

Mozambique News Agency

AIM Reports

Report no.467, 8th July 2013



Renamo admits it carried out ambushes

Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of Mozambique's main opposition party, on 3 July admitted that Renamo was responsible for ambushes on the country's main north-south highway (the EN1) in late June.

Speaking at a press conference in his bush headquarters at Satunjira, in the central district of Gorongosa, Dhlakama said the purpose of the attacks was to prevent the transport of troops and weaponry up the road to attack his headquarters.

The vehicles attacked on the stretch of road between the Save river and the small town of Muxungue, in Sofala province, were civilian buses and trucks. At least two people died, and five others were injured in these ambushes.

Dhlakama claimed that he had never wanted to attack civilians, and that when he saw one of the victims on television, he ordered the Renamo men concerned to return to base.

"It was never our intention to attack civilians", he argued. "The troops that come to Gorongosa do not come in military vehicles but in civilian ones. Hence some civilians were attacked because they were in vehicles that were believed to be carrying soldiers".

Dhlakama denied categorically that Renamo had carried out the attack on a military arsenal, belonging to the Mozambican armed forces (FADM), at Savane, also in Sofala. Seven soldiers were murdered in this raid, and an unspecified amount of weaponry was stolen.

He announced that he was willing to hold a face-to-face meeting with Mozambican President Armando Guebuza – but he would only go to Maputo, if the government withdrew the military and police forces from the vicinity of Satunjira. If the government was unwilling to accept that condition, then President Guebuza would have to come to Gorongosa for the meeting.

However, on 5 July Mozambique's ruling Frelimo Party argued strongly that any face-to-face meeting between President Guebuza and Afonso Dhlakama should be held in Maputo.

Giving Frelimo's reaction to Dhlakama's press conference, the Central Committee Secretary for Mobilisation and Propaganda, Damiao Jose, said that President Guebuza's meeting with Dhlakama last year in the northern city of Nampula, where Dhlakama was then living, was exceptional.

"It's true that, because of his simplicity and humility, President Guebuza did go to Nampula to meet the Renamo leader. But this cannot be a routine practice", said Jose.

He stressed that President Guebuza has an office in Maputo, which is where Dhlakama, like any other political leader, should be received.

Renamo camp destroyed

The Mozambican police have confirmed that an operation by the defence and security forces on 6 July destroyed the guerrilla camp used by members of Renamo when they launched the attacks in late June.

The Renamo camp was at Mangomonhe, in Chibabava district, in the central province of Sofala.

Interviewed by Radio Mozambique, the Sofala provincial police commander, Joaquim Nido, said the camp consisted of 53 huts, which were all destroyed.

He said that the defence and security forces suffered no casualties, and that the Renamo men fled in disarray.

"We dislodged some bandits camped in the Mangomonhe area", he said. "This was the group which, on 21 June, attacked vehicles and killed and injured some of our fellow countrymen".

However, a report in the daily newsheet "Mediafax" claimed that information of the impending attack was leaked to Renamo, so that when the joint force from the police and the army arrived, they found nobody at the base.

"Mediafax" added that, on their return from Mangomonhe, the security forces were ambushed by Renamo, and an intense exchange of fire took place, in which there were casualties on both sides.

Rio Tinto resumes coal shipments

The Anglo-Australian mining company Rio Tinto has resumed moving coal along the Sena railway line from its mine in Moatize in the western province of Tete to Beira port after a fortnight suspension due to threats by Renamo.

The line's other main customer, Brazilian company Vale, has now increased the number of trainloads of coal it is moving.

Meanwhile, the publicly-owned port and rail company, CFM, has resumed passenger trains and removed speed restrictions.

The resumption of Rio Tinto's shipments follows the announcement on 3 July by the leader of Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama, that he has ordered a suspension of armed attacks.

Despite Dhlakama's order to his forces to return to base, the passenger trains are being escorted by the security forces, who are also escorting vehicles along the EN1.

Still 9.7 million square metres of land to be demined

According to the Mozambican government's National Demining Institute (IND) there are still an estimated 9.7 million square metres of land to be demined before the cut-off date of 2014.

90 per cent of this consists of new areas identified during the course of the IND's work and which were not included in earlier estimates made in 2007/2008.

The area concerned is equivalent to 900 football fields. Clearing it of land mines would make the land available for agriculture, and for many other types of economic and social activity which cannot go ahead while people still fear that mines are lurking beneath the surface.

This information was provided at a meeting in Maputo between the IND and its cooperation partners at which the latest National Mine Action Plan was presented and debated.

