

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## Renamo President Ossufo Momade pledges to maintain peace

The newly elected President of Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, Ossufo Momade, declared on 17 January that Renamo is committed to peace and will lay down its weapons in order to join the national development agenda.

In his first speech as President of Renamo, Momade told the delegates and guests to the Renamo Congress in the central district of Gorongosa "We don't want war. Our late leader Afonso Dhlakama taught us that war only holds back development. We are in favour of peace, and we want a country where people move around and work freely".

He said that Dhlakama, who died of diabetes last May, had always wanted to solve problems through dialogue. "We have to honour this commitment", said Momade. "We are promising the country and the world that we shall continue the dialogue with the government, and we shall not remove a comma from what was left by our late leader".

"The lesson is that nobody should pick up arms again to wage war against our adversary", he continued. "The only way we have found which is effective for Mozambicans is to bank on dialogue. War only brings poverty".

However, Momade announced that he would only leave Renamo's military headquarters in the Gorongosa bush and return to Maputo or any other large city if the dialogue with the government produces encouraging results which can lead to effective peace. He added "our main objective is to win the elections next October and to govern the country as from 2020". That victory, Momade warned, could only be achieved if Renamo members were united and committed to working together, without looking at the differences they may have with each other. He said he was counting on the assistance of all Renamo members "in this difficult task of serving the party and serving Mozambicans. Without you, I cannot advance on my own. I need your support and I am relying on contributions from all of you".

The Congress was a triumph for Momade, who was elected President with 410 votes (61 per cent). The runner-up, Elias Dhlakama, brother of Afonso, received 238 votes.

Momade's immediate task is to resume discussions with President Filipe Nyusi on the disarming and demobilisation of the Renamo militia and the integration of its members into the armed forces and police, or back into civilian life.

President Filipe Nyusi welcomed the election of Ossufo Momade and his commitment to achieving an effective peace. In a congratulatory message, President Nyusi wished Momade success, and hoped "that we shall continue working on the full implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Military Matters", which the two men had signed in August. This should lead "to achieving sustainable peace, to the benefit of all Mozambicans".

## Mozambique seeks extradition of Chang

The Kempton Park Magistrates Court in Johannesburg has delayed the hearing on the possible extradition to the United States of former Mozambican Finance Minister Manuel Chang until 5 February.

The hearing was due to resume on 18 January, but the sudden decision of the Mozambican Attorney-General's Office (PGR) to seek Chang's extradition to Mozambique has complicated matters.

According to the anti-corruption NGO, the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP), which has a correspondent at the court, Chang's defence team has withdrawn its application for bail, in favour of sending Chang back to Mozambique under the protocols of SADC (Southern African Development Community). The judge was not expecting this, and the Mozambican request has forced a postponement of the case until 5 February.

The formal paperwork backing up the US request has yet to arrive – but the Americans have 60 days, dating from the arrest of Chang on 29 December, to submit it.

Chang's defence team requested the postponement, which was supported by the prosecution and the judge.

Technically, the Mozambican request is not for extradition (and indeed there is no extradition treaty between Mozambique and South Africa), but simply for Chang to be returned to stand trial in Mozambique. A formal response to the Mozambican request is expected to be given by the South African Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Development. The Ministry must decide which of the two extradition requests takes precedence.

One thing is certain – Chang will not be in New York on 22 January, which is the date set for the start of the trial of the former minister and his co-accused in the case of Mozambique's "hidden debts". They face charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering, wire fraud and securities fraud, arising from the loans of over US\$2 billion that three companies, Proindicus, Ematum (Mozambique Tuna Company) and MAM (Mozambique Asset Management), obtained from the banks Credit Suisse and VTB of Russia on the basis of guarantees signed by Chang.

The PGR has a list of 18 names of people who could face criminal charges, most of whom are in Mozambique. As far as is known, none of them have yet been arrested or charged.

## Mayor Araujo to leave office temporarily

The Mayor of the central Mozambican city of Quelimane, Manuel de Araujo, has been ordered to hand over his office to the chairperson of the Municipal Assembly, Domingos de Albuquerque, by 21 January, reports the television station STV. This follows the rejection by the Administrative Tribunal of Araujo's appeal against the government decision, taken in August, to sack him as Mayor.

The government sacked Araujo because he had switched his political party allegiance. He fought and won a by-election for Mayor of Quelimane in 2011 on the ticket of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM). Two years later he was confirmed as mayor, again on the MDM slate, in the nationwide municipal elections of 2013.

