
Restoring Peace in Mozambique

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Introduction

This document provides a summary of a meeting and question and answer session held at Chatham House on 14 July 2014 on recent developments in peace negotiations in Mozambique.

The speaker discussed the need for a consolidation of peace in Mozambique through a national peace process. This is not only because of the current conflict, but also due to the unsustainable nature of peace in the country, which is demonstrated by domestic violence and the abundance of guns. Progress has been made in the current negotiations and the speaker highlighted the positive commitment to peace both by the Mozambican people and by the political parties Renamo and Frelimo. However, problems remain and the conflict has resulted in a large number of casualties and a big humanitarian impact. The speaker expressed his concern that citizens may not participate in the upcoming October elections owing to fears of violence during the polls.

The speaker described how the peace process must involve all sectors of society, not just politicians, and called on civil society to take a more proactive role. He examined the role that the international community can play, both as observers to the elections and as partners to the national observers' initiatives on peace, health and ethics. He discussed potential problems with the October elections, and stressed the need for continued dialogue and consultation between Renamo, Frelimo and the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM).

The meeting was held on the record. The following summary is intended to serve as an *aide-mémoire* for those who took part and to provide a general summary of discussions for those who did not.

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The speaker described how he is dedicating his retirement to helping create and consolidate peace in Mozambique. This is needed not only because of the current conflict, but also because Mozambique's peace is not secure. He highlighted how this can be seen in the high levels of domestic violence in the country, and stated that there is a lack of appreciation of the value of human life. Elders are also frequently mistreated and accused of witchcraft by their own children. The speaker specified that the prevalence of guns is a big problem. He explained that one of the reasons for the present situation in Mozambique is the failure to completely disarm in 1992, with many individuals retaining their weapons. He said the fact that the equipment used in the present conflict is in much better condition than would be expected after disuse for so many years, and the fighters are younger than the ex-combatants would be, demonstrated how the possession of firearms attracted other gun owners to violence. He acknowledged that the abundance of weapons is not the only problem that Mozambique faces, with additional challenges arising from party factional issues, disputes over the distribution of natural resources and economic

hardship. However, in his view the availability of guns is the biggest problem as it impedes dialogue on the other issues. Because of these challenges, there is a need to consolidate peace through a national peace process. The speaker described his involvement in a 'swords to ploughshares' programme, whereby individuals are encouraged to turn in their guns so that the material can be used by artists to create messages of peace. He said that artists have a duty to work for peace, having previously glorified war through artistic works such as monuments. Over 15 years, 900,000 pieces of equipment have been collected, and he noted that although the programme was originally aimed at ex-combatants, ordinary civilians were now participating as well.

The speaker said he was one of the five individuals observing the present negotiations, who are trying to move the discussion beyond simply employing words, such as unification, integration, parity and equilibrium, to real action. The observers are mandated by their respective leaders to work together, but are not representing their specific institutions or churches. The speaker said the main concern regarding the peace negotiations is the slowness of the process – not because of pressure to meet the election timetable, but because individuals may not vote owing to fears of violence during the electoral process. He noted that some positive aspects remain, including the continued commitment of both President Armando Guebuza and Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama to the negotiations, despite the poorly timed recent arrest of a Renamo member of the Council of State. Further positive features include a similar commitment to peace by all Mozambicans, as well as the flexibility of the electoral process. However, the speaker said the current conflict had led to a high number of casualties, and many livelihoods had been destroyed. There had been a severe humanitarian impact, with food unable to reach certain areas and individuals prevented from travelling and the victims included individuals whose economic, cultural and religious activities have been affected by the conflict.

The speaker described his focus on health in addition to peace. He highlighted the challenge that malaria presents in Mozambique, with the disease responsible for high mortality figures. He stated that, despite this, the eradication of malaria is achievable. He argued that ethics had not previously been given sufficient attention, and proposed that alternatives should be offered to corrupt individuals in business and government. He explained that one of his initiatives involved assisting individuals to lead a full life in adversity or poverty, or in the face of excessive wealth. He explained his plan to channel the three areas of peace, health and ethics through education, and suggested that the international community could partner in these initiatives.

Summary of Questions and Answers

Question

Both sides have made extreme demands in the negotiations, including Renamo's calls for a complete restructuring of the military and the government's refusal to withdraw the military from Gorongosa. Could the speaker describe how he envisages the parties moving forward from this rigidity?

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The speaker stated that progress could be seen in both sides reaching an agreement on the number of people who will be involved in the peace negotiations, both nationally and internationally. A lot of progress had also been made on the question of Renamo's demilitarization, and this was a key part of the discussions. He suggested that publishing these results would be helpful, as it would allow the public to see that progress is being made.

Questions

How serious is the division between the north and the south given Renamo's increased rhetoric about splitting the country, as well as a growing sense of discrimination in the north, even within Frelimo?

Have the problems around paying pensions to former Renamo fighters been addressed?

Is the speaker concerned that there will be violence in the October elections between the MDM, its supporters, the police and Frelimo?

What should the international community do to help prevent violence?

Could the speaker further elaborate on his experiences educating young people on peace?