Based on the earlier research, the government approved an action plan for the period 2008-2014. Since it was clear that mine clearance could not end by 2009, the initial deadline under the Ottawa Treaty on the outlawing of anti-personnel mines, the government requested an extension for a further five years, which was granted by the Permanent Committee of the State-Parties to the Ottawa Treaty. Under this extension, the demining of all known mined areas in the country should be concluded by 1 March 2014.

According to the IND, in the 2008-2012 period 983 dangerous areas were demined, setting free about 28.7 million square metres of land. 20,479 mines and 3,780 other items of unexploded ordnance were destroyed.

In the same period, demining was concluded in Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambezi and Gaza provinces. 103 of the country's 128 districts were classified as "free of mines".

Under the National Mine Action Plan, a strategy was adopted of "demining district by district", which obliges the organisations involved in the demining effort to systematically survey the districts, to ensure that no area where land mines may be buried has been left out.

Demining is only regarded as concluded when the communities that use the land and the district authorities confirm that there are no longer any areas in the district where the presence of mines is suspected. Only then can a district be classified as "free of mines".

That strategy made it possible to demine an additional 399 dangerous areas which had not initially been on the 2007/08 lists of mined areas. These 399 areas covered slightly more than 13.5 million square metres.

In 2012, a total of 8.7 million square metres were cleared. This result leads to optimism about the possibility of concluding the demining of the remaining dangerous areas on time.

Cotton goes to waste due to lack of storage

The Mozambique Cotton Institute (IAM) has estimated that during the last agricultural campaign two thousand tonnes of cotton went to waste due to a lack of storage.

Last season's campaign was particularly productive, resulting in farmers and businesses being unable to cope with the 184,000 tonnes of cotton harvested.

The director of IAM, Norberto Mahalambe, has highlighted that there was a lack of storage capacity at the factories in Ribaué, Mutuale and Cuamba.

In Ribaué, in the northern province of Nampula, a large quantity of cotton was recently destroyed at the factory.

Mahalambe told the daily newspaper "Noticias" that

"there have also been problems with transporting cotton fibre, with a lack of equipment available to take the fibre from the factories to the ports. In addition, the ports were congested, particularly in Nacala and Pemba, because of economic diversification and the demand for services".

He explained that the overproduction had revealed weaknesses in the capacity to deliver services, particularly transport.

However, Mahalambe stressed that everything is being done to ensure that these logistical deficiencies are tackled.

Mahalambe pointed out that "at the planning level we have recognised that there were errors in forecasting yields. These mistakes were the result of the fact that the yields varied from 300 to 550 kilogrammes per hectare. Nobody expected that the measures that we have taken could have such a rapid impact on the increase in production".

Exim Bank of India opens \$217 million credit line

The Exim Bank of India has opened a \$217 million credit line to finance infrastructure projects in Mozambique.

Under the credit facility, \$150 million will be made available to fund the rebuilding of the highway between Tica, Buzi and Nova Sofala in the central province of Sofala; \$47 million will be used in constructing 1,200 houses in the provinces of Tete, Zambezia and Cabo Delgado; and \$20 million will finance the third phase of the rural water supply project in the provinces of Manica, Zambezia and Nampula.

The credit line was formalised in Maputo on 4 July with the signing of three accords by Mozambique's Finance Minister Manuel Chang and Exim Bank's Executive Director David Rasquinha.

Speaking to the press during the signing ceremony, Manuel Chang explained that the credit line is based on concessional terms, repayable over twenty years with a two per cent interest rate.

Chang praised the role of the Indian government and the Exim Bank in supporting development programmes in Mozambique.

David Rasquinha is in Mozambique as part of the delegation that is accompanying India's Minister of State for External Affairs Preneet Kaur during a two day working visit.

The agreement follows on from the \$500 million credit line opened after Mozambique's President Armando Guebuza visited India in 2010.

That credit line was made available for improving the energy supply in the city of Maputo and Maputo province, enhancing the productivity of rice, wheat and maize cultivation, and building a solar photovoltaic panel manufacturing plant in Beluluane.

Prime Minister inspects Maputo ring road

Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina has stressed the extreme importance of the Maputo ring road for relieving the capital city's traffic congestion.

The Prime Minister was speaking on 4 July after paying a working visit to several sections of the road which is currently under construction. He expressed his satisfaction at the progress he had seen, and added that once complete the road will significantly improve the flow of traffic into and out of the capital.

The ring road is being built with a \$300 million loan from the Exim Bank of China.

The 74 kilometre long dual carriageway is being constructed in sections, with 52 kilometres built from scratch and 22 kilometres being renovated or widened.

According to the managing director of the public company Maputo Sul, Nelson Nunes, the work is being carried out on schedule, with the major hurdle being the relocation of water, energy and telecommunication networks.

