



Stabilisation Unit

**Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project:
Mozambique Case Study**

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February 2018

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Author details

The author is Head of the Africa Programme at Chatham House and a senior lecturer at Coventry University. The study draws on the author's observation of the Mozambican conflict since 1984, and field research conducted in Mozambique in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including in Rome during the peace negotiations and serving as an election officer for *Operação Unite Nations em Moçambique* (ONUMOZ) in 1994. It also benefits from recent field research in Mozambique since 2010 and includes face-face interviews with *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO) and *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) parliamentarians, current and past mediators, and a small number of academics working on past and current conflict analysis of Mozambique. It also draws upon a comprehensive review of secondary sources and some primary historical documents from the southern Africa archive of the Borthwick Institute, University of York.

Background to Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project

This case study is one of a series commissioned to support the Stabilisation Unit's (SU) development of an evidence base relating to elite bargains and political deals. The project explores how national and international interventions have and have not been effective in fostering and sustaining political deals and elite bargains; and whether or not these political deals and elite bargains have helped reduce violence, increased local, regional and national stability and contributed to the strengthening of the relevant political settlement. Drawing on the case studies, the SU has developed a series of summary papers that bring together the project's key findings and will underpin the revision of the existing 'UK Approach to Stabilisation' (2014) paper. The project also contributes to the SU's growing engagement and expertise in this area and provides a comprehensive analytical resource for those inside and outside government.



Executive Summary

This case focuses on a series of elite bargains between Mozambique's ruling party (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, (FRELIMO) and the armed opposition, *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO). These bargains are cyclical and have occurred with increasing regularity since the Rome General Peace Accord (GPA) of 1992. The study examines the background to these bargains and why they (partly) failed.

The build-up to a deal

The root causes of the post-independence civil war grew from political and economic inequality for non-FRELIMO supporters, particularly in Mozambique's central provinces. The situation was exacerbated by the intervention of white minority regimes in Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa, aimed at destabilising the situation. RENAMO was originally created and nurtured by these regimes to weaken the Mozambican government but not to overthrow it. Only with the end of the Cold War and the end of apartheid South Africa did these secondary issues fall away, making a settlement possible.

By 1992, a hurting stalemate prevailed militarily. International mediation was supported by various actors, including Western and regional governments (US, Kenya, Portugal, UK and Italy in particular), faith groups and the private sector. RENAMO, in particular, needed support, as it had to quickly develop political negotiation skills and prepare for peace. The result was the 1992 Rome General Peace Accord, which underpinned a transitional process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), the creation of a new army, and Mozambique's first multiparty elections in 1994, overseen by a UN peacekeeping operation, *Operação Unite Nations em Moçambique* (ONUMOZ).

The durability of the deal

This transitional process was mostly successful, with peaceful elections and the creation of a new joint army. International efforts to support post-conflict reconstruction were also effective, and a "pay and scatter" programme successfully dispersed and reintegrated many thousands of ex-combatants. However, its shortcomings soon became clear: it was a time-limited technical process, and it devoted declining resources and attention to clusters of ex-combatants who failed to be dispersed. In addition, RENAMO's leader was allowed to maintain an armed militia (under the guise of a presidential guard).

The lack of inclusive growth, alongside mounting regional inequality in opposition strongholds such as central Mozambique, also eroded the early post-election peace gains. RENAMO made political gains in central Mozambique, and its leader, Afonso Dhlakama, nearly won the 1999 presidential elections (some believe he did). The result focused FRELIMO's attention on the threat that RENAMO posed, and it responded by more aggressively countering RENAMO while also seeking to contain it, including by offering provincial governorships to RENAMO members in 2000. FRELIMO hardliners and RENAMO's internal incoherence undermined this particular effort. After President Guebuza was elected in 2004, he embarked on a strategy of total FRELIMO domination across the country, which was rewarded in the short-term by a landslide victory over RENAMO in the 2009 elections. Longer term, this further humiliated and marginalised RENAMO ex-rebels, resulting in their return to targeted armed violence in 2013.

The search for new elite bargains

Limited armed conflict then lasted until July 2014, with a new agreement signed in September 2014. This deal provided for a more politicised electoral process, jobs for RENAMO members in the army and police, demobilisation and an amnesty for crimes committed since March 2012. However,



numerous issues remained unresolved, including the number of RENAMO combatants to be employed by the State and funding for RENAMO.

RENAMO was rewarded for its return to targeted violence by winning increased seats in the 2014 elections. FRELIMO's new leader, President Nyusi, sought direct dialogue with Dhlakama. His efforts were initially compromised by his attempt to consolidate power inside FRELIMO and the disjointed approach towards negotiations with RENAMO. A new, more violent phase of armed conflict followed from May 2015 to December 2016: five rounds of internationally mediated peace talks took place from July to December. Finally, in late December 2016, Dhlakama announced a unilateral truce, which was extended twice and subsequently made indefinite. New peace talks have also started and, in August 2017, President Nyusi met Dhlakama near his base in central Mozambique.

The role of external actors

External actors have played an important role in encouraging elite bargaining processes in Mozambique, including support for the peace talks that led to the Rome General Peace Accord (GPA) in 1992. The UN subsequently conducted a successful peacekeeping mission preparing for elections in 1994, and international donors then supported post-conflict reconstruction. However, they made the mistake of seeing this support as both time-limited and as a primarily 'technical' intervention.

The resumption of limited armed conflict in 2013, therefore, caught international partners and Mozambique's neighbours by surprise. International pressure eventually convinced former President Guebuza to seek a negotiated settlement with RENAMO and a short-lived truce and agreement was achieved in 2014.

With a return to armed conflict in 2015, new mediation efforts took place. This time, and in response to RENAMO demand, international mediation was led by the EU-supported Mario Rafaelli and the Community of Sant' Egidio. However, by November 2016, President Nyusi and Dhlakama decided to take a firmer grip on the process, having become frustrated by intrigues, including within their own negotiating teams. Their direct approach to communication was a breakthrough, signalling that both men wanted complete Mozambican ownership of the process.

It is likely that the local election in 2018 and national elections in 2019 will be hotly and, at times, violently contested. Disputed or violent elections could trigger a new cycle of violence, and future 'deals' will require further negotiation and renegotiation.



Part I: Mapping the Context of Armed Violence

Mozambique's history is deeply tied to complex regional politics (compounded by divisions between the centre and the peripheries of the country), and failures in nation building. For much of the colonial period up to 1942, Mozambique was divided into separate administrative zones, which fragmented the colony and prevented the emergence of a common system of law and administration. The location of the capital in the extreme south of the country, and the proximity of South Africa, concentrated resources and the modern sector of the economy in that region, while much of the rest of the country continued to be relatively marginalised.¹ The 1977–92 civil war also helped to accentuate regional differences, with RENAMO's activities concentrated in the centre of the country.

FRELIMO was founded in 1964 and had socialist and modernising ambitions for Mozambique. Under Samora Machel's leadership, FRELIMO articulated a clear vision in which the country would be cleansed of the corruption and exploitation of the colonial regime. Mozambique obtained independence in June 1975, following a nationalist struggle against Portuguese colonialism by FRELIMO;² and in February 1977, FRELIMO formally declared its transformation from liberation movement into a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. The decision came at a time when there were growing numbers of skirmishes between Mozambique and Rhodesia, and when the party was seeking to attract military aid from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.³

Following FRELIMO's rise to power, their efforts at 'purification' and persecution of those who had collaborated with the colonial regime led many Mozambicans to leave the country, some of whom joined RENAMO. FRELIMO increasingly found that it could not defeat RENAMO, partly as a result of its guerrilla tactics and partly because of the centralisation of the state, which meant that many regions had never benefited from a centralised government in Maputo and their politics and loyalties were regional and local as a result.

