offices often comprise little more than a flag on a member's house.

Nevertheless, the former guerrilla movement has succeeded in mounting a serious electoral challenge to the ruling party, and in maintaining its role as the principal opposition over more than a decade of multiparty politics. Yet, the movement has failed to learn from a number of its successes. For example, in the 2003 local elections, RENAMO's vote was strong only in those areas where it waged a strong campaign and was able to mobilise its supporters to go to the polling stations - most notably in Beira, Nacala, Ilha de Moçambique and Mocimboa da Praia. However, when it failed to mobilise supporters in a number of key municipalities it expected to win, it lost - as was the case in Milange and Mocuba. The same happened in December 2004.

The functioning of the organisation has remained almost totally in the hands of its president, however. Despite the age of pluralistic and democratic politics, Dhlakama retains his personal control over the party by systematically undermining the development of an effective and democratic party organisation.²⁰

The only occasion on which the authority of the party president seemed to be challenged by an alternative centre of power within the party was when a RENAMO parliamentary wing was formed, following the 1994 elections. Dhlakama had decided that he would run only for the state presidency and not for a parliamentary seat, and thus he remained outside the parliamentary group. In the absence of the party leader, Raúl Domingos, a former railwayman who had been the chief RENAMO negotiator in the peace talks in Rome, emerged as an influential and visible figure in parliament. After the general elections of 1999, it was Domingos who negotiated FRELIMO's unprecedented offer to allow the appointment of RENAMO governors in three provinces. Dhlakama then stepped in and rejected the deal, undermining the autonomy of the party's legislative wing. He expelled Domingos from the party in late 2000. It is widely believed that Dhlakama perceived Domingos as a threat.

The marginalisation of prominent figures developed into a pattern, leading to regular suspensions, resignations and dismissals in recent years. Joaquim Vaz, the secretary general of the party who had been advocating the re-admission of Domingos, was dismissed only eight months after he took office in 2001. As Dhlakama took over as interim secretary general, the whole political commission was sacked on the grounds of 'unpatriotic' and 'undemocratic' behaviour, and a new one elected after a purge of a few moderates.²¹

In November 2002, RENAMO's national council chose the then 33-year-old Viana Magalhães as the party's new general secretary. The appointment of Magalhães, who has a degree in linguistics and who did not play an active role in the war of destabilisation as he only joined RENAMO in 1992, is part of RENAMO's policy of promoting a younger generation of politicians. Additionally, the former rebel movement recently made efforts to open the party to professionals, people who could staff its own cadre positions and represent RENAMO within state institutions. For instance, a senior academic, Eduardo Namburete, headed its election office this year. However, the young and better educated seem to have little chance to take up the position of party president at any time soon. In August 2004, Dhlakama said that he could not abandon politics, because he always wins. 'I won in 1994 and in 1999. I don't know what it is to lose.'²²

Other weaknesses of RENAMO include its difficulties in operating within the new democratic institutions, which is in part a consequence of its lack of a well-

functioning organisation. RENAMO tried to provoke a complete breakdown in the country's legislature using as a pretext a demand to expel Domingos and four other deputies who were no longer members of RENAMO from parliament. RENAMO's demand had no legal basis, as there are no provisions stipulating that deputies expelled from their parties should lose their seats. RENAMO behaved in such an unruly manner that police had to be called to clear enough room to allow the members of the parliamentary Standing Commission to take their seats.

On 3 April 2002, RENAMO plunged the Assembly of the Republic into yet another crisis, when it refused to discuss the report of a parliamentary commission of enquiry into the riots of November 2000, even though the commission had been appointed at RENAMO's request. The report had concluded that the RENAMO demonstrations 'were illegal, violated the constitution and did not respect the legal framework governing the right to demonstrate'.

In the run-up to elections in December 2004, RENAMO resorted to aggressive rhetoric. Dhlakama repeatedly said he would take power irrespective of the results of the 2004 general elections and that he would form a government 'with or without fraud' ('fraud' implying a FRELIMO victory).

Nevertheless, RENAMO has never been close to re-starting the war and has, in fact, contributed to keeping all sections of society within the new pluralist framework, thus avoiding serious violent challenges to the status quo. It still remains to be seen whether this tradition will continue in the future, following the Constitutional Council's rejection of RENAMO's application concerning the 2004 election results.