Quelimane MDM members wanted Araujo to run for a further term of office in the municipal elections scheduled for 10 October last year. But they were disappointed when he announced, not only that he had rejoined the opposition party Renamo, but that he would be the Renamo candidate for Mayor of Quelimane.

The Council of Ministers (Cabinet) justified its decision to sack Araujo on the basis of a clause in the 1997 law on administrative supervision of municipalities, which states that "office holders in municipalities shall lose their office if, after the elections, they join a party or list different from the one for which they presented themselves to the electorate".

The law is quite unambiguous – yet Araujo appealed to the only body that could overturn the government decision, the Administrative Tribunal. It was an open and shut case – but the Tribunal behaved with extraordinary lethargy, delaying a decision by almost three months. Its decision dated 21 December, but only made public this month, ruled in favour of the government, and ordered Araujo to pay the costs of his appeal, set at 10,000 meticais (US\$164).

The Tribunal said there was no legal basis for an appeal. It rejected Araujo's protest that the government had not instituted any inquiry or heard his side of the story. An inquiry would only make sense if the facts were in dispute. But they were not: nobody doubted that Araujo had left the MDM and joined Renamo. Indeed, he had announced it himself.

The loss of his mayoral office was "an automatic effect determined by the law", said the ruling. But the Tribunal's delay allowed Araujo to run for mayor, this time as a Renamo candidate, on 10 October. Had his appeal been thrown out before that date, he would have been unable to stand.

The Tribunal's ruling is thus of very limited effect. Domingos de Albuquerque, a member of the MDM, may take over as interim mayor on 21 January, but he will run Quelimane for less than a month before Araujo is sworn into office once again.

The notification that Araujo must hand over to Albuquerque, added the warning that Albuquerque is only authorised to run the day to day affairs of the municipality until the end of his term of office – which is in February. Then, not only will Araujo become mayor once again, but the new Municipal Assembly, with a Renamo majority, will also take office.

Araujo told STV that the Tribunal's decision was too

late. Like all the other mayors elected on 10 October, Araujo's victory has been validated and proclaimed by the Constitutional Council, the country's highest body in matters of constitutional and electoral law, and there can be no appeal against Constitutional Council appeals.

## Pensioners complain of long "proof of life" queues

Pensioners in the northern city of Nampula, many of them elderly and frail, are being obliged to queue up for hours outside the provincial offices of the National Social Security Institute (INSS) to prove that they are still alive.

Every year, people drawing old age or invalidity pensions from the INSS are obliged to submit to a "proof of life". This means they must go to the nearest INSS office in person or their benefits will be cut off. The only exceptions made are for those who are bedridden or otherwise unable to leave their homes. In such cases, the INSS will come to them, and make home visits.

The scene at the INSS offices in Nampula is chaotic, since the queues are badly organised and so what should be a simple procedure can take many hours. Pensioners who spoke to AIM expressed their frustration at standing in apparently interminable queues, which creep forward at a snail's pace.

These lengthy queues have been in plain sight since the first day of the exercise, yet INSS officials brush the complaints aside. The interim INSS provincial delegate, Arcelina Maringue, told AIM that pensioners do not have to come to the Nampula head office, since teams have been sent to offices in the city's six administrative posts. She suggested that the pensioners go to the office in the nearest administrative post.

But the pensioners told AIM this information had not been made available, and they only found out about the offices in the administrative posts once they had made their way from the periphery of the city to the INSS headquarters in central Nampula.

Pensioner Momad Adamo said "I've been here since the first day, but at 10.00 they sent us away, and told us to come back the next day. I did that, but I found a queue and it wasn't moving. So, this is the third day I've come here. But if I'd been properly informed I would have done the proof of life in my home neighbourhood".

Maringue promised that the information about where people should go for their "proof of life" will be improved, so as to reduce the suffering imposed on the pensioners, who are mostly old, ill or widowed mothers accompanied by young children.

She admitted that, unlike previous years, the pensioners had turned up en masse for the proof of life – but had found that the INSS was not prepared to receive them. "The brigades have been sent to the previously identified places", she said, "and in our district offices too, we shall publicise the information".

She declared that anyone who does not provide proof of life risks having their pension cut off as from May (the month following the end of the proof of life exercise on 10 April).

Maringue said the INSS has 9,890 pensioners on its books in Nampula. 6,400 of these are receiving old age pensions.