Background to RENAMO

In 1976, Mozambique imposed sanctions against neighbouring Rhodesia's white minority regime, which disrupted the Mozambican economy and deprived its ports of lucrative earnings. It also marked the start of hostile relations between the two countries: in 1977, the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Office (CIO) began to arm and train the nascent RENAMO opposition force in retaliation for Mozambique's support to Zimbabwe nationalist guerrillas. André Matsangaissa was RENAMO's first leader until death in action in 1979. A power struggle then ensued, until Afonso Dhlakama became RENAMO's second leader in 1980 at the age of 30.⁴

Rhodesian training, supplies and support, and the safe haven the country offered, were critical for RENAMO, which would not have survived without it. The group started with 76 fighters in 1977 and grew to over 20,000 by 1992. During this period there were different episodes in RENAMO's evolution: the Rhodesian phase (1977-80); the overt South African phase (1980-84); the covert South African phase (1985-88); the post-South African phase until 1990, by which time, according to the CIA, RENAMO had become a self-sustaining fighting force; and a military stalemate and peace process phase (1990-92), when both sides were exhausted, militarily spent and wanted an elite bargain.

¹ Newitt 2017: 22.

² Newitt 1995.

³ Cann 1997.

⁴ Flower 1987.



In addition to its reliance on Rhodesia and later apartheid South Africa, RENAMO enjoyed logistical support from Hastings Banda in Malawi and Daniel arap Moi in Kenya. There was also support from Portugal.⁵ RENAMO's relocation to South Africa marked a turning point in the war, which soon began to escalate. The South African government used RENAMO as a tool for destabilising Mozambique in response to Mozambique's support for the African National Congress (ANC). Ultimately, their aim was to destabilise Mozambique and bring FRELIMO to the negotiating table.

RENAMO quickly expanded its military operations from the centre of the country. By 1982, fighting had spread to Gaza and Inhambane provinces and the country's richest province, Zambézia.⁶ In the early 1980s, RENAMO gained a reputation for brutal violence and became notorious for its practice of mutilating civilians, including children, by cutting off ears, noses, lips and sexual organs. RENAMO also engaged in numerous attacks on civilian targets such as transportation links, health clinics and schools. A study of ex-combatants after the war in 1997 showed that 87 percent of RENAMO soldiers had been forced recruits, a statistic that has been supported by more recent studies and interviews with ex-RENAMO leadership.⁷

Failed attempts to end the war

FRELIMO made a bid to end the war in 1984 when it signed the Nkomati non-aggression pact with apartheid South Africa, followed by talks in 1985 with RENAMO. However, both failed due to South African duplicity. Indeed, RENAMO changed its military strategy as South Africa significantly reduced its covert aid to the rebels. Prior to the Nkomati accord it had airlifted significant supplies into Mozambique to help RENAMO become more self-sustaining. Rather than rely on rear bases in South Africa, RENAMO now had to find provisions from the local population and replenish its arms supplies from captured weaponry. It also moved away from attacking military targets in favour of attacking "soft" civilian targets, and began to exercise greater control over populated areas through a combination of looting and pillaging on a wider scale, and efforts to target hearts and minds.⁸

By 1986, RENAMO units had pushed deep into Zambézia province, and at one point it appeared as if RENAMO would capture the city of Quelimane, cutting the country into two.⁹ More Tanzanian and Zimbabwean troops were brought to help the Mozambique army regain territory lost to RENAMO.¹⁰ During this period, Mozambique's first president, Samora Machel, was killed in a mysterious plane crash and Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's foreign minister since independence, became President. This change in leadership led to a series of reforms, and ultimately official peace negotiations with RENAMO that began in 1990.

The Rome General Peace Accord (GPA) that was signed in 1992 brought over 20 years of peace. It was followed by an aid bonanza that rapidly transformed the FRELIMO elite into a patrimonial political class that became increasingly determined to hang on to power at all costs. Gas and coal reserves heightened the stakes further, dividing the FRELIMO elite over who had access to the spoils. It also triggered RENAMO's decision to return to targeted armed violence in 2013, to push for a new elite bargain with FRELIMO in order to benefit from future coal and gas rents. Sumich and Honwana¹¹ note the fragility of this elite bargain in their assessment of FRELIMO and its disinclination to share power:

⁵ Vines 1996.

⁶ Vines 1996: 22-25.

⁷ Dolan and Schafer 1997; Hultman 2009.

⁸ Vines 1996: 22-25.

⁹ Manjate 2013: 250.

¹⁰ Hall and Young 1997: 191-192.

¹¹ Sumich and Honwana 2007: 22.



Since independence power has primarily been located in the Frelimo party, not in supposedly neutral state structures that could be inherited in a reasonably intact manner by another political force. Thus the very success of the party in rebuilding their hegemony and their disinclination to share power with social forces outside of their control could intensify the divisions and inequalities that helped to fuel the civil war in the first place.

Until 2013, Mozambique was regarded as having passed through a successful post-conflict transition. In April 2013, however, there was a return to limited armed conflict between former fighters of RENAMO and Mozambican government forces. A new agreement in September 2014 ended regular armed skirmishing in central Mozambique, but armed violence once more resumed in 2015 and persisted until late December 2016, focused primarily on commercial links and public services. Fresh negotiations for a new political deal are currently underway.

Part II: The Antecedents of an Elite Bargain

While the roots of the peace process began in 1982, South Africa's covert policy of support for RENAMO eroded initial attempts to seek a negotiated settlement. The Mozambique government was also not prepared to offer significant positions of patronage in government as a guarantee of RENAMO's survival. Only in the late 1980's, with declining external support for RENAMO and greater pressures on the government from the vacuum left by the end of the Cold War and the collapsing Eastern Bloc, were serious peace talks possible.

Neither side could continue fighting indefinitely. Mozambique had become impoverished and the pool of booty for military commanders on both sides was declining steadily. Neighbouring states like Zimbabwe also wanted to cut their losses and disengage militarily from Mozambique, which added momentum to the process. Growing preoccupation by the Kenyan and Malawian governments with their own domestic political problems and the changing political environment in South Africa, also increased pressure on RENAMO to engage in negotiations.

By late 1988, therefore, it became clear to the Mozambican government that there could be no military solution to the war. President Chissano met South African President Botha at Songo in Tete province in September 1988 and secured a pledge that Pretoria would abide by the 1984 Nkomati Accord. Unlike the previous South African pledge, this one seems to have been largely honoured. Chissano also gave senior church leaders permission to open direct contact with RENAMO. Following several failed initiatives and false starts, direct RENAMO-FRELIMO peace talks eventually began in Rome in July 1990 mediated by the Catholic *Community of Sant' Egidio*.¹²

Widespread famine conditions injected a new urgency into the peace process in 1991 and 1992 as the war prevented the provision of adequate relief to the population. With a spreading drought, RENAMO's ability to live off the land steadily collapsed. It became increasingly desperate in its search for food, and peace looked increasingly attractive.¹³

During the negotiations, *Community of Sant' Egidio* was strategic in building up RENAMO's trust, and Kenya provided passports to key RENAMO officials to enable them to travel. They also helped the rebels transform vague requests into communicable proposals. However, as the peace process progressed, so did RENAMO's financial demands. In December 1991, RENAMO asked for US\$3 million, a figure that had risen to US\$10-12 million by June 1992. RENAMO's final demand in Rome in

¹² Vines and Wilson 1997: 137-139.

¹³ Vines 1996: 142.



October 1992 before the ceasefire was US\$6-8 million to finance RENAMO's transformation into a political party.¹⁴

Once the eleventh round of peace talks got underway in June 1992, *Community of Sant' Egidio's* role was reduced. Discussions on military issues brought the US, France, Britain and Portugal into the negotiations as observers, and the momentum grew for twin track diplomacy and the urgent need to "Summitise" and "Africanise" the process. The *Community of Sant' Egidio* mediators only gave a reluctant agreement to this US-proposed plan in April 1992, perhaps worried about a loss of momentum and that they might lose influence and credit for the peace process.

