

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

287 10 May 2015 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/mozambiqueElections/home.aspx>

Also in this issue:

Mediators warn Renamo-government talks intentionally deadlocked

Worst place to be a pedestrian

Mozambique is one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a pedestrian, according to the World Health Organisation "Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013", published in March. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/

Mozambique has a high road traffic death rate, but 56% of road deaths are pedestrians. Only two countries in the world are worse for walkers - Liberia and El Salvador.

In terms of road traffic deaths per 100,000 population, Mozambique ranks 114th, with 18 people killed on the roads each year per 100,000 people. Russia and Indonesia are similar. South Africa is one of the worst in the world, with 32 deaths per 100,000. Malawi is 20, Tanzania 23 and Zambia is 24. The safest major countries are Sweden with only 3 deaths per 100,000, and Britain, Netherlands and Norway with 4. The United States is 11.

These figures suggest that more than 4300 people were killed in Mozambican road accidents last year, of whom 2400 were pedestrians and not people in vehicles.

Murders up, but still much less dangerous than South Africa

Murders rose 12% last year, from 1,092 to 1,223 - a 12% increase - Attorney General Beatriz Buchili told parliament on 5 May. With a 2014 population of 24 million, that gives a homicide rate of 5 per 100,000 people, the same level as the United States. By contrast the rate is 31 per 100,000 in South Africa, 25 in Brazil, but only 1 per 100,000 in Britain, Portugal and Sweden, according to World Bank statistics.

Buchili said kidnappings fell from 44 in 2013 to 42 in 2014. This is 2 per million population in Mozambique, compared to 41 in Portugal and 102 per million in Belgium, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime statistics.

AIM (6 May) notes that the wave of kidnappings, notably of businessmen of Asian origin, began in late 2011. Initially the abductions were concentrated in Maputo – but in 2014 there were 6 kidnappings in Beira, 5 in Nampula and 3 in Inhambane. Buchili said 18 people were convicted of kidnapping last year and sentenced to prison terms of 8 to 24 years. Buchili noted that large sums in cash have been paid to ransom the victims of kidnap gangs “which shows that a great deal of money is continuing to circulate outside of the banking system”.

Buchili said nothing of the murders of judge Dinis Silica on 8 May 2014 and constitutional lawyer Gilles Cistac on 3 March this year - both gunned down by assassins on the street. This suggests a lack of progress in solving these very public crimes.

Unexpectedly, during the parliamentary debate on the report, Frelimo backed proposals by the two opposition parties (Renamo and MDM), Buchili, and the Mozambique bar association to restructure the Criminal Investigation Police (PIC). PIC is a police force which answers to both the Interior Ministry and the Attorney General's office, and there have been claims of political interference by the ministry. It is now proposed to make PIC separate from the ordinary police and responsible only to the attorney general's office.

906 corruption cases

In her report to parliament, Buchili also said that the Central Office for the Fight against Corruption (GCCC) handled 906 cases of corruption, diversion of state funds and similar crimes in 2014, similar to the 876 cases in 2013. Charges had been brought in 239 cases, and 79 had come to trial, involving thefts from the state of 87 million meticaís (\$2.6mn). Of this, only 11 million meticaís has been recovered. Most cases appear to have been dealt with through disciplinary proceedings, which resulted in the sacking of 247 state employees, and the expulsion from the state apparatus of another 294. Buchili gave no details of any of the corruption cases.

And the Cardoso case

Buchili made no mention of the assassin of Carlos Cardoso having been released without serving his full sentence and apparently being in London in violation of his parole. Based on this, Paul Fauvet of AIM (7 May) makes an unusually strong attack on Buchili and the judicial system.

Nini Satar was convicted of ordering the murder of investigative journalist Carlos Cardoso in November 2000 and sentenced to 24 years in prison. The murder was partly to silence Cardoso and stop him reporting on a fraud which stole \$14 million from what was then the country's largest bank, the state-owned Commercial Bank of Mozambique. Nini was subsequently convicted of that crime as well, and sentenced to a further 14 years.

Fauvet notes that Nini smuggled mobile telephones into his cell and even ran a Facebook page. In 2013 the police accused him of orchestrating kidnappings from his cell with his mobile phone. A Maputo judge, Aderito Malhope, ruled there was not enough evidence to charge Satar. Then last year Judge Malhope ordered the release of Satar on grounds of good behavior (contested by the public prosecutor's office) after he had served half the murder term - but before he had served any of the subsequent bank robber sentence.