## Terrorists behead four in Mocimboa da Praia

A terrorist group, believed to be Islamic fundamentalists, murdered and beheaded four people on 10 January in an attack against the village of Manila, in Mocimboa da Praia district, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

According to the newsheet "Mediafax", five people were seriously injured in the raid and six houses were burnt down. One of those murdered was the head of the village.

According to a second newsheet "Carta de Mocambique", on the same night, in the neighbouring district of Palma, a peasant couple was attacked just five kilometres from the home of the district administrator. The terrorists hacked the man into five pieces in front of the woman who was left physically unharmed.

The terror caused by this barbaric act was such that people from four nearby villages fled towards Palma town, in search of protection.

On 12 January, a unit of the Riot Police captured four insurgents who were heading for Manguna village, also in Palma. The detained are reported to be collaborating with the authorities by indicating exactly where other members of the insurgent group can be found in Palma.

About 1,000 people who have fled from terrorist attacks to Ibo district are now in need of emergency assistance, according to the Ibo district administrator, Issa Tarmamade. 450 of these displaced people are in Ibo town and another 620 sought refuge on nearby islands. "Most of these people came from Macomia district and have been accommodated by relatives and friends", said Tarmamade. "We have had to shelter the others in houses of families who agreed to receive the displaced people. They need a bit of everything, particularly food and clothing".

Despite the goodwill of Ibo residents, the housing situation is desperate, and the district authorities need other forms of shelter.

The district government launched a movement of solidarity, but the only response so far has come from the Islamic Community of Cabo Delgado, which has donated seven tonnes of food and soap.

## Mozambique bans meat from South Africa

Mozambique has banned the import of animals and animal products from South Africa, because of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the province of Limpopo.

According to a release from the National Veterinary Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, the measure has been taken to avoid the risk that Mozambicans livestock might be infected from contaminated South African animals and products. The ban covers all cattle, goats, sheep and pigs and their products and sub-products from the entirety of South Africa. The only exceptions are products that have been completely treated to de-activate the foot-and-mouth virus, such as pasteurised dairy products, and heat processed meats.

The Mozambican authorities have guaranteed that border inspection will be stepped up to prevent South African livestock and meat from entering the country.

The foot-and-mouth outbreak in Limpopo province was reported on 7 January. Since then bans on importing South African meat have been announced by Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and now Mozambique.

The South African Department of Agriculture says that the affected areas are under quarantine, and investigations are underway to determine the extent of the outbreak.

The World Organisation for Animal Health has temporarily suspended South Africa as a meat exporter until the area affected is confirmed as free of the disease.

## President Nyusi holds meeting with Masisi

President Filipe Nyusi on 10 January held a courtesy meeting with his Botswanan counterpart, Mokgweetsi Masisi, who was on a private visit to Mozambique. The President was accompanied by the First Lady, Isaura Nyusi and by the governor of Maputo Province, Raimundo Diomba.

Last November, Masisi made a state visit to Mozambique. During that visit President Nyusi called for increased cooperation in areas such as agriculture, livestock, transport and communications, tourism, mining and energy. An agreement was signed during Masisi's visit that will allow Air Botswana to fly to Mozambique. The Botswanan government expects that, by the end of 2019, Air Botswana will be flying to Mozambican destinations. Currently anyone wishing to fly between the two countries must change planes in Johannesburg.

The two sides also agreed to reactivate plans to build a deep-water mineral port at Techobanine in the southernmost district of Matutuine. This would be used to export Botswanan minerals, notably coal, and would involve building a new railway from Botswana through Zimbabwe to the far south of Mozambique. The project is strongly opposed by environmentalists.

## Inflation in 2018 less than four per cent

Inflation in Mozambique in 2018 was just 3.52 per cent, according to the latest figures from the National Statistics Institute (INE), based on the consumer price indices of the three largest cities (Maputo, Nampula and Beira).

Despite fears of speculation during the festive season, inflation in December was only 0.37 per cent. There were some price rises in the month – including for butter beans (24.9 per cent), dried fish (20.6 per cent), tomatoes (12.1 per cent), coconuts (6.1 per cent), onions (2.6 per cent), and wine (9.9 per cent). But the prices of other goods remained stationary or fell – the main goods where prices declined were fresh fish (3.9 per cent), lemons (24.2 per cent) and petrol 0.8 per cent.