Mozambique was also highly dependent on foreign aid, which by one estimate constituted close to 90 percent of GNP in 1994. This made the government far more susceptible to pressure from donors and the UN. Secret Italian and Lonrho pledges of financial support to RENAMO after the ceasefire provided an acceptable "neutral forum" in which the major players could directly negotiate how to reach an elite bargain.

After twelve often torturous rounds of negotiations, on 4 October 1992 the GPA was eventually signed in Rome between President Joaquim Chissano and RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama. It set out the 'principles and modalities for the achievement of peace' in the country and consisted of seven protocols. The termination of armed conflict would contain four phases: the ceasefire, the separation of forces, the concentration of forces for a new army, and demobilisation. Disarmament would also be an integral part of this process.

Under the terms of the GPA, demobilised RENAMO forces and government troops were to form a 30,000-strong army. Subsequently it was agreed that a United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) force of up to 7,500 personnel would oversee the transition period. ONUMOZ's political mandate involved a central role in keeping the Rome peace process on track, and Aldo Ajello, an Italian, was appointed as UN Special Representative, arriving in Maputo in October 1992 on the day the GPA came into force. Multiparty elections were to follow once demobilisation was complete and voters were registered.

From the date the agreement was signed until 2013, there was only one serious violation of the Rome GPA. This occurred between 17 and 20 October 1992, when RENAMO forces unexpectedly occupied four towns, but which the government retook within a month.

Part III: Key Features of the Elite Bargain

The implementation of most of the key provisions of the GPA was placed in the hands of the UN. ONUMOZ was mandated to perform a series of tasks, including monitoring and verifying the implementation of the ceasefire, for instance monitoring the retreat of Malawian and Zimbabwean units from Beira, Limpopo and Nacala transport corridors, and protecting these corridors with its own forces.

In order to fulfil its mandate, ONUMOZ was provided with both civilian and military departments. It was mandated to monitor the cantonment, disarmament and demobilisation of nearly 110,000 combatants from both sides, as well as the creation of the new army and the resettlement of

¹⁴ Vines 1996: 145-46.



between five to six million refugees and displaced people. The cost was estimated at US\$331 million (one million dollars per day) until 31 November 1993.¹⁵

Creation of the New Army

The creation of a new Mozambican army, the *Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique* (FADM), was central to the peace process. It was intended to be in place before the elections and to be an effective stabilising force once the UN pulled out after the 1994 elections. The question of how many soldiers would be part of the new army was a major point of discussion during the protracted peace negotiations in Rome. The government favoured a larger army, while RENAMO favoured a smaller one. Both sides eventually agreed that the new FADM army would be 30,000 strong, with 15,000 from each side.¹⁶

The plan to have a 30,000-strong army on the ground before the October elections (thus putting into practice one of the lessons drawn from the failure of the Angola process that there needed to be sufficient blue helmets deployed) was not achieved. As the year progressed, discipline broke down in both armies and a wave of mutinies struck government and RENAMO Assembly Areas (AA) alike. In the end, 12,195 soldiers (8,533 from the FAM/FPLM and 3,662 from RENAMO) were selected for the FADM – about five percent of all soldiers in the AAs.

RENAMO soldiers appeared more willing to enlist into the new army than their government counterparts; for many it was their first opportunity to earn a salary, and their political leaders had promised them vastly improved conditions under a RENAMO government. Others simply lacked the qualifications; for instance, RENAMO sought funds in 1995 for driving lessons for its long time military chief of staff, General Faustino Adriano, in order to make him more employable.

Re-Integration of Ex-Combatants

Unlike demobilisation, which ended in late August 1994, the social and economic re-integration of demobilised combatants was an open-ended process. To assist this, a Reintegration Support Scheme (RSS) of two years of monthly support in cash, to be paid by the government for six months and by the donor community for the following eighteen months, was instituted in early 1994. Soldiers who were demobilising were given an introductory course about their rights and duties as civilians and offered vocational training. They also had to choose the place they wanted to live, and were given a package of civilian clothing and transport to their chosen destination. The monthly sum was related to their last salary and paid into a local bank account, although this was difficult to assess for RENAMO soldiers. Most payments were, on average, between 7 and 24 dollars a month, with a lump sum of 52 dollars at the end of the two years.

By 1996, 87 percent of demobilised soldiers had been integrated into society, and most had secured a food supply or a small guaranteed income. The total reintegration budget was US\$94.4 million, of which \$35.5 million was allocated to support two years of cash for registered ex-combatants, and \$33.7 million went directly to demobilised soldiers. In all, some 92,000 soldiers benefited, about 71,000 from the government forces and 21,000 from RENAMO.

At the time, RENAMO combatants complained of their exclusion from full reintegration benefits: in particular, they had not had pension allowances deducted from their salaries like government troops, so they were not eligible for pensions. The Mozambican demobilised soldiers' association, the *Associação Moçambicana dos Desmobilizados da Guerra* (AMODEG), tried to assist, but its

¹⁵ Synge 1997.

¹⁶ McMullin 2004: 629.



dependence on state funding made it less supportive of ex-RENAMO combatants in their efforts to reintegrate.¹⁷

RENAMO proposed extending pension benefits to its soldiers as they had not been paid salaries during the war, but FRELIMO opposed it, and used the pension debate to demonstrate its political strength. This issue resurfaced in the 2003 municipal elections and the 2004 national elections, but with little impact.¹⁸ However, it later became one of the drivers for renewed armed conflict by RENAMO in 2013.

Disarmament

According to the Mozambican Force for Crime Investigation and Social Reinsertion (FOMICRES), between three and four million weapons were circulating at the end of the war in 1992.¹⁹ During the 1992–94 peace process, the priority of ONUMOZ was to help RENAMO transform itself into a political party and contest national elections. The UN priority was to dismantle RENAMO's command and control structures, and also disperse ex-combatants through the pay-and-scatter programme. Disarmament was not a priority, and the UN's Special Representative, Aldo Ajello, admitted that he considered that muscular disarmament would undermine the peace process.²⁰ After the withdrawal of ONUMOZ in 1995, and as crime rates increased in Mozambique and across the border in South Africa, two disarmament efforts got under way: Operation Rachel (a joint Mozambican-South African police initiative) and an Arms for Tools (TAE) programme run by the Christian Council of Mozambique. Operation Rachel focused on the border regions of Gaza province and Mpumalanga, and by 2003 several tons of weapons were destroyed. The TAE reported it had collected 800,000 guns and other pieces of military equipment.²¹

The failure to completely disarm in 1992–94 resulted in many individuals retaining their weapons. While these weapons are not thought to have been used in the recent renewal of conflict since 2013 (the equipment used recently is in much better condition than would be expected after disuse for so many years – and those using them are considerably younger), it has been argued that the possession of firearms subsequently attracted other gun owners to violence.²²

The current legacy of incomplete DDR

More generally, the process of demobilisation, disarmament and integration of RENAMO into government forces has returned as a critical issue in the current crisis, with RENAMO alleging discrimination against its forces. The International Observer Military Team for the Cessation of Military Hostilities (EMOCHM) that was mandated by the September 2014 agreement between President Guebuza and Dhlakama, ended in May 2015.²³ It was to have been made up of observers from Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cape Verde, Italy, Portugal, the UK and the US, and headed by a brigadier from Botswana. With only a ten-day installation period, it was mandated to complete its task of monitoring the disarmament and demobilisation of RENAMO's "residual forces"

¹⁷ Schafer 1998.

¹⁸ McMullin 2004: 627-629.

¹⁹ Reisman and Lalá 2012.

²⁰ Interview with Aldo Ajello, Rome, 17 October 2012. Others consider this as one of the flaws and that this was a lesson learned by the UN DPKO for future operations. Interview with Owen Greene, University of Bradford, 2 March 2017.

²¹ Reisman and Lalá 2012.

²² Sengulane 2014. There is little evidence of many fresh, young combatants becoming involved in this armed conflict to date, but small numbers joined RENAMO for training in 2013-16 and could become a future problem if this conflict becomes protracted.

