

MOZAMBIQUE 152

News reports & clippings

IMPACT OF GLOBAL CRISIS ON MOZAMBIQUE

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ANIMALS VS PEOPLE

MOB ATTACKS POLICE STATION

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News reports & clippings no. 152 from Joseph Hanlon

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Three files attached: pdf of this report, economic reports, and Cahora Bassa articles

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Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique?

by Joseph Hanlon & Teresa Smart

is only available direct from the publisher.

Go to the website

www.jamescurrey.co.uk

click on the picture of the book cover

and that takes you through to an order form.

(The book is not available from Amazon. Allegedly Amazon charges the publisher too much.)

The book in English is presently sold out in Maputo, but more copies should be in bookshops in a couple of weeks.

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Growth will fall to 4%, but Mozambique partly protected; IMF says spend more

Mozambique's economic growth will fall to 4.3% this year according to the IMF, or 4% according to *Africa Economic Outlook*, with both agreeing on only a relatively small increase in 2010. Lower commodity prices, falling foreign investment, and possible aid cuts are blamed. Nevertheless, *Africa Economic Outlook* says that Mozambique's "economy is likely to be relatively shielded from

the direct impacts of the current world financial crisis because its financial system is poorly integrated into world capital markets.”

In a statement issued on 13 May, the IMF calls for “fiscal stimulus in Mozambique”. Although tax revenue will fall significantly, by 1.3% of GDP, the government should maintain its planned level of spending, the IMF says. Mozambique should “at least partly offset the impact of the global economic crisis [with] somewhat more expansionary fiscal and monetary policies.” In particular, it calls for “easing monetary policy” by reducing the squeeze on private sector credit.

Africa Economic Outlook warns that “the government is struggling to generate domestic drivers of growth and reduce its dependence on official development assistance (ODA)”. The report is critical of the large foreign investment projects in mining and aluminium smelters which have become the major drivers of growth, which at best produce “some trickle-down effects in services and construction.” It adds that “the foreign-owned mega-projects consume most of the energy produced in the country, benefit from generous tax exemptions and have limited labour-creation capacities, preventing growth from being broad-based.”

The *African Economic Outlook* is a combined report from the OECD Development Centre, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and a network of African think tanks and research centres.

Both statements are attached.

103 HUNGER DEATHS

103 people are known to have died of hunger in Mozambique in the year ending 31 March 2009, according to the Deputy National Director of Agricultural Services, Marcelo Chaquisse. AIM reports.

Speaking on 30 April at a meeting of the Consultative Council of the Food and Nutritional Security Technical Secretariat (SETSAN), Chaquisse said that food shortages currently affect 450,000 Mozambicans. He blamed the lack of food reserves combined with droughts and floods.

Maria Zimmerman, the Maputo representative of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), said Mozambican farmers are not gaining from rising food prices, even though poor households are forced to spend most of their income on acquiring food. According to Zimmerman, “the price of maize in Maputo, for example, has gone up by 10%, but the farmer in Mossurize, or in any other Mozambican district, doesn’t know that the price has gone up”.

CAHORA BASSA – terrorism or holy hand grenades?

Four people were arrested on 21 April when they were caught dumping 500 kg of strange objects into the lake behind the Cahora Bassa dam. In an era of extreme panic over terrorism, the four were charged with attempting to sabotage the dam. Their bizarre explanation caused both confusion and hilarity. They say they are part of a cult trying to put positive energy into the Zambeze river to counter the negative energy being beamed into the region by the United States and NATO.

The four are based in South Africa, and are Georg Ritschi (a German architect), Carlos Silva (a Portuguese hotelier), Joseph Ngusato (a South African “prophet”), and Tino Phutheso. The fourth person was a Botswana military aircraft pilot, who, suggests *Savana* (15 May 2009), may have links to the Botswana security services.

The four are part of a group called “Orgonise Africa”, followers of the Austrian psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich, who died in a US jail in 1956. They had publicised their trip in advance on their website. Reich believed there was a universal positive energy called orgone, and that illness and other problems are caused by insufficient orgone. The four say that there were putting “orgonite” into the lake. They say they were putting in cones made of fibreglass and aluminum shavings, with a crystal at the core, and they call these cones “Holy Hand Grenades”. These would attract orgone to the Zambeze valley, countering “weather manipulation and mind control” being transmitted from the United States (via mobile telephone towers).

The arrests have received substantial press coverage in Mozambique and an attached file has some of the articles (in English and Portuguese) as well as web addresses.