The annual inflation of 3.52 per cent can be regarded as a significant victory in the Bank of Mozambique's struggle to bring inflation under control. In 2017 inflation was 5.66 per cent, and in 2016 it had reached 25.26 per cent.

Throughout the year, inflation had remained low. In not a single month did inflation reach as much as one per cent. The month with the highest inflation was March, when it hit 0.97 per cent. In two months, June and July, inflation was negative, with price falls of 0.12 and 0.18 per cent.

The inflation trends were different in the three cities: it is more expensive to live in Maputo than elsewhere in the country. Inflation in Maputo in 2018 was 4.33 per cent. In Beira, it was 3.76 per cent, and in Nampula, it was 1.74 per cent.

## Cahora Bassa power exceeds plan

Hydroelectrica de Cahora Bassa (HCB), the company that operates the Cahora Bassa dam on the Zambezi River in the western province of Tete, produced 1.39 per cent more power in 2018 than planned.

According to HCB, production in 2018 was 13,659 gigawatt-hours (GWh). This was due to a gradual improvement in the storage of water in the reservoir behind the dam as a result of an increased inflow of water and to water management measures taken by HCB.

The company added that the increase in electricity production also results from the modernisation of the dam and power station that is now underway. HCB is implementing a ten-year capital expenditure programme of investments in the dam, the power station, the two sub-stations (at Songo and Matamo) and on the transmission lines.

These investments are intended to increase HCB's "technical and operational reliability" and prolong its useful life: the dam and its power station have now been in operation for more than 40 years.

The HCB Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 envisages expanding the company's productive capacity, diversifying its business and exploiting new opportunities for investment in the energy sector.

The Mozambican government has extended HCB's right to operate the dam for a further 15 years, as from 2033. This should make viable the planned sale of 7.5 per cent of HCB's shares on the Mozambican Stock Exchange.

For 2019, HCB has set a production target of 14,809 GWh.

## 33 die in rainy season

Storms, high winds and floods have so far claimed 33 lives in the 2018-2019 rainy season in Mozambique, according to the country's relief agency, the National Disasters Management Institute (INGC).

Speaking to reporters on 11 January during a meeting of the government's Disaster Management Technical Council, the INGC spokesperson, Paulo Tomas, said that, since the rainy season began in October, 24 people have been killed by bolts of lightning, six have drowned in flooding, and the other three died when walls collapsed on top of them.

He added that 14,150 people have been affected by natural disasters and are now receiving assistance from the INGC. 586 houses have been destroyed in storms and floods, and a further 2,374 have been damaged. Schools have also suffered with 66 classrooms destroyed and 183 damaged.

Tomas said that the weather forecast for the coming days is for rain in the central and northern provinces, while poor rainfall will continue to characterise the south.

Much of southern Mozambique (notably the interior of Gaza and Inhambane provinces) is naturally semi-arid. This situation is made worse in years marked by the El Nino weather phenomenon.

El Nino is an anomalous warming of the surface waters in parts of the Pacific, which has a major impact on weather patterns worldwide. In southern Africa, it frequently results in severe droughts.

## Syrah begins commercial production at Balama

The Australian mining company Syrah Resources has announced that it has begun commercial production of graphite at its mine in Balama district, in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado.

The mine was officially inaugurated by Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi in April last year although it began mining graphite in November 2017. Since then it has been building up its capacity and last year produced 104,000 tonnes of natural graphite. In addition, the company is improving the rate of graphite recovery, which increased from 53 per cent in the third quarter of 2018 to 70 per cent in the last quarter.

According to Syrah's Managing Director, Shaun Verner, "the declaration of commercial production represents a key milestone for Syrah, reflecting the significantly improved production consistency and strong recovery improvements".

Syrah has binding agreements with Chinese buyers and will this year provide 20,000 tonnes of graphite to Taida-Huarun and between 48,000 and 60,000 tonnes to Qingdao Langruite Graphite. In addition, it has set up its own production plant in Louisiana, in the United States which will produce up to 5,000 tonnes of spherical graphite per year for use as battery anodes.

The Balama mine covers 106 square kilometres and is reported to hold the largest graphite reserves ever discovered. It is an open cast mine and the company estimates the lifespan of the resource at more than fifty years.

Graphite is a highly valued form of carbon due to its properties as a conductor of electricity. It is used in batteries and fuel cells and is the basis for the "miracle material" graphene, which is the strongest material ever measured, with vast potential for use in the electronics industries.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact [pfauvet@live.com](mailto:pfauvet@live.com)

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