²³ EMOCHM 2014.



and ensuring their incorporation into the FADM and the police, or a return to civilian life, within 135 days.

The 135 days expired in February 2015, and a dispute followed as to whether or not to renew the mandate. RENAMO sought an extension of 120 days, but the government insisted on 60. EMOCHM's mandate eventually expired, unfulfilled, on 15 May 2015.

By this time, RENAMO had not delivered a list of those it wished to see recruited into the FADM and the police, and the observers had little to observe. The government said in October 2014 that it was prepared to incorporate 300 men into the armed forces and police from RENAMO's militia (200 and 100 respectively), a figure based on past contacts with Dhlakama. However, EMOCHM was effectively a government political gesture rather than a meaningful concession to RENAMO and was never intended to be the start of a serious process.²⁴

RENAMO's leadership also did not want to reintegrate its residual forces and finally disarm, as this remains its prime leverage over the government in its continuing effort to extract political concessions. RENAMO's combatants that were part of EMOCHM signalled to the international observers that they wanted a lasting deal and were fatigued by having been kept on military standby for over 20 years. They also expressed their anxiety over lack of skills and were unrealistic about what resources would be available and what they could expect.²⁵

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from RENAMO's strategy since 2013 is that maintaining armed men who are prepared to challenge the government enhanced RENAMO's political standing in the short term, and has resulted in a new process to reach a new elite bargain in the longer term. Two other lessons can be drawn from the resumed violence of 2013–14 and subsequent clashes. First, DDR efforts were seen as a finite, short-term technical process that did not cover political inclusion. This meant that after a decade of peace, international donors concluded that Mozambique had undergone a successful post-conflict transition and that support for NGO efforts in this field was no longer a priority.

Second, disarmament should not have been neglected, and ONUMOZ missed an opportunity with regard to this. After its withdrawal, the opportunity to disarm diminished and only a small percentage of weapons were given up through official and NGO efforts. RENAMO has maintained armed men and weapons stockpiles over 20 years, and there was early warning of this. In 2012, the NGO FOMICRES,²⁶ for instance, located large arms caches in five districts in Sofala province, including heavy weapons, but politically it was not able to access them for destruction;²⁷ and RENAMO official Rahil Khan warned in January 2014 that RENAMO had arms caches across the country that it could draw upon.²⁸ While recognising that RENAMO would never have handed over all its weapons to ONUMOZ, more effort during its mandate would have reduced stockpiles further, especially if international partners had continued to support disarmament and support to alternative livelihoods of ex-combatants in central Mozambique.

RENAMO's continued access to an armed militia is also the result of a provision in the GPA, which stipulated that the former rebels could maintain body guards (who would enjoy police status) as a 'transitional guarantee' until elections in 1994. The objective then was for the police to take over

²⁴ Interview with Jamie Martin, ex-EMOCHM - Beira, Salisbury, 24 February 2017.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Littlejohn 2015.

²⁷ FOMICRES is led by ex-RENAMO and was able to access areas of central Mozambique other NGOs could not. Over the last decade FOMICRES suffered from funding difficulties due to international attention shifting from post-conflict assistance. Interview with Gary Littlejohn, Harrogate, 2 March 2017.

²⁸ Agência Lusa 2014.



these responsibilities, but that Dhlakama's 'bodyguards' could, if a list be provided, be given police training. Although a list was eventually provided, the government insisted that, once trained, these men must obey police orders. In January 1998, worried about losing authority over these men, Dhlakama categorically refused to allow his bodyguards to be incorporated into the police. It seems likely that a mixture of fear of losing his prime asset (armed men) and concern over his own security drove this decision.

The result was that, from 1994 to 2013, the Mozambican government reluctantly accepted the de facto presence of several hundred armed RENAMO personnel resident in the Maringué and Cheringoma districts of Sofala province, who occasionally paraded with weapons and intimidated local FRELIMO activists.²⁹ A small group of them also escorted Dhlakama and provided security for his house in Nampula as his "presidential guard". They were poorly uniformed, with shoes falling off and brandishing old weapons.³⁰ The government wanted to disarm this "presidential guard" completely, and offered to integrate it with the national police force, but this offer was rejected. A further opening to reintegrate some from this RENAMO militia emerged from the September 2014 agreement, which temporarily halted hostilities, but depended on their fitness and the provision of a new list. That list was never forthcoming and, again in 2016 and now in 2017, 'integration' of RENAMO members and the career progression for those who were integrated after the GPA, remain key agenda items in talks between the government and RENAMO.

Transformation into a Political Party

The principal achievement of the GPA was the conversion of RENAMO from an almost entirely military force into more of a political organisation³¹ supported by a UN Trust Fund which, in the run up to the 1994 election, provided some 17 million dollars to the former rebel movement. RENAMO and the government had quietly signed an agreement in December 1992 with Italy, that it would provide RENAMO with 15 million dollars and a further 17 million dollars to be divided by all opposition parties. By March 1993 these funds had not appeared.³² Nevertheless, the Trust Fund played an important role in incentivising RENAMO to forego violence, referred to as an 'effective insurance policy against failure'.³³

As momentum towards peace negotiations increased, in 1989 RENAMO recruited between 100 and 200 secondary school students with the promise of scholarships abroad. This effort to increase the level of educated supporters backfired as RENAMO failed to deliver any scholarships. Nevertheless, despite its violent reputation during the war, RENAMO was able to attract new supporters in 1993-1994, some of whom were anti-FRELIMO and others who saw opportunity in becoming involved. In 1995, only 18 of RENAMO's 112 members of the National Assembly had been fighters. However, RENAMO's parliamentarians had few graduate educational qualifications in 1995, and only six percent of RENAMO deputies had a university degree compared to 24 percent for FRELIMO.³⁴

Tension between Dhlakama and ex-fighters, and newer post-conflict RENAMO supporters looking for an alternative to FRELIMO, has grown over time and has resulted in serious splits. Some newer members are more hawkish for conflict, having had no experience of the realities of war or memory of past elite bargains.

²⁹ Xinhua News Agency 2005.

³⁰ Author witnessed them line up as guard of honour after his meeting with Dhlakama, Nampula, 23 September 2010.

³¹ Synge 1997: 148.

³² The British businessman 'Tiny' Rowland also became personally engaged in the search for a solution to Mozambique's war as early as 1984. He became increasingly involved from 1989 and played an important facilitating role in the run up to the Rome GPA.

³³ Synge 1997: 148.

³⁴ Manning 1998: 185.



RENAMO's Rise and Decline

RENAMO has contested all five presidential and parliamentary elections since the war ended in 1992. The results of all five elections up to 2014 show a clear and consistent pattern. FRELIMO was able to command a majority overall and dominate in the capital, the south and the extreme north, while RENAMO remained strong in the centre and north. However, RENAMO was visibly weakened after the 2009 elections, and the new parliament was dominated by FRELIMO which had won 75 percent of the votes and had majorities in all former RENAMO strongholds. Positions in the National Assembly were allocated to parties in proportion to their number of parliamentary seats.

For a while in the 1990s, RENAMO became the largest opposition party in Africa, only overtaken by Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 2002. RENAMO won nearly 40 percent of the overall vote and the majority in five provinces in both the 1994 and 1999 elections. Its popularity at that time surprised many observers because of its atrocious record for human rights abuses during the war. Its support indicated discontent at continued domination by FRELIMO, the strength of regional politics and divisions within the country, and the fact that the wounds of the civil war were yet to fully heal. However, successful demobilisation, poverty, lack of service delivery and conflict weariness contributed to an increasing disillusionment by grassroots RENAMO supporters with an increasingly distant leadership by Afonso Dhlakama. As a result, after the 1999 elections and up to 2014, RENAMO was on the decline as an opposition party, and it was not able to significantly challenge FRELIMO's hegemony.