Normally prisoners on parole must stay in Mozambique, but Judge Malhope has allowed Nini to go to India for medical treatment. Satar on Facebook subsequently claimed to be in London. He added: “I am blessed with money and the taste to buy whatever there is of the best quality in the world. My wardrobe alone is worth millions of dollars”. He was supposed to present himself to judge Malhope on 15 April, but did not do so. (*Canal de Moçambique*, 22 April)

Mediators warn Renamo-government talks intentionally deadlocked

The Monday talks between Renamo and the government remain deadlocked, after 103 meetings. The mediators finally called a press conference on 13 April and in a very strong statement Lourenco do Rosario said the talks "are going nowhere and it seems to us that there are interests who do not want these issues resolved."

He continued: "we have met with the leaderships of the two delegations to express our concern. ... There has been a kind of narrowing of the political dialogue, so that some details, apparently easy to solve, such as the separation of political parties from the state, are not resolved".

Meanwhile, President Nyusi has said he will only meet Dhlakama again if the meeting has a concrete goal. He said the meetings in February succeeded because they had the specific goal of finding a way that Renamo could take up its seats in parliament. (Notícias 25 April)

On 4 May, Renamo accused the government of continuing to violate the ceasefire and said government troops based in Inchope and Gorongosa are preventing food and other supplies from reaching the Renamo troops stationed in the area. Government head of negotiations José Pacheco said the agreement does not prevent government forces from stopping, searching and even detaining vehicles travelling through the country.

At the 4 May meeting Renamo presented its proposed organisational chart of the armed forces, with parity between Renamo and Frelimo members in the distribution of leadership positions. Pacheco said "Renamo wants parity in the armed forces, against all the rules which establish that the armed forces are not party political bodies".

Parliament rejects Renamo autonomous province proposal;

Parliament on 30 April rejected Renamo's proposal to create "autonomous provinces" (*autarquias provinciais*) similar to the elected municipalities. The vote was 138 to 98, with Frelimo voting against and Renamo and MDM voting for.

The bill had already been discussed by two parliamentary committees, Constitution and Public Administration. *O País* (30 April) published ten questions asked by the committees and the Renamo replies. The justification of the bill was purely political: the 15 October elections were not free, just or transparent; the count did not follow the law; the National Elections Commission was divided on accepting the final result; Renamo won in six provinces and this was an "electoral coup"; and Dhlakama has said "we want to govern where we were elected".

But Renamo did justify the constitutionality at least of the broad proposal. It said the constitution calls for local power and the Renamo proposal was similar to elected municipal governments. It said that municipalities had followed the policy of "gradualism", with new municipalities being added in each election, and thus its proposal to start with the six provinces it claims to have won follows the gradualism policy.

Comment: In their 9 February meeting, President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo head Afonso Dhlakama agreed that Frelimo in parliament would "take seriously" Renamo's proposal for "autonomous provinces", and not reject it out of hand. That did not happen. Instead Frelimo MPs made clear they were rejecting the bill because it did not say how much it would cost - which is required for all bills presented to parliament - and because it was argued that the proposal, as written, was unconstitutional. Both were true, but no attempt was made to resolve the problems.

Indeed, in the month before the parliamentary vote, Nyusi returned to the rhetoric of his predecessor, Armando Guebuza, that the proposal was unconstitutional and would divide the country. The new openness and flexibility shown by Nyusi in the February meetings has evaporated, and Nyusi is increasingly being accused of lacking a strategy to deal with Dhlakama.

For his part, Dhlakama responded with an increasingly hard line - that the bill must be accepted unchanged or Renamo will return to war. And in the Monday talks, Renamo continued to add new demands.

Both sides have valid arguments. Frelimo's obsession with national unity is justified in the face of problems caused elsewhere in Africa by regional and language differences. But some decentralisation is clearly needed, to take more account of local differences. A real debate in parliament on how to balance the two would have been useful. Similarly, the Renamo demand that the President not be involved in any party activity during the working day is excessive but not totally unworkable; it could have been accepted, and it would actually have been symbolically useful if the Frelimo Political Commission could only meet after 3.30 pm.

But the rigidity of both sides makes negotiation virtually impossible. Issues on both sides now add to the paralysis. After Dhlakama's higher than expected votes in presidential elections, Frelimo is very frightened about agreeing anything that is not totally proposed from within the party; Dhlakama cannot be allowed to take credit for decentralisation and reducing the role of Frelimo in the state. On his side, since the failed negotiations of 2000, Dhlakama has always wanted patronage power - the right to appoint governors and district administrators - which Frelimo will never agree.

The hardening positions on both sides do not bode well for negotiations. But are the two sides willing to risk confrontations? Nyusi as defence minister did not create an army capable of beating a handful of Renamo guerrillas. But Dhlakama must also know that his boasts of being able to mobilise thousands of young people to create an "Arab spring" are also exaggerated. Thus, most likely is several more months of rigidity and posturing. *jh*

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Joseph Hanlon

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