In 2005, FRELIMO will mark 30 years of uninterrupted power, during which it built an effective organisation. In reality, FRELIMO's organisational structure has remained largely unchanged since its days as a socialist movement. An alleged 30,000 cells remain the party's basic units, as in the tradition of communist parties, immediately followed by circle and zone branches. It is at the latter level that party 'offices' are allegedly present all over the country. At higher local levels (district and province), FRELIMO structures benefit from the resources that the organisation inherited from its past privileged status as the sole legal political party, notably in terms of buildings.²³

In the early 1990s, when constitutional reforms were discussed in the country, FRELIMO realised the negative consequences of its attempt to impose political change from above. FRELIMO started to target groups that it previously considered as 'enemies', such as traditional leaders and religious communities, and began to portray itself as an inclusive party. Membership rose, reaching close to 1.5 million in the space of a decade.

These changes in the party's outlook, however, led to a division within the party. The authority of former combatants of the anti-colonial struggle in the main party organs has remained unchallenged, in spite of the emergence of the new technocrats in government and of an influential parliamentary wing. The old guard is seen - and likes to be seen - as guarantors of the superior ethics of the national leadership in the face of the new and allegedly more corruptible politicians brought to the fore by multiparty politics. The 'renewal in continuity' quota system, which allows the party to integrate younger generations or outsiders, does nothing to challenge the built-in conservative majority in all the party organs to which it applies.²⁴ Thus, there is a schism between a pragmatic, modernising wing that dominates the Cabinet, and a conservative old guard that dominates the party structures.

Choices favoured by the party leadership are rarely challenged, as was demonstrated by the election in mid-2002 of Armando Guebuza as FRELIMO's secretary-general and prospective candidate for the 2004 presidential elections.

While it was not Chissano alone who appointed his successor, the selection process was fundamentally oligarchic: a nomination was produced by the political commission, which was then formally endorsed by the central committee and later approved by the party congress. Armando Guebuza, who was at the time the chief of the party's parliamentary delegation, was thus selected in a manner that was largely consensual and disciplined, but also explicitly top-down and undemocratic. The election of Guebuza was viewed with suspicion because of the perception that the new generation was not given any space in the party's higher ranks.

On the other hand, Mozambique's current Prime Minister, Luísa Diogo, belongs to the new generation. Diogo is an economist who was born in province of Tete. She was only 17 when the country won its independence in 1975, so she took no part in the armed struggle for independence waged by FRELIMO. Diogo, who was the World Bank Programme Officer in Mozambique before joining the government in 1994 as deputy finance minister, was promoted to minister in 1999. She combined that position with the post of prime minister after Pascoal Mocumbi resigned before his term ended in February 2004. Significant for the future of FRELIMO, and for Mozambique's political development, will be Guebuza's choice of prime minister. The question is whether Guebuza will reappoint Luísa Diogo or replace her with a member of the older generation.

Armando Guebuza, who was born in Murrupula in Nampula province, is a veteran party member who established his credentials by leading a campaign against the Portuguese during the liberation war. He has been part of the FRELIMO senior leadership ever since the party's second congress, held in 1968 during the war. After independence, Guebuza became the right-hand to Samora Machel, as minister of internal administration and, later, as minister of the interior. His 1983 Operation Production, in which unemployed people were rounded up in Maputo and Beira and taken into the countryside, made Guebuza unpopular. After Machel's death in 1986, Guebuza was appointed to head the government commission of inquiry looking into the causes of the plane crash that took the lives of Machel and 34 others.

Under Chissano's first government, Guebuza was minister of transport. But his key role was as head of the government team that negotiated with the RENAMO rebels for two years in Rome, finally producing the peace agreement in October 1992. Guebuza also headed the government delegation on the Supervision and Control Commission (CSC), the UN-chaired body that oversaw the implementation of the peace agreement. Guebuza was elected head of the FRELIMO parliamentary group in late 1994 and re-elected after the 1999 elections.

Chissano has experienced declining support from within his party over the last two years, amid numerous corruption scandals, and the lack of action against those involved. It is expected that Guebuza's succession will involve a shift within FRELIMO towards a greater focus on public policies and control over government officials. Some critics have said that Guebuza will have difficulties in promoting transparency, given his own business interests. It has been argued that the change in political leadership may lead to increased corruption in Mozambique as the new leadership 'will need to establish its networks of clients and state funds will continue to be among the sources of enrichment of the elites'.²⁵ There are laws obliging public figures to declare their business interests, notably Law 4/90. Yet, as journalist Marcelo Mosse has pointed out, ambiguities surround how the declaration of interests is to be lodged, and - most crucially - while Law 4/90 makes explicit reference to other public figures, it does not apply to the president:

'It is certain that this [Law] 4/90 tries to take steps in relation to the separation of the public and the private, but does not establish effective mechanisms of control [. ...] It does not refer to the President of the Republic and neither does it state where the declaration [of interests] must be made.'²⁶

Continuing challenges

In September 2001, Mozambique became one of the first countries to reach completion point under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). Although Mozambique's debt is not currently sustainable, the country should reach debt sustainability in the near future. However, this depends on the ability of the country to withstand external shocks such as the famine that has recently ravaged Southern Africa.

