

MOZAMBIQUE 167

News reports & clippings

2 September 2010

=====

Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

To subscribe: tinyurl.com/mz-en-sub

To unsubscribe: tinyurl.com/mz-en-unsub

=====

4 to 11 dead in price rise riots

Violent demonstrations in Maputo yesterday and today (1,2 September) against price rises and the cost of living have left between 4 and 11 dead. The riots were worst yesterday, but today most businesses and institutions are closed; there is no public transport in Maputo and most roads out of central Maputo remain blocked, including roads to the airport and Matola.

The police say four people are dead. The daily O Pais says that at an emergency Council Of Ministers meeting this morning, it was reported 7 died and 288 were injured. But O Pais itself says 10 were killed yesterday and one today.

The protests were against the increase in prices of electricity and water, which took effect yesterday, and the recent price rises of bread and fuel. Cost of living for the urban poor has risen sharply recently, reflecting global increases in fuel and food prices, and the ending of a very large fuel subsidy maintained after 5 February 2008 demonstrations (which left five dead and more than 100 injured)

The devaluation of the metical has also played an important role, because much food and other goods are imported from South Africa. In January there were 4 meticais to the South African Rand and 29.3 to the US dollar. Today the official rate is 4.9 and 36.3, a 25% devaluation in just eight months.

Publication of the 2008 family expenditure has been repeatedly delayed, but it is expected to show increases in both urban and rural poverty, rather than the decreases claimed by government and donors.

The demonstrators have largely been young men who were organised over the past few days by mobile telephone text messages (SMS). Few urban jobs have been created in recent years and young people are expected to survive in the "informal sector", often selling goods on the street. Flexible working means these people can stop work to participate in demonstrations. Yesterday and today, roads were blocked with burning tyres, trees, dustbins and other objects. Demonstrations started in the outer suburbs where the poorer people live. As well as blocking roads, some shops were looted and cars and buses attacked. Demonstrations continued in the suburbs today. There have been confrontations between rioters and police; shots and tear gas have been fired; at least some of the dead were shot by police.

In a statement yesterday, President Armando Guebuza called for calm and blamed agitators who were misleading young people. He said poverty can only be ended if people work harder. Interior Minister José Pacheco called the demonstrators “bandits” and “hooligans”.

But in an unusually strong editorial this morning entitled “Why 5 February? And now why 1 September?”, the Editorial Director of O Pais, Jeremias Langa, talks of the “enormous disenchantment with the widening gap between those who have and those who do not have”. It is said that Mozambique is a world example of economic growth but this is not reflected in the quality of life of most citizens. It is said the Mozambique has the most agricultural potential in SADC but agriculture has been left to subsistence production and most of what we consume comes from South Africa, Langa notes.

“Instead of offering solutions of the citizens, we offer magician’s tricks to distract the citizens,” he concludes.

Thus, “there is a class that manifestly feels itself excluded from the distribution of income, that feels that the state has broken the social contract, that does not see that state as a source of solutions but of problems – because it promotes accumulation by a few to the detriment of the majority.”

Strong words from the editorial director of the main private TV station (STV) and daily newspaper.

Detailed coverage of the demonstrations, updated frequently during the day, in Portuguese, are available on the O Pais website (www.opais.co.mz) with pictures and the blog “Diário de um sociólogo” by Carlos Serra (<http://www.oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com>)

=====

[Now in paper at a reasonable price](#)
**Do bicycles equal development
in Mozambique?**

by Joseph Hanlon & Teresa Smart
is now available in **paperback**, for £17.99 (+ p&p)
but only from the publisher (not Amazon)
<http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=13503>

**Just Give Money to the Poor:
The Development Revolution from the Global South**

by Joseph Hanlon, Armando Barrientos, and David Hulme
Most of this book can now be **read on the web**
<http://tinyurl.com/justgivemoney>

=====

Also on the web: Previous newsletters and other Mozambique material are posted on
tinyurl.com/mozamb

=====

NOTE OF EXPLANATION:
This mailing list is used to distribute two publications, both edited by Joseph Hanlon. This is my own sporadic "News reports & clippings", which is entirely my own responsibility. This list is also used to distribute the *Mozambique*

Political Process Bulletin, published by CIP and AWEPA, but those organisations are not linked to “News reports & clippings”
Joseph Hanlon

=====

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

=====

This mailing is the personal responsibility of Joseph Hanlon, and does not necessarily represent the views of the Open University.

==