He added that a total of 384 families of the 1,110 covered by the resettlement process have already been transferred, with the remaining families to be moved before the end of 2014.

Private sector fundamental for SADC infrastructure

Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi on 28 June stated that the participation of the private sector is fundamental for implementing infrastructure projects in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

SADC estimates that over the next five years about \$64 billion will be invested in projects to accelerate the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP) for 2012 to 2027.

Speaking in Maputo during the high level SADC Infrastructure Investment Conference, Baloi said that private-public partnerships are needed for these projects to materialise.

He added, "judging by the active participation that private sector representatives are playing in this conference, it is our firm conviction that the conditions have been created for the adoption of a strategy that provides the ways and means to increase their contribution to infrastructure investment".

The Master Plan will be implemented over three five-year periods, and it will focus on energy, transport, information technology and communications, meteorology, water and tourism. Over the entire fifteen year period the projects could absorb a total of \$500 billion.

During his speech, Baloi said that while governments will continue to dedicate part of their budgets to finance essential infrastructure projects, their main responsibility is to create a favourable business environment and to guarantee good conditions for investment.

The conference is being held under the theme "Accelerating investment in SADC infrastructure through sustainable and innovative financing" and has over two hundred delegates including investors, cooperation partners, heads of continental and regional organisations, ministers and high ranking government officials.

New Chief of Staff for FADM

President Armando Guebuza on 26 June appointed Graca Chongo as the new Chief of Staff of the country's armed forces (FADM) following consultations with the National Council for Defence and Security.

General Chongo has been promoted following the removal from office of General Paulino Macarique. He had been in post since 2008 when he replaced General Lagos Lidimo.

General Chongo was formerly the General Inspector of the FADM.

President Guebuza has extended the mandate of Lt-General Olimpio Cambona as the Deputy Chief of Staff of the FADM. He was appointed to the post at the same time as Macarique in 2008 but keeps his position.

Lt-General Cambona was a commander in the former rebel movement Renamo having joined at the age of seventeen in 1977.

However, since the merger of the old government army and the Renamo forces in 1994 he has served in the FADM.

Indian companies to buy stake in Rovuma Basin

The Indian state owned hydrocarbon companies ONGC and Oil India have agreed to jointly buy a ten per cent stake in Offshore Area 1 in the Rovuma Basin in northern Mozambique from Videocon for \$2.475 billion.

Offshore Area 1 covers 2.6 million acres off the coast of Cabo Delgado province, where the Texas based company Anadarko is the operator. It has already found between 35 and 65 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas.

Anadarko holds a 36.5 per cent share in Offshore Area 1. Its co-owners are Mitsui of Japan (20 per cent), BPRL Ventures of India (10 per cent) and PTT of Thailand (8.5 per cent). The Mozambican government is represented by Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos (ENH) which holds a 15 per cent stake in the fields.

Any acquisition is subject to approval by the Mozambican government.

Anadarko is working with ENI, the Italian operator in neighbouring Offshore Area 4, on drawing up plans for a liquefied natural gas processing plant to commercialise the gas. This will not be operational until at least 2018.

Previously, the chairperson of ENH, Nelson Ocuané, said that the LNG plant could cost between \$14 billion and \$20 billion depending on how many units are built.

Oil India points out that such an LNG plant would be "strategically located to competitively supply LNG to India", and that the two companies "participation in the project will facilitate access to the growing Indian gas market which will supplement the country's energy security endeavour".

It added that "this investment is expected to further enhance the strong business and cultural links between Mozambique and India".

Roads destroyed during rainy season

The floods which hit Mozambique during the last rainy season destroyed about thirteen per cent of the country's roads, along with other infrastructure, according to the Minister of Public Works and Housing, Cadmiel Muthemba.

Cited in the daily newspaper "O Pais", Muthemba explained that "the 2012 to 2013 rainy season was characterised by flooding in various river basins damaging about four thousand kilometres of road, 30 bridges, 14 drifts and 62 aqueducts. This represents thirteen per cent of our road network of 30,000 kilometres".

Muthemba was speaking during the closing of a meeting of the coordinating council of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing.

The ministry also announced that due to the current international financial crisis it will not begin work on the roads linking Chimuará and Nicoadala, Lurio River and Metoro, Moeda and Negomane, and Namitile and Angoche.

"These are four projects in the government's five year plan that, unfortunately, we are not going to see commence this year due to financial difficulties", explained the coordination council's spokesperson Marcelo Amaro.

Despite the financial constraints, a dozen roads have been rehabilitated under the five year plan and the government expects to complete another 28 road works.

In one of its major road projects, the government has invested 1.5 billion meticaís (\$50 million) on improving the EN221 in Gaza province, which will be reopened in 2014.