RENAMO's popularity was not helped by its lack of skilled cadres and its failure to deliver on wartime promises. Corruption has also been an issue: between 1999 and 2004, RENAMO received about \$1.4 million per year from the state, almost half of which remains unaccounted for.³⁵ Hardly any of these funds trickled down to the districts and, with the fall in the number of RENAMO seats from 90 to 51, the subsidy fell too, putting a severe financial squeeze on the party since it had never established effective collection of membership dues, and ran few businesses that could raise funds.

Leadership has also played a key role. Dhlakama has been RENAMO's leader for 37 years, and the party's three peace-time national conferences have failed to modernise the party. Key appointments were still made by Dhlakama rather than by election,³⁶ in contrast to the political debate and compromises over leadership made by FRELIMO. Despite resumed violent conflict, RENAMO did not boycott the 15 October 2014 national elections and, in June 2014, its National Council met in Beira and was addressed by a 22-minute phone call from Dhlakama (in hiding in central Mozambique at the time), who was unanimously re-elected as RENAMO's leader and presidential candidate.

Although RENAMO has occasionally successfully organised protests, such as the boycott of the 1998 municipal elections and public demonstrations against the 1999 election results, these have not resulted in concessions or a material improvement of its fortunes. In November 2000, RENAMO staged demonstrations throughout the country, claiming that the 1999 election results were fraudulent. Violence killed 40 people and injured over 100; while in some parts of the country, such as the capital Maputo, demonstrations took place peacefully. Arrests followed and President Chissano cancelled an international trip in order to oversee efforts to calm the situation.³⁷

After RENAMO's defeat in 2009, Dhlakama regularly threatened to hold nationwide demonstrations against what he claimed were fraudulent election results, but not a single RENAMO demonstration was staged. Dhlakama also announced that the RENAMO deputies elected in 2009 would boycott the

³⁵ Carbone 2005: 431.

³⁶ Manning 2002: 155-158.

³⁷ AIM Reports 2000.



new parliament, but all the RENAMO deputies including their secretary general defied him and took up their seats, anxious to claim their allowances.

Dhlakama's strategy between 1994 and 2013 was to regularly obstruct parliament or pull decisions out of it and seek a high level bilateral negotiation between both leaderships. There was little vision beyond oppositionist politics, and with RENAMO's electoral weakening until 2014, the bargaining power of Dhlakama was greatly reduced. In addition, RENAMO party networks are weak, and the inability of Dhlakama to change his leadership style from that of an insecure, centralising guerrilla leader contributed significantly to RENAMO's pre-2014 decline. Post conflict peace building efforts also did not help RENAMO inasmuch as there has never been a fair redistribution of the peace dividend.³⁸

From May 2009, Dhlakama relocated permanently from Maputo to the northern city of Nampula. He finally met President Guebuza in Nampula on 8 December 2011 for the first time since Guebuza's first-term inauguration as President of the Republic in 2005. After this meeting, Dhlakama said a working group would be established to examine RENAMO's concerns but he also continued to threaten anti-government demonstrations. Then on 8 March 2012, an armed confrontation erupted outside RENAMO's provincial offices in Nampula between government riot police, some 300 RENAMO ex-combatants and Dhlakama's armed "Presidential Guard", resulting in two deaths, injuries and 34 arrests. Some 400 former RENAMO guerrillas had assembled in Nampula in December 2011 after being called by Dhlakama to take part in protests but had begun drifting home, some of them claiming they had been promised demobilisation pay.

On 17 April 2012, President Guebuza met Dhlakama again in the Nampula Provincial Government. Both men exchanged phone numbers and agreed to meet again. This meeting seemed to temporarily reduce tensions. But then in October 2012 Dhlakama left Nampula, moving to Satunjira, Gorongosa, in central Mozambique, near Casa Banana, a guerrilla base that served as RENAMO's headquarters during the early 1980s. The date and place were significant: Satunjira was a former RENAMO military base and Dhlakama timed his arrival to commemorate the anniversary of the death of RENAMO's founder, André Matsangaissa, killed during military action near Satunjira by FRELIMO on 17 October 1979.

A Return to Armed Conflict

As the above sequence of events show, Dhlakama was isolated in Nampula and lacked resources for patronage, which meant that his core-supporters in central Mozambique were increasingly impatient. His return to central Mozambique reflected a calculation that his only viable option to strengthen his grip on power and his negotiating hand was to return to targeted armed violence. His economic interests, including artisanal gem mining (Tourmaline) interests in central Mozambique, also came increasingly under pressure by FRELIMO officials from 2012, heightening the squeeze on his resources.

Armed attacks started in April 2013, and government riot police (FIR) raided RENAMO local headquarters in Muxungué and Gondola, Manica province, and made arrests. RENAMO retaliated by attacking Muxungué police station, killing four members of the FIR and injuring at least nine. One RENAMO attacker was also killed. On 5 April 2013, RENAMO attacked traffic on the main north-south EN1 road for the first time. In June 2013, the government introduced military convoys along a 100 km

³⁸ Machietto 2016: 268.



stretch of road between the River Save and Muxungué because of the number of attacks (these convoys continued until 28 August 2014).³⁹

Political tensions deepened on 21 October 2013, when FADM occupied the Satunjira base after RENAMO had congregated there again to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Matsangaissa. Dhlakama fled to another base deep in the *Serra da Gorongosa* and the FADM moved on to occupy another RENAMO base, Maringué, which had remained a location of armed RENAMO men with the tacit acceptance of the government since 1994.

RENAMO then launched more attacks on traffic on the EN1 south of Muxungué and around Gorongosa and attempted to expand its operations by sending armed men into Inhambane province. In April 2014, attacks on the railway and trains carrying coal to Beira port were a major escalation and caught the attention of the international markets for the first time.

This low-intensity targeted violence was aimed at strengthening RENAMO's negotiating position, and differed from RENAMO's objective of the early 1990s which was to hold towns and territory, degrade government infrastructure and cause massive displacement. In early May 2014, as peace talks progressed, RENAMO announced a ceasefire along the EN1 to assist election registration efforts in central Mozambique for the October national elections. This was followed by RENAMO and the government agreeing upon a ceasefire at the 74th round of negotiations on 24 August 2014 in Maputo. Finally, Dhlakama agreed to leave his hiding place in central Mozambique and be escorted back to Maputo on 4 September by an international delegation of foreign diplomats accredited in Mozambique. On 5 September, President Guebuza and Dhlakama met in Maputo and formally signed the agreement ending the hostilities. During 2013, at least 60 people were killed and more than 300 injured in fighting. There are no accurate comparable figures for 2014, but observers believe the total was less than 100, mainly injured, while in 2015 the figure was less some 20 killed and 50 injured.

In early 2015, following two face-to-face meetings between Dhlakama and President Nyusi, RENAMO again threatened conflict if it did not obtain concessions from the government. The President signalled he would support a parliamentary bill for autonomous provincial governments if RENAMO ended its boycott of parliament and submitted the bill to the National Assembly for debate. In the short term this provided hope of a new deal, but Nyusi failed to deliver on his promise and FRELIMO rejected the draft Bill. On 2 April the FADM and RENAMO exchanged fire in Gaza province.

Accurate figures of how many armed men Dhlakama remobilised are not available but probably remained in the hundreds. Many of these were ex-combatants of the 1977-92 conflict from central Mozambique, although some younger fighters seem to have been drawn to RENAMO by the fighting. Their tactics were a classic repeat of the low-intensity guerrilla tactics that RENAMO had conducted up to 1992 such as ambush, hit and run, and disruption to infrastructure such as digging large trenches across roads. RENAMO's ability to successfully disrupt was aided by weak government forces, unable to respond efficiently with counter-insurgency operations in central Mozambique. Although RENAMO tried to spread its military operations outside central Mozambique and Tete, this was less successful and better contained by government forces.

Electoral politics

³⁹ Informal mediation started in July 2013, when Anglican bishop Dinis Sengulane and academic Lourenço de Rosário met Dhlakama in Satunjira and obtained his key conditions: reform of electoral law; depoliticise the civil service; reform of the military and more equitable wealth sharing.