In spite of this, the overall Mozambican economy has shown some impressive results in recent years. Inflation dropped from 56.5 percent in 1995 to 2.9 percent in 1999 and was around nine percent in 2004. Also, the metical strengthened against all foreign currencies and is currently stable. Furthermore, the government has privatised about 700 state companies, including 40 large enterprises, which were sold mainly to foreign investors. In 2001 foreign direct investment, especially from South Africa, totalled US\$255 million; a year later investments amounted to US\$406 million.²⁷ Consequently, the economy grew eight percent on average for the past five years, despite two devastating floods in 2000 and 2001. Growth is expected to continue, yet the 'economic tiger' label sometimes applied to Mozambique tells only part of the story. High annual growth percentages obscure both the fact that growth is starting from a low base, and the fact that much of the growth is attributable to large, foreign owned and capital-intensive projects such as the Mozal aluminium smelter in Maputo province, which so far have done little to stimulate the growth of indigenous enterprise.

However, growth continues to occur mainly in the new, capital-intensive sectors of southern Mozambique. Activity is faltering in traditional sectors such as agriculture and fisheries, leading to weak growth in the rural areas where most Mozambicans live. Agriculture generated 27.1 percent of GDP in 2003, but supplies the income of some 80 percent of the population. This means that only part of the population is benefiting from the economic growth, and the majority remains excluded. The asymmetric development pattern is a legacy of the colonial period, yet the gap has widened further since the end of the 1980s. To reverse this trend remains a huge challenge for Mozambique.

The first results of the Action Plan to Reduce Absolute Poverty (PARPA), the government's strategy to eliminate at least 60 percent of absolute poverty in the country by 2005, are hopeful. In 1997, almost 70 percent of the population lived below the poverty line. This percentage had, according to a nationwide household survey, decreased by more than 15 percent within six years. Still, the effects of PARPA vary enormously from region to region. In the provinces of Tete and Sofala the percentage of people living in absolute poverty had by 2003 been reduced to 60 and 36 percent respectively, but in Inhambane about 80 percent of the population still lived in miserable circumstances.

Furthermore, Mozambique continues to face a health emergency, since close to 13 percent of its adult population is living with HIV/AIDS. Infection rates are the highest in central Mozambique, 16.5 percent, and the lowest in the north, 5.6 percent. In southern Mozambique 13.2 percent of the adult population was living with HIV/AIDS. Recent figures from the Ministry of Health put the national infection rate even higher: at 16 percent. Not only does this represent a human tragedy, but it is also likely to impose constraints on the economic development of Mozambique, since the loss of the economically active population will undermine the country's productive capability. Life expectancy figures decrease dramatically when HIV/AIDS infection rates are taken into consideration: on average Mozambicans will not live longer than 36.5 years.²⁸ The Mozambican government has expressed a commitment to addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis; it adopted a National Strategic Plan in 2000, and set up a National AIDS Council, led by the prime minister.

An additional challenge is to alter Mozambique's low ranking on the corruption index compiled annually by Transparency International. In 90th position out of 146 countries in 2003, Mozambique is in that group of countries considered to have 'rampant corruption'. In particular, large-scale corruption in the financial world, which led to the murders of journalist Carlos Cardoso and bank manager António Siba Siba Macuacua, caused great damage to Mozambique's image. Some progress has been made in this respect: There is now an anti-corruption unit within the Prosecutor General's office, a new anti-corruption law and better supervision in the banking sector. Heavy sentences were passed on those convicted for Cardoso's murder. Yet investigators are paralysed by lack of resources, and the hit man convicted in the Cardoso case has twice escaped from custody in what many Mozambicans consider to be suspicious circumstances. People who were close to Cardoso feel that the figures ultimately responsible for his killing have never been brought to justice.

Final Thoughts

In Mozambique, the armed opposition accepted the general peace accord of 1992 and organised itself into a political party capable of contesting national elections and prepared to function as an opposition. RENAMO accepted FRELIMO's refusal to set up a coalition government of national reconciliation, without resorting to armed violence. RENAMO, therefore, has transformed itself remarkably from an armed group bent on destruction to a party seeking a legitimate political place in today's Mozambique. The country's first pluralist elections, held in 1994, established a formally competitive system, and with peace and stability restored all over the territory came dividends in the form of resumed economic activities and impressive rates of growth.