Could the speaker comment on which areas should be addressed in order to consolidate peace?

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The speaker asserted that young people are a priority, and needed to be guided and supported in their commitment to peace. He noted that the Bible is not the only source of education about peace.

He stated that elections would take place. His hope was that no political violence would occur and that Renamo and Frelimo would refrain from transferring the present conflict into the electoral process. He argued that observers have a role to play in persuading politicians to speak more openly and set certain standards during the electoral process. He said that observers remain aware of violence being instigated by different groups, and are monitoring the situation.

The issue regarding former combatants is part of the agenda, but the speaker clarified that this should be discussed later. He explained that some former Renamo fighters who are entitled to a pension have not collected it because they are currently in the bush. This is why the government has asked for a list of Renamo members, as this list could be cross-checked to ascertain whether it includes individuals who are entitled to pensions.

The speaker acknowledged the possibility that some individuals feel discrimination. However, he noted that half of Mozambique's leadership comes from the north, and intermarriage between individuals from

the north and the south is prevalent. He said that political positions are not decided by the region from which people come; the three current presidential candidates all come from the north, and this should be taken as a sign that there is no discrimination against the north. He stated that a division of the country would not be realistic, and calls for this were highly emotional. He emphasized that the message of national unity is not simply rhetoric, but is a reality for the country, and this makes a split unlikely.

He added that, as in the past, the participation of the international community in the elections is necessary. Both sides have accepted that the international community must play a role in the facilitation process. The countries that are to be involved have already been identified, and the number of international facilitators has been agreed on, but some factors still require clarification, including the role of international actors. It has yet to be decided whether they will unify the army and integrate new members from other factions.

Questions

Could the speaker comment on how Dhlakama's campaign will evolve, and whether he believes Dhlakama will leave Gorongosa to campaign for the elections?

Will the peace dialogue be impacted by the Frelimo candidate winning the elections?

Will the elections be conducted fairly, or are Renamo and Frelimo using their discussions to organize a strategy to defeat MDM?

Has Dhlakama successfully evolved from a rebel leader to a political leader?

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The speaker acknowledged that a lot of uncertainty surrounds the elections and the peace dialogue. Even when progress appears to be made, this can stop abruptly, and the situation can deteriorate rapidly. He said that it remains unclear who is responsible for delays in the situation, but that rather than placing blame, it would be better to identify partners from the different parties with whom there could be cooperation to overcome these problems.

He suggested that the events of mid-July 2014 could increase Dhlakama's fears. He said that the spokesperson who was arrested possessed immunity, and Dhlakama was far more responsible for loss of life than that person. At the same time, however, nothing had happened to individuals participating in the peace process who were also responsible for perpetrating military actions. The speaker acknowledged that it would require courage on behalf of Dhlakama to leave Gorongosa and campaign, and proposed that it would be beneficial for both sides to discuss Dhlakama's fears and for assurances to be made that these concerns are unfounded.

The negotiations will not be completed ahead of the elections, and commitment on behalf of the government and the president will be required to ensure that the negotiations continue after the polls. The speaker expressed his view that the Frelimo candidate would not become an obstacle to the peace process. A general concept of statehood was widespread, and this was crucial for maintaining commitment as it was not dependent on individual preferences.

MDM performed well in the municipal elections, and the speaker indicated his hope that the party would continue to play a role in Mozambican politics. Renamo and Frelimo needed to identify members of MDM with whom they could enter into a dialogue and collaborate. The speaker said there was a general understanding that the discomfort which individuals may feel when working with different political parties was less important than maintaining relations between the parties. He added that in this context, it was a positive sign that Renamo had continued the peace process, despite Dhlakama's isolation. This indicated that the party believed in the process.

The speaker stated that the conditions favoured free and fair elections. He noted that Mozambican churches, youths and civil society were involved and cognizant of the dynamics. In addition, the international community will be present during the elections.

Question

What is the role of civil society?

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The speaker said civil society needs to improve and expand its role. He explained that one of the mistakes made in 1992 was a pre-emptive withdrawal of churches and civil society from the peace process. He stressed that all sectors of society need to be involved in the peace process in order for it to be sustainable. Civil society in particular should be more active. Two large demonstrations were organized in October 2013, but there had been no follow-up to these. He stated that this was due to a misconception within civil society that a march was sufficient, when, in his view, a dialogue should have been initiated afterwards. Civil society has a further role to play in holding politicians accountable and encouraging them to better perform their duties to citizens. The speaker suggested that the observers could help push civil society towards more proactive involvement.

Question

Does the speaker believe that Renamo is receiving new funding or help, given that many Renamo fighters are young and in possession of new weapons?

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The speaker said that politicians dislike displaying their weaknesses, and this was part of the difficulty in ascertaining how many soldiers Renamo has. Renamo is also concerned about the possible use of this information; there is a fear that the army will use it to raid the homes of Renamo combatants rather than registering the combatants to receive pensions. While the possibility of disarmament has been raised, the speaker explained that a number of issues still require discussion, including the number of Renamo members, the type of guns they possess, and who will collect the guns when they are handed over. He stated that civil society should help to push the process of disarmament forward.