RENAMO's boycott of the 20 November 2013 municipal elections back-fired. At a local level, in Quelimane and Nampula, RENAMO supporters tactically voted for the MDM – a splinter party from RENAMO. But FRELIMO won 49 mayoral seats and MDM four. MDM managed to secure 365 (30 percent) of 1,216 municipal assembly seats overall and its candidates took more than 40 percent of the vote in 13 municipalities, including in the FRELIMO heartlands of Maputo and Matola, a feat never achieved by RENAMO. This was the first time that the MDM contested municipal polls nationwide, and the results show the party can campaign at the national level and attract support from urban areas outside Beira and Quelimane.⁴⁰

The municipal election results convinced RENAMO and FRELIMO that they needed to return to negotiations, to ensure they neutralised MDM's growing support base, and the 2014 presidential and legislative elections re-emphasised that RENAMO and FRELIMO were the primary political players in Mozambique. Both also showed they could control their supporters as there were only isolated violent incidents during the 2014 elections.

Given that the elections followed 18 months of targeted armed violence, this was an achievement and shows that peace could prevail when there was leadership and political will. But electoral participation was low, at around 48.6 percent, continuing a long-term trend of political indifference.

As after previous elections, the judiciary rejected opposition claims of rigging at the 2014 elections on procedural grounds.⁴¹ Although significant evidence has not been provided to conclude that it was on a scale that had affected the overall result of a FRELIMO presidential victory and parliamentary majority, fraud and incompetence by the electoral commission did occur. The opposition parties are also at fault for being unable to provide credible evidence of widespread fraud despite having deployed electoral observers across the country. The result was suspicion, conspiracy and allegation, which contributed to deepening political tensions between FRELIMO and opposition parties. Lessons from the 2014 elections are that the electoral legislation should be amended to provide a clear system of complaints and appeals, and that judges, electoral managing bodies and political parties need training in how to use these procedures. There also needs to be efficient training on counting and tabulation procedures.

While RENAMO has rejected all election results since 1994, due to the 2013–14 outbreak of armed violence it was important that the process was at least perceived to be better than it had been in the past. RENAMO's strong performance, with Dhlakama winning a majority of the vote in five provinces (Nampula, Zambézia, Tete, Manica and Sofala) was surprising, not least because of his late start to campaigning. It has strengthened Dhlakama's position in the party and there are no longer calls for him to step down. RENAMO also believes that calculated armed violence has restored greater parity with FRELIMO, brought about concessions and marginalised the threat posed by MDM.

Mediation (2013 – 2015)

During the 114 rounds of Mozambican mediated talks with the government between April 2013 and August 2015, RENAMO obtained concessions over politicisation of the electoral system and additional jobs in the military. Five Mozambican mediators were officially added in January 2014, at RENAMO's insistence: an academic, Lourenço do Rosário, Anglican bishop Dinis Sengulane, Roman Catholic priest Felipe Couto, Methodist pastor Anastacio Chembeze and Moslem cleric Sheikh Saide Abibo. Their appointments were made individually by President Guebuza and were a compromise gesture: in November 2013 Dhlakama had written a letter to President Guebuza requesting

⁴⁰ For an analysis of the impact of MDM on Dhlakama see Vines 2013: 388-389.

⁴¹ Vines et al 2015: 18.



international and national mediation. The presidency wanted to avoid internationalisation and also wanted to ensure the mediation relied on its patronage.

In early 2014, the delegations agreed on sweeping changes to the electoral legislation, which were then rubber-stamped by the parliament. These changes granted the parliamentary political parties absolute dominance over the electoral bodies, and political appointees were inserted into the electoral apparatus. The paradox was that RENAMO, during the 2014 elections, was unable to find sufficient skilled cadres to staff the electoral apparatus.

During 2014, the dialogue concentrated on the second point of the agenda, namely defence and security, which led to an agreement on a cessation of hostilities signed by Guebuza and Dhlakama on 5 September 2014. Like in 1992, RENAMO and FADM also obtained an amnesty approved by parliament for crimes committed since March 2012. RENAMO, however, as discussed above, refused to hand over a list of the members of its militia whom it wished to join FADM and the police. Therefore, the transfer of “residual forces of RENAMO” into the army and the police remains unresolved.

In March 2015, RENAMO tabled its parliamentary bill for more autonomous provincial governments, expecting it to be debated in parliament. This proposal came after Dhlakama and President Nyusi held two rounds of bilateral talks in February 2015 aimed at improving relations. Nyusi successfully convinced Dhlakama to end his boycott of parliament and table the autonomous governments’ bill, promising that it would be taken seriously.

This was a step-change from the Guebuza era treatment of RENAMO, and provided hope of a *modus vivendi* between the government and RENAMO in the short term. But from late March 2015, Dhlakama and RENAMO threatened that if the proposal was rejected, RENAMO would implement it in the provinces regardless. Political tensions increased, resulting in some armed exchanges. On 30 April 2015, parliament rejected the RENAMO proposal by 138 votes to 98 and all FRELIMO deputies voted against the bill, while MDM deputies voted with RENAMO in favour. On 31 July RENAMO submitted a constitutional amendment to the National Assembly that proposed that provincial governors should be appointed by elected provincial authorities but this was also rejected by all FRELIMO deputies during a vote on 7 December 2015. RENAMO’s parliamentary party leader, Ivone Soares, claimed the voting down of the amendment “is part of a strategy to push RENAMO into war,” and Dhlakama officially ended RENAMO’s negotiations with the government in August 2015.

The autonomous regions proposal sparked a national debate, which FRELIMO responded to by taking the issue to its grassroots, presenting it as an effort to divide the country. In fact, the proposal advocated a dual administration for elected municipal governments by a mayor and an elected assembly. There were two particularly controversial parts of the draft bill: heads of administrative posts and localities would be named by the new ‘council president’, and provinces would be given half of all taxes to the state from minerals, gas and oil extracted from the province. Nominally, RENAMO, through provincial administrations, would therefore draw revenue from some of the country’s most resource-rich provinces. Although not a true separatist, therefore, his autonomous regions proposal was an attempt to gain concessions that would put RENAMO in control of patronage positions in order to draw rents.

Raised political tensions and lack of progress saw renewed armed violence from May 2015. Sporadic armed clashes in parts of Tete province from June 2015 resulted in some dead and injured and up to 11,000 Mozambicans fleeing to register as refugees in Malawi by mid- 2016 (although the majority



had left the official camps by September 2016, a large number stayed in Malawi waiting for a new peace agreement).⁴²

Dhlakama's own vulnerability became apparent when, between the 12 and 25 September 2016, his security escort was involved in two armed incidents in Manica province. Dhlakama then went into hiding in Gorongosa again. With President Nyusi's blessing and guarantees, the official mediators arranged to meet him in the bush and escort him to Beira on 8 October. He was effectively placed under house arrest by armed riot police and a stand-off ensued between police and Dhlakama's armed guards. Following direct mediation by the provincial FRELIMO Governor; the MDM's leader; the MDM mayor of Quelimane and the Catholic Bishop of Beira, this stand-off passed without violence. His guards handed over their weapons and in exchange the police released eight RENAMO supporters that they had detained. Shortly after, Dhlakama left the city and returned to the safety of the area around Satunjira, while RENAMO announced that it no longer had confidence in the five national mediators and wanted them replaced with international ones, suggesting president Zuma of South Africa and the Catholic Church.⁴³

Between October 2015 and December 2016, armed clashes escalated. President Nyusi consistently signalled that he wanted a third round of direct talks with Dhlakama, who also agreed in late May 2016 to talks about talks between RENAMO and the government. This resulted in two phone conversations between President Nyusi and Dhlakama in mid-June, which endorsed a four-point agenda for the talks, two items from each side. RENAMO's agenda items were on the governing of the six provinces won by RENAMO and the integration of RENAMO military cadres into key positions in the armed forces, while the government's agenda items included an immediate ceasefire and the disarmament of RENAMO.

