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ENERGY & BIOFUELS

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News reports & clippings no. 147 from Joseph Hanlon

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DAVIZ BACKERS FORM NEW PARTY

Backers of the newly re-elected mayor of Beira, Daviz Simango, formed a new party in Beira at the weekend. The Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM, Movimento Democrático de Moçambique) has so far drawn its support largely from Renamo, which has haemorrhaged members since Renamo was trounced in local elections in November.

Renamo President Afonso Dhlakama at the last minute did not select the popular Daviz as Renamo candidate for re-election. In less than a week, Daviz's backers organised enough signatures to allow him to stand as an independent. He won with 62% of the vote. Dhlakama's very tight control of the party and his failure to organise campaign support for Renamo candidates in the local elections was the last straw. Renamo parliament members now fear they will lose their seats in elections this year. Several, including Maria Moreno, head of the parliamentary group, attended the MDM founding conference -- Moreno made clear she had not left Renamo yet. Many key figures seem to be sitting on the fence, hoping Dhlakama can be forced to change and invite Daviz back in; but they will join MDM if they are expelled from Renamo, as it likely to happen at a Renamo special political commission meeting this week in Nacala.

Daviz and MDM leaders have confirmed that they will stand candidates for provincial and national parliaments in elections later this year. But it remains unclear if Daviz will stand for president against Armando Guebuza -- time is short, and he already has a fight on his hands as mayor of Beira with a municipal assembly controlled by his opponents.

The popularity of Daviz and organising skills of Daviz and party spokesman Geraldo Carvalho could turn the MDM into a formidable opposition, but it will take a huge amount of work and the MDM is unlikely to be able to mount a credible challenge until 2013-2014 elections. This year, it will do very well to gain more parliamentary seats than Renamo. Frelimo has a huge and well organised party machine, and Renamo is fixed in many voters' minds as the only real opposition.

At the constituting meeting at the weekend, 252 voting delegates named Daviz president of the MDM, and selected 9 of 11 members of a political commission, a 60 member national council based on provincial representatives, and a five member supervisory commission. A secretary-general is still to be named.

The MDM Supervisory Commission is headed by the party's top jurist, Eduardo Elias, who is a former Renamo deputy, and currently a member of the Higher Council of the Judicial Magistrature (CSMJ). One member is Zaida Mussa, a lawyer and the wife of Renamo MP Ismael Mussa.

The new party seems to be making an explicit effort to link back to Renamo's 1981-92 guerrilla war and to Portuguese backing for that war. A member of the MDM's new 11-member political commission is Ivete Fernandes, widow of the Renamo secretary-general in the mid-1980s, who was assassinated in Portugal in 1988. In that period, Ivete Fernandes had strong links with the Portuguese Social Democratic Party (PSD), and the PSD was officially represented last weekend at the MDM founding conference. Another member of the political commission is Simango's press spokesman, Geraldo Carvalho. According to Canal de Moçambique, Carvalho was "a senior officer and active guerrilla" during the war. (The US Department of State report "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2000: Mozambique" said that Carvalho had been killed by government security services in 2000, and this was repeated in the 2001 report.)

Daviz is the son of one of the founders of Frelimo, Rev Uria Simango, who fell out with the successful leadership of Frelimo in the bitter struggles of the late 1960s. Uria and his wife (Daviz's mother) Celina were executed in the early years of independence, but the details have never been published.

CONFUSION WARNING: The Frelimo mayor of Maputo is David Simango and the MDM mayor of Beira is Daviz Simango. They are not related.

FRELIMO LEADERS IN BEIRA PUNISHED FOR LOSING

The Frelimo party has dismissed its leadership in Beira and Sofala and sent in a team of heavies to restructure. The party team is headed by Political Commission member Alberto Chipande and includes Political Commission member and Interior Minister Jose Pacheco, Minister of State Administration Lucas Chomera, Health Minister Ivo Garrido, and Frelimo mobilisation secretary Edson Macuacua.

Lourenço Bulha, the Beira mayoral candidate and (until last week) Sofala Frelimo head, nearly doubled the Frelimo vote for the mayor (from 23,405 to 42,003) and saw Frelimo become the largest party in the municipal assembly (with 19 seats compared to 17 for Renamo). Nevertheless, Beira was the only municipality of the 43 where Frelimo did not win the post of mayor and win a majority in the assembly. So Bulha and his team pay a harsh price for not winning.

According to Noticias, Chipande is now first secretary of the Sofala party while Pacheco will be in charge of organisation. Macuacua and Garrido will deal with Beira. Chomera will deal with Gorongoso and Marrumeu (where Frelimo won 82% and 54%)

6 KILLED BY MOBS FEARING CHOLERA & DROUGHT

The rage of the poor continues. In Nampula province, angry mobs have killed three people falsely accused of spreading cholera. In Zambezia three people have been killed for stealing or locking up the rain. In urban areas, lynchings continue.