Yet the political climate has been deteriorating since December 1999, when RENAMO rejected the results of the national election and made accusations of fraud, which led to a political stalemate and a cessation of dialogue. This shows that, by the turn of the century, democracy had not yet been consolidated in Mozambique, as both parties showed a disregard for democratic process and behaved in a spirit of struggle following RENAMO's rejection of the election results. RENAMO refused to accept the government's right to govern in the six provinces where the opposition received the majority of the votes in 1999. Such discourse is potentially dangerous given the reality of the developmental imbalances, the lack of opportunities, issues around regions and zones in the country, with many Mozambicans feeling excluded from the process of reconstruction and progress. Thus, of immediate concern is the extent to which the new government will continue the processes of reconstruction and rehabilitation - however, in such a way that all citizens, irrespective of their area of origin, will benefit equally.

New political parties have made few inroads into an electorate shaped and dominated by the FRELIMO-RENAMO split. Unless or until some major political event generates the momentum for a third actor to challenge the current duopoly, small parties could find it even harder to enter parliament in the near future: state funding, to which only parties with parliamentary representation have access, may work as a further barrier to the success of any such challenger. This is of particular concern since FRELIMO strengthened its representation in parliament after the December 2004 election, reducing the opposition's share of seats substantially. It remains to be seen how this new balance of power will take shape in practice, considering RENAMO's distrust towards FRELIMO and its continuing difficulties in operating within the new democratic institutions.

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2 From official CNE tables, AWEPA, Maputo.

- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Post-election Statement on Mozambique Elections, 21 December 2004, Carter Center, Maputo.
- 5 Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 34, January 2005, AWEPA, Maputo.
- 6 Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 24, August 2004, AWEPA, Maputo.
- 7 The problems caused by names being left off the register were to some extent mitigated by a law allowing people to vote solely on the basis of a valid voter's card if their names did not appear on the list at the station where they ought to have been registered.
- 8 Mozambique Political Process Bulletin, 18 December 2004, AWEPA, Maputo.
- 9 Mediafax, "STAE mente sobre dossier software", 24 November 2004.
- 10 Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 31, December 2004, AWEPA, Maputo.
- 11 In Mozambique, the municipalities have almost the same structure as central government, with the same 'presidential system'. Every five years, a municipal president (mayor) and municipal assembly are elected. The municipal president then chooses local ministers, known as vereadores, who administer the various departments of the municipality. Apart from these municipalities, there are also so-called local state organs, consisting of 128 districts, 393 administrative posts and 1048 'localidades' (local communities). In all cases the administrators, as well as provincial governors, are appointed centrally.
- 12 There were also reports of the poor performance of FRELIMO in the rural areas during the first national elections, which contributed to the decision to exclude the rural areas from the process of municipal government.
- 13 E Braathen, Democratic Decentralization in Mozambique?, in M Newitt with P Chabal & N Macqueen (eds). *Community and the State Lusophone in Africa*, King's College, London, 2003, p. 99-126.
- 14 I B Lundin, Will Mozambique Remain a Success Story?, *African Security Review*, 10 (3), Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2000.
- 15 B Mazula, The Mozambican elections: a path of peace and democracy, as cited in E Braathen, op cit.
- 16 A Ostheimer, Mozambique: The Permanent entrenchment of democratic minimalism?, *African Security Review*, 10 (1), Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2001.
- 17 If one takes the official voters' roll figure of 9,1 million, then the turnout of 3,3 million represents a mere 36,4 percent. It is however universally recognised that voters' roll numbers have been inflated by duplicate registrations and a failure to remove the names of deceased voters.
- 18 Savana, "*Absentismo venceu eleições?*", 3 December 2004, p. 2.
- 19 As cited in Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 31, December 2004, AWEPA, Maputo.
- 20 While party congresses should be organised every two years, for example, none was held between 1994 and 2001.
- 21 BBC, '*Purge of Mozambique's opposition*', 30 July 2002.
- 22 Quoted by AIM Agência de Notícias, see also 'Ecos do Conselho Nacional da RENAMO' and 'Crise na RENAMO aumenta descontentamento', AIM edição 2878, Maputo.
- 23 See G Carbone, *Emerging pluralist politics in Mozambique: the FRELIMO-RENAMO party system*, Development Research Centre, London School of Economics, London, 2002.
- 24 Idem.
- 25 M Mosse, *Corrupção em Moçambique*, <http://geocities.yahoo.com.br/gotaelbr/mosse.htm>, 2004.
- 26 Idem, page 24.
- 27 Figures of Centro de Promoção de Investimentos (CPI), Maputo;
- 28 Instituto Nacional de Estatística, *Impacto demográfico de HIV/SIDA em Moçambique*, Maputo, 2000.