The government also compromised on 7 July and agreed officially to international mediators (three chosen by RENAMO and three chosen by government).⁴⁴ The former Italian government mediator from the 1992 Rome peace process, Mario Raffaelli, was chosen to lead the mediation efforts jointly with Angelo Romano of *Community of Sant' Egidio*, both supported and funded by the EU. Sir Ketumile Masire, former president of Botswana and a member of the Global Leadership Foundation, was also invited to be a co-chair.⁴⁵

Between July and December 2016, the Joint Commission, with the help of international mediators, worked through the agenda items over five rounds of negotiations. The government and RENAMO set up a sub-commission to work on constitutional amendments on decentralisation.

The talks between the government and RENAMO in 2015 and 2016 were not helped by an ongoing struggle in FRELIMO over strategy. The two armed confrontations involving Afonso Dhlakama in September and October 2015 do not seem to have been mandated by the presidency, and highlight the divisions in FRELIMO, particularly between hardliners in the FRELIMO Political Commission and

⁴² Interviews in 2016 with internally displaced persons from Tete, and with NGOs and officials who visited the refugees in Malawi, indicate that government forces violently abused communities. However, RENAMO also encouraged communities to flee, saying they would be safer in Malawi and would receive better food supplies. This also successfully humiliated the Mozambican government as it had demonstrated that the conflict had spread and it could not control its territory.

⁴³ RENAMO clearly blamed the mediators for providing guarantees of safe passage to Dhlakama that resulted in the armed stand-off at his Beira house.

⁴⁴ The mediators were the EU, South Africa; Vatican; Inter Mediate; Global Leadership Foundation; Tanzania.

⁴⁵ The GLF first approached President Guebuza in late 2013 offering its good offices and subsequently Sir Ketumile Masire led a team to Mozambique six times up to July 2016, see, 'GLF Co-chair mediation in Mozambique', July 2016, <http://www.g-l-f.org/ghf-project-mozambique>.



President Nyusi and his cabinet.⁴⁶ The stand-off outside Dhlakama's house in Beira was contrary to an agreement reached by peace mediators, who had guaranteed Dhlakama's safe passage as a build up to a further meeting between President Nyusi and Dhlakama. It demolished what trust was left.

The result was that the security situation remained volatile, mostly driven by brinkmanship rather than brute force, and mostly confined to the central provinces. RENAMO showed that it lacked the military capacity to sustain an insurgency across the country and there were signs of increasing fatigue among its mostly middle-aged combatants, who want jobs and pensions and yearn for a lasting deal. It is significant that although much of Mozambique's youth vote for RENAMO in protest against FRELIMO, there is little evidence that significant numbers have become armed combatants – although in 2017 there seems to have been an up-turn in recruitment of youth.⁴⁷

President Nyusi and Dhlakama had been speaking to each other by phone throughout 2016, which helped nudge the peace process forward and build up renewed trust between them. Thus, while the process initially needed facilitation by international mediation, by November 2016, President Nyusi and Dhlakama had both decided to take a firmer grip of the process themselves, as they had become frustrated by intrigues including inside their own negotiating teams. This was a breakthrough, signalling that both men felt they could reach a new deal and that they wanted 100 percent Mozambican ownership of the process.⁴⁸

The result was that the international mediators left Mozambique on 16 December and some two weeks later Dhlakama announced a week-long ceasefire. An extension of a 60-day truce (until 4 March 2017) followed, which RENAMO and government forces have both observed and armed convoys have been suspended. RENAMO nevertheless restarted peaceful political activities in central Mozambique in 2017. On 3 March, RENAMO extended its truce to 4 May and then extended the truce for an indefinite period to allow the new peace talks to progress.

In February 2017, President Nyusi and Dhlakama confirmed that they had invited international advisers to assist on technical issues and new negotiations were underway.⁴⁹ Two four-person working groups have been established: one on decentralisation and the other on DDR and Security Sector Reform (SSR) issues (disarming and dismantling the RENAMO militia, integration of RENAMO into the defence and security forces, and the creation of some parity between the two sides in the military), although their expertise has not been regularly utilised. A new phase of dialogue between the government and RENAMO in the presence of the International Contact Group got underway on 6 March 2017, and by August sufficient progress had been achieved for President Nyusi to meet Dhlakama near his bush base in central Mozambique for a face-to-face meeting.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Dhlakama had tried to moderate hardliners in RENAMO who called for direct military confrontation. Indeed Dhlakama, also faces challenges of maintaining unity over strategy and there were indications that some of his advisers had hoped to benefit from him miscalculating.

⁴⁷ This is unlikely to be for combat, a similar pattern happened as RENAMO prepared for agreement in 1992. These recruits hope to benefit from the pickings from the next agreement.

⁴⁸ Some of the mediators felt that Mario Raffaelli and the Community of Sant' Egidio's Angelo Romano were over-committed to protecting the legacy of the Rome General Peace Accord and too public. They failed to build up full trust in their stewardship of this process with President Nyusi and increasingly by Dhlakama. Interviews with ex-mediators, February 2017.

⁴⁹ On 28 February 2017, President Nyusi invited seven diplomatic envoys accredited to Maputo to be part of a contact group to support the peace talks, chaired by Switzerland. This Contact Group (UK, Switzerland, US, China, Norway, Botswana and EU) "will provide coordinated financial and technical assistance, and carry out other tasks as indicated in their terms of reference". The Swiss government has provided core funding for the process so far and the EU has positioned itself to provide funding through its Stability Instrument if requested.

⁵⁰ By September 2017, the Contact Group had very little interaction with the negotiations.



IV: Sustainability of the Elite Bargains

What many external observers overlooked in Mozambique was the post-war relationship between RENAMO's low- and mid-ranked veterans and its leadership. Studies in West Africa show that long after a conflict is over, military networks remain involved in myriad activities such as election campaigning, illicit trade, private security, mining and criminality.⁵¹ In Mozambique, with RENAMO's rapidly degrading fortunes, Dhlakama has shown that he could still remobilise ageing ex-combatants and arm them 20 years after the conflict ended because of patronage politics. The dependency between Dhlakama and core followers in central Mozambique was breaking down and in 2012 he moved back to shore-up support.⁵² An anthropologist who spent several years in this area estimates that some 3,000 RENAMO ex-combatants lived in Maringué district and that they had been "waiting" for the party to provide them benefits, although this estimate is in fact more likely to be for the whole of Sofala province.⁵³

The confrontation also grew out of RENAMO's rejection of electoral laws approved in parliament. During the extended debate on the electoral laws in 2012, RENAMO consistently demanded the right to have veto power in the National Elections Commission (CNE). Tensions had risen because of municipal elections in November 2013, which RENAMO boycotted, and preparations for national presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2014.

Other key drivers for resumed conflict between April 2013 and December 2016 included:

- *RENAMO veteran fighters*: In 2011, parliament approved FRELIMO-proposed legislation providing pensions for civil war veterans, although it did not win the support of RENAMO. Despite good intentions, the law raised unfulfilled expectations. The bureaucratic and lengthy process rekindled feelings of discrimination among RENAMO veterans, leading them to mobilise and pressure their leadership to do the same.
- *Dhlakama*: Afonso Dhlakama was 63 in 2017. His relative youth meant there was little discussion of a potential successor, and dissent against him could lead to expulsion. Dhlakama also proved to be a poor negotiator, inconsistent and holding out for maximum concessions, using boycotts and threats.
- *Guebuza*: On several occasions, FRELIMO 'negotiated' with RENAMO concessions resulting in financial compensation or electoral legislation amendments.⁵⁴ During Guebuza's tenure as president, he was less amenable to granting such concessions. It might also be that Guebuza wanted to extend his term in office by encouraging an armed stand-off with RENAMO in 2013 and early 2014 until coming under internal and regional pressure to reach agreement in 2014.⁵⁵
- *RENAMO's financial crisis and lack of accountability*: Losing MPs in the 2009 election and being without local-government representation further damaged RENAMO's already fragile finances. Leadership secrecy over party finances and patronage has been the norm since 1994. Dhlakama himself has faced allegations of misuse and greed, to which he replied that

⁵¹ Thémner 2012.