As noted earlier (see newsletter 145), a study by Carlos Serra and a team from Universidade Eduardo Mondlane found that in northern Mozambique poor people strongly believe that the rich and powerful want to kill them, and thus feel they were fighting for their lives. (The study was

published in 2003 in an excellent small book *Cólera e catarse*. The full book, in Portuguese, and my preface, in English, are posted on my website: <http://www.tinyurl.com/mozamb>)

Mogincual district in coastal Nampula remains one of Mozambique's poorest districts. Half of the population are facing food shortages due to damage done by cyclone Jokwe in 2008. There are continued outbreaks of konzo, paralysis caused by eating too much cassava without first treating it to remove the cyanide, which only happens when people are really hungry. On 25 February two Red Cross volunteers who were part of a brigade publicising anti-cholera messages, which include putting chlorine in wells, were beaten to death, accused of poisoning the wells with cholera. The mob also burned houses and destroyed bicycles and motorcycles, which are seen as only being owned by the better off. Three people were arrested but the crowd blocked the road to prevent them being taken out of the village.

Then three days later, in Angoche district (just south of Mogincual) protestors attacked health workers accused of spreading cholera. They were already being protected by the police so the mob attacked the police with knives and spears, disembowelling and killing a police sergeant and seriously injuring two other policemen. On the same day in Moma district (south of Angoche) a mob attacked a community leader accused of putting cholera in the wells; two policemen protecting him were hospitalised.

Meanwhile, in Nicoadala district in Zambezia province, local people are accusing the state of locking up the rain and only giving it to better off farmers. In mid-February three people were killed and six injured, accused of diverting the rain. Nineteen people have been arrested. One farmer was quoted by the Sunday newspaper Domingo as saying "In the farm over there, something is growing, but on mine, nothing. How is it that my neighbour can eat and I can't?" (see <http://www.oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com> for more)

Meanwhile, lynching in poor urban areas continues, with at least one death a week reported. It has become so serious that on 3 March President Armando Guebuza actually spoke out against mobs taking the law into their own hands. And, contrary to the view that it is poor uneducated people, Guebuza claimed that lynch mobs include educated people who know about legality and justice.

The word "linchar" has entered into Portuguese for executions by mobs, based on "lynch" in US English, used for mob killings, particularly of Black people in the US south in the 19th and 20th century. The word is said to come from the name of an 18th century American terrorist, Charles Lynch, who during the Revolutionary War headed an irregular court in Virginia to punish Loyalist supporters of the British.

GLOBAL CRISIS DELAYS BIG INVESTMENTS

The global financial crisis has already caused mining and energy projects to be delayed or suspended in Mozambique, according to the new IMF report "The Implications of the Global Financial Crisis for Low-Income Countries". Mega-projects depending on foreign investment are being "rescheduled", admitted government spokesperson, Deputy Education Minister Luis Covane, last week. These include an oil refinery to be built at Nacala on the northern coast and a new hydroelectric dam at Mphanda Nkua on the Zambezi. A project for mining titanium-bearing heavy sands near Chibuto has already been put on hold, and press reports indicate there is no money for a proposed oil refinery near Maputo.

Mozal, the aluminium smelter, has sacked 80 workers and cut production. Its profits fell from \$550 million in 2007 to \$440 mn in 2008, and aluminium prices continue to fall -- from \$3000 per tonne in June 2008 to \$1300 per tonne now. Labour Minister Helena Taipo said the dismissals were illegal because adequate notice had not been given.

The Mozambican government has set up an inter-ministerial working group GASI (Group to Accompany the International Financial Situation) chaired by Finance Minister Manuel Chang. Other

members are the ministers of Planning and Development (Aiuba Cuereneia), Industry and Trade (Antonio Fernando), Labour (Helena Taipo) and Agriculture (Soares Nhaca) and the Governor of the Bank of Mozambique, Ernesto Gove.

CAUTIOUS MOVES ON BIOFUELS

Mozambique has huge potential for biofuels production -- particularly sugar cane for ethanol and jatropha and copra (coconut kernels) for diesel, according to Energy Minister Salvador Namburete. But the government is moving slowly, being careful that biofuels do not compete with food production and foreign investors do not create conflicts over land.

So far, Namburete said, Mozambique has received applications for 7 million hectares of land for biofuel -- one-fifth of Mozambique's entire arable land (36 mn ha). But only two projects have been approved, both for sugar care -- 30,000 ha in Gaza and 18,000 ha in Manica.

Mozambique's first biofuel project is being run by the state company Petromoc, which is already producing 80,000 litres a day of biodiesel from copra in Inhambane.

Four years ago President Armando Guebuza ran a major campaign to get peasants to grow jatropha, which grows well on marginal land. The plants are now producing, and peasants complain that they cannot sell the seed. Namburete stressed that the government is committed to buying all jatropha offered to it, but it appears that no mechanism has been established to actually buy the seeds.

The Minister also said that only one local company has so far succeeded in making use of carbon credits, the Portuguese-owned Cimentos de Moçambique, by switching from coal to gas and reducing carbon emissions. He said it is not easy to register Mozambican projects but hopes that some biofuel projects will qualify.

LEGAL NOTES

+ The backlog of court cases has been slightly reduced, according to the President of the Supreme Court, and now is equivalent to one year's cases. At the start of 2008, there were 147,527 cases pending in all courts. During 2008, 111,766 new cases entered, but 136,683 were dealt with, reducing the number of pending cases to 120,764.

+ Attorney General Augusto Paulino in a speech on 3 March stressed the need to combat "illicit enrichment", which ranged from drug trafficking to money laundering to theft of public resources.
+ 48 of the 49 charges against the former interior minister, Almerino Manhenge, were thrown out by a Maputo city judge, with no explanation. The Public Prosecutors Office has appealed to the Supreme Court to reinstate the charges, and Manhenge remains in jail.

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