The budget for the road's improvement has grown to about 2.4 billion meticaís due to increases in the cost of materials and other factors. The works cover a total of 322 kilometres of which 40 kilometres will be finished this year.

Dutch companies awarded Maputo water contract

The Dutch companies Royal HaskoningDHV and Vites Evides International have been awarded a contract to work on a project to supply drinking water in Mozambique's capital city Maputo.

The companies will design a water distribution system for northern Maputo which will eventually supply safe drinking water to 550,000 residents and 20,000 households.

The contract was awarded by Mozambique's Water Supply Investment and Assets Fund (FIPAG) for the implementation of all services required for the development phase of the project that will be funded by the Dutch government. The contract is worth €2.2 million (just under \$3 million).

The water distribution system will be part of the Corumana Water Supply System, a \$130 million project funded by the World Bank through a loan to the Mozambique government.

The Corumana Water Supply System will initially supply 60,000 cubic metres per day of treated drinking water to Maputo from the Corumana Dam on the Sabie River. This capacity will be extended during a second phase to 120,000 cubic metres per day.

The distribution system will cover an area of about 900 square kilometres. Royal HaskoningDHV and Vites Evides International will design the system with four new distribution centres and 192 kilometres of primary and secondary distribution pipes connecting 20,000 household to the water supply for the first time.

The consortium will also draw up the tender documents for the construction of the distribution system.

The design phase is due to end in April next year, with building work scheduled to begin before the end of 2014.

The Dutch government will fund the construction phase with a grant of around €20 million, and will pay for the system's operation and maintenance for the first decade, costing around €1 million.

According to Royal HaskoningDHV's project director, Bob Bakker, "the new sustainable urban water supply system will provide good quality drinking water for more than half a million inhabitants in northern Maputo. The new system will improve drinking water quality and quantity, and will reduce the costs per litre for the inhabitants that now depend on unreliable sources".

Bakker added, "it is exciting to have the opportunity to provide a system that will make a real difference to the quality of lives of so many people, and help to enhance the Maputo community in such a positive way".

Currently the cities of Maputo and Matola and the adjacent areas rely on the Umbeluzi River for their water supply. But the system based on the Umbeluzi treatment station is no longer sufficient to meet the growing demand for water.

The Dutch government previously contributed €18.6 million to the expansion of the Umbeluzi system, a project which increased the number of people benefitting from this system from 670,000 to 1.5 million.

Campaign against trachoma

The Ministry of Health is to spend four million meticaís (\$133,000) on a health campaign to treat trachoma in the northern province of Niassa where the disease affects about a third of the population.

The campaign will take place between 24 and 29 June in ten districts in the province. About half a million people will receive treatment against the bacterial disease that can result in blindness.

Trachoma is caused by the highly infectious bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis*, which is transmitted by direct contact with someone with the disease, infected cloths or flies.

Speaking at a press conference in Maputo, the National Director of Public Health, Mouzinho Saide, said that under the campaign the treatment will be free and will target young children and pregnant women.

During the second phase of the campaign, which begins next year, surgical intervention will be introduced to deal with trichiasis, which is when the disease leads to turned-in eyelashes that scratch and scar the cornea. If left untreated, such scarring causes blindness.

The health authorities are currently mapping trachoma in the other two provinces in the north of the country to maximise the campaign's effectiveness.

The disease affects more than 40 million people worldwide and causes blindness in eight million people.

Mouzinho Saide also gave details of the "national health week" that took place in May.

During the week, 4.5 million children under the age of five received polio vaccinations, Vitamin A supplements, mebendazol deworming tablets and routine vaccinations. According to Saide, the \$4 million campaign surpassed its coverage targets.

He added that in April Mozambique launched the use of the pneumococcal vaccine PCV-10. This protects against the main types of bacteria that cause pneumonia and a long list of other illnesses ranging from bronchitis to septicaemia or meningitis.

Saide stated that there are encouraging first signs that the number of children being hospitalised for severe pneumonia and meningitis is falling.

The goal is to vaccinate a million children with PVC-10 by the end of the year, and Saide pointed out that so far 193,198 children have been covered.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service – for details contact aim@aim.org.mz

Mozambique News Agency, c/o 26 Withdean Crescent, Brighton BN1 6WH, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 7941890630 - mozambique-news@geo2.poptel.org.uk

Subscription Rates (24 issues)	Individuals	Institutions
UK	£15.00	£25.00
Europe	£25.00	£40.00
Rest of the World	£30.00	£50.00

Overseas subscribers are requested to pay in sterling. If payment is made in another currency, add the equivalent of £6.00 to cover bank charges.