⁵² Wiegink 2015.

⁵³ Wiegink 2013.

⁵⁴ Vines 2013.

⁵⁵ Guebuza also in 2013 underestimated RENAMO's capacity to disrupt and did not support FADM efforts including diverting resources towards maritime security. Interview, ex-FADM official, November 2016.



he never wanted to be an MP.⁵⁶ Action by government officials from 2012 against RENAMO's artisanal mining interests also heightened the sense of vulnerability.

- *The younger RENAMO generation:* There are several important leaders who are not from the civil war generation, including Manuel Bissopo, Ivone Soares, Saimon Macuiane and Eduardo Namburete. They are now in their thirties and forties, and some of them believe that FRELIMO will never be made to cede power without the use of force.
- *Promise of Riches:* In 2012-13, Mozambique's politicians, private companies and the press talked up the prospects of Mozambique becoming rich on coal, oil and gas. This added pressure on Dhlakama to act radically and not just to seek small cash handouts through an elite bargain. The political dangers of not managing expectations of the riches from natural resource endowments seem to be playing out now in Mozambique following the discovery of world class gas fields.⁵⁷
- *FRELIMO:* FRELIMO's rejection of the decentralisation bill of April 2015 undermined President Nyusi's authority and the trust he had built up with Dhlakama, showing he lacked a tight grip over the party. This failure resulted in a fresh round of armed violence.

The importance of decentralisation

Dhlakama increasingly understands that he is unlikely to ever win national power through the ballot box and is focusing his efforts on carving out a more sustainable provincial power base. However, both FRELIMO and RENAMO stand to gain from the new ceasefire of late 2016. Both sides are beginning to prepare for the 2018 municipal elections and FRELIMO's popularity has been severely undermined by Mozambique's economic woes, linked to undisclosed debts. Moreover, a commitment to dialogue and a lasting end to hostilities will help restore Mozambique's reputation among donors and investors, and economic recovery would benefit both parties. RENAMO and FRELIMO parliamentarians have been travelling abroad (including to Portugal, Italy, Spain and Germany), fact-finding on devolved government models.⁵⁸

Meaningful decentralisation by FRELIMO and full demobilisation by RENAMO remain the key items for negotiation. RENAMO has dropped its insistence on directly appointing governors in the provinces it claims to dominate and now seems to accept the principle of gubernatorial elections, either directly, or appointed through provincial assemblies – and if agreement is reached these could happen in 2018 or 2019, along with national elections (following a constitutional amendment and new legislation). RENAMO also wants a new law passed on provincial finances, with some of the tax revenue collected in a particular province spent in that province and the balance provided to central government, for redistribution.

The need for compromise

FRELIMO is beginning to unite over offering concessions in whatever deal is reached with RENAMO. In late August, Dhlakama also signalled that a deal could be reached, and reiterated in late September that the integration of RENAMO into command positions of the military, police and

⁵⁶ Cahen 2011.

⁵⁷ Ross 2012: 149-151.

⁵⁸ Interview with Gania Aly Abdulla Mussagy, RENAMO MP and Ana Antónia Henrique Dimitri, FRELIMO MP, London, 3 February 2017. Both parliamentarians voiced their belief that a durable settlement would be reached and compromise was desirable.



security forces, and the approval of a legislative package establishing the direct election of provincial governors, were pre-conditions for an agreement.

At a face-to-face meeting with Nyusi on 6 August 2017, both men agreed that a constitutional amendment to provide for elected governorships would need to be completed by February 2018. This would allow Nyusi to announce the exact date for the 2019 general elections, including for provincial governors within the legal timetable (at least 18 months in advance). RENAMO also senses that increased divisions and infighting in MDM provide it with an opportunity to make serious electoral gains in the 2018 local elections.

FRELIMO also knows it will need to offer concessions for reintegrating RENAMO combatants into the FADM, police and security forces. New symbolic senior posts are being created to absorb some of these former fighters and RENAMO has raised the idea of creating a 'provincial police force'.⁵⁹ A challenge will be what to do with new 'opportunistic' recruits. Cash is tight and this is where international partners will need to make long-term guarantees to DDR and reintegration efforts in hot spots, particularly parts of central Mozambique and Tete province. International engagement will also need to focus on bringing Dhlakama out of the bush and cementing him into a process that incentivises non-violent politics. Too much focus on austerity by international donors and the International Financial Institutions at this critical moment might back-fire – their engagement needs to be conflict-sensitive.

A durable peace settlement will require compromise by FRELIMO and an acceptance that RENAMO has, in the short-term, been able to capitalise on some of its shortcomings. A danger for RENAMO is that its armed militia is mostly middle aged and that it will not be able to rely on them indefinitely to provide military back up. The party is also reliant on Dhlakama and there is no obvious successor to him, as he maintains a culture of 'Big Man' dominance and patronage over his supporters.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Many factors contributed to the end of the Mozambican civil war in 1992, including the end of the Cold War and the end of Apartheid in South Africa, changes among Mozambique's neighbours and a hurting military stalemate between FRELIMO and RENAMO. Likewise, post-conflict politics have been framed by regionalism and inequality, with FRELIMO increasingly trying to assert its hegemony across Mozambique.

Since Mozambique's first multiparty elections in 1994, FRELIMO has pursued a strategy of co-option and division of RENAMO through elite bargains with its leader Afonso Dhlakama. After the shock of the 1999 presidential election result, President Guebuza was determined to end these cycles of often opaque elite bargains (in particular, payments and offering token concessions) and neutralise RENAMO permanently. However, he underestimated both RENAMO's support and ability to disrupt, and the weakness of the Mozambican state to effectively respond.

As a result, more than 25 years after the Mozambican conflict ended, a hardened core of ex-militaries re-mobilised for armed conflict. The 'pay and scatter' DDR strategy and other efforts to dismantle RENAMO's command and control structures have ensured it could not reignite total civil

⁵⁹ The existing force, the Mozambique Republic Police (PRM), would retain responsibility "for the most serious crimes", while other policing matters would pass into the hand of the provincial forces.

⁶⁰ During interviews in Maputo in March 2016, a number of RENAMO supporters speculated that his niece, Ivone Soares, might be a possible successor. Several also mentioned the son of RENAMO's first leader, André Matsangaissa, was also being groomed for leadership. In August 2017 senior RENAMO officials signalled that Dhlakama would run for a sixth time as the party's candidate in the 2019 national elections for the Mozambican presidency.



war. Indeed, this remains a success story. However, Mozambique remains an example of a mostly successful demobilisation but poor elite reintegration. Mozambican domestic politics is partly to blame for this, but so too is international complacency that assumed that Mozambique's peace was secure.

Looking ahead, RENAMO still faces challenges, partly as a result of having been led by Dhlakama for 37 years. Dhlakama's strategy remains one of obtaining future elite bargains backed by armed violence or the threat of further violence, not least as he is under pressure to continue to provide patronage to his supporters. The question still remains whether Dhlakama is able to adapt from being a military tactician to become a peacetime political strategist, especially if RENAMO wins some provincial governorships in 2019.

Comprehensive disarmament and reintegration of RENAMO's ageing armed militia would end this strategy. Dhlakama's armed men are looking for a lasting accommodation and its politicians want to compete in the 2018 local elections and 2019 national elections. FRELIMO's elite also want increased political stability to attract international investment and finance. The contours of the next elite bargain are emerging and involve the possibility of elected governorships for RENAMO, payment for disarmament and employment opportunities.

However, FRELIMO's objective is to retain power, and any concessions to RENAMO will be contested. It is likely, therefore, that the local election in 2018 and national elections in 2019 will be hotly and, at times, violently contested. Disputed or violent elections could trigger a new cycle of violence and future 'deals' will require further negotiation and renegotiation.



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