THREE TOP JUDGES REPLACED

Parliament 14 May approved new appointments for the three top judicial positions; the men were nominated by President Armando Guebuza on 23 April. They replace men whose terms had expired.

Luis Mondlane becomes head of the Constitutional Council, the supreme body on matters of constitutional law. The Council also rules on electoral disputes, and proclaims and validates election results. Mondlane had been a Supreme Court judge for 20 years. He was also the first presiding judge of the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Tribunal, whose most important ruling struck down as illegal parts of the chaotic “fast track” land reform under which the Zimbabwean regime of President Robert Mugabe had seized land from white commercial farmers, AIM notes. He replaces the 76 year old Rui Baltazar, who had served in various government since independence, and whose term of office had expired.

Ozias Pondja is the new president of the Supreme Court, He has been a member of the court since 2002. He was chief attorney in Zambezia in the late 1970s, and was then presiding judge in provincial courts, first in Cabo Delgado, then in Zambezia. He replaces Mario Mangaze, whose fourth five year term of office had expired. Mangaze was head of the Supreme Court for 20 years and has been controversial. His re-appointment by President Joaquim Chissano in the last days of his office, rather than leaving the appointment to Guebuza, caused some concern, and Mangaze was openly criticised by the United States in a report in 2006 which said he protected the interests of important people in Frelimo. *O Pais* (24 April) considers Ponja “very close to Mangaze”.

Machatine Munguambe is president of the Administrative Tribunal, which handles issues relating to the government, including state accounts. He was previously the rector of the Mozambican police academy, ACIPOL, and was once director of the Eduardo Mondlane University law faculty. His predecessor, Antonio Pale, had served for 15 years (three terms of office).

WILD ANIMALS causing problems for rural people

Conflicts between wild animals and people are an increasingly tense issue. In Niassa, 43 people have been killed by wild animals in the past four years, according to AIM. And in Mucojo, in Macomia district of the Quirimbas National Park in Cabo Delgado, local people used the recording of a radio programme to protest about the problem of elephants. (*Noticias*, 15 May 2009)

The meeting in Mocojo started with the district administrator giving a cheque for MT 50,000 (about \$2000) to the local committee, as its share of the 20% of tourism fees given to the local community for development projects. After the cheque was presented, a radio programme was recorded on local wildlife. But the community speakers unexpectedly raised the issue of elephants. “You are cheating us. MT 50,000 is not enough to even repair the damage done by the elephants, leaving

nothing for development projects.” Speakers were backed by community leaders. One speaker called the 20% a “poisoned gift”. Another said to the visiting delegation: “If a goat eats my crops, I capture it and settle up with the owner. You are the owners of the elephants, and what are you doing. Pay us for the destruction caused every day.”

Noticias points out that six months ago, the neighbouring village of Quiterajo refused to allow governor Eliseu Machava to speak at a scheduled public meeting until he had fulfilled the promises made by the previous governor, Lázaro Mathe.

LYNCHINGS CONTINUE as mob attacks police station

A mob attacked and briefly occupied the police station in the southern town of Magude on Tuesday 12 May, in an attempt to seize and to lynch a suspected murderer. According to STV, four men murdered a youth named Filipe Cossa on Sunday, accusing him of having an affair with the wife of one of the men who attacked him. The jealous husband, known only as Muzonduane, attempted to flee from Magude, but the police arrested him in the neighbouring district of Manhica.

Cossa’s funeral was Tuesday, and his relatives diverted mourners to the police station where they demanded that the alleged assassin be handed over. The police opened fire on the crowd, but could not hold them back, and were forced to retreat. In the confusion, four prisoners in the police cells escaped. Muzonduane was beaten unconscious, but apparently survived. Cossa’s relatives then went to Muzonduane’s house and burnt it down. They also destroyed a vehicle belonging to him.

Savana reports that at least 20 people have been killed in lynchings in Mozambique so far this year.

MORE BICYCLES

3000 bicycles are being put on sale in Maputo city and province, with preference being given to civil servants. The initiative, by the ministries of Transport and Commerce, is to try to encourage people to commute by bicycle rather than by vehicle. But the national director of surface transport, Taibo Issufo, admitted that nothing will be done to create cycle lanes or bicycle parking. (*Noticias* 23 April 2009)

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Election newsletter in Portuguese:

Para assinar: <http://tinyurl.com/mz-pt-sub>

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Mozambique media websites:

Noticias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O Pais: www.opais.co.mz

Savana: www.savana.co.mz

Canal de Moçambique: www.canalmoz.com

AIM Reports: www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news

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