

**MOZAMBICAN PRESIDENT COMMENTS ON
POSSIBILITIES FOR DIALOGUE WITH REBELS,
NATIONAL DEBATE ON POSSIBLE MULTIPARTY
SYSTEM**

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Radio Mozambique, Maputo, in Portuguese 1800 gmt 1 Mar 90

Excerpt from recording of news conference by President Chissano with unidentified reporters "on his return from Lusaka" on 28th February

...[Reporter] A few days ago, Nelson Mandela spoke publicly about acts of destabilisation in Mozambique through the armed bandits. Would it be possible to think that Nelson Mandela and the ANC could have any role to play during this present phase to try to stop every kind of South African assistance to the armed bandits?

[Chissano] I believe that the effort to normalise life, to normalise the situation in South Africa, is in itself a very big contribution so that forces in South Africa who persist in supporting the armed bandits would begin to be less concerned with this task. As we know, one of the reasons - I repeat, one of the reasons but not the only one - that led South Africa to support the armed bandits was our solidarity with the ANC in its liberation struggle. If contacts and possibly increasing detente between the ANC and these forces are created, we can equally begin to see a change in factors determining the continued destabilisation of Mozambique.

[Q] Since we are somehow already speaking about the internal situation in Mozambique, if you allow me, Mr President, I would like to request you, if possible, to expand a little further on the statement you made in Algiers, if I am not mistaken, that there seem to be signs to believe that there could be a platform that would eventually lead to dialogue, a direct meeting with the so-called Renamo [Mozambique National Resistance]. I don't know how far at this stage, Mr President, you would be able to give us further details on this issue?

[A] Yes. The signs are that Renamo leaders have already begun to speak in a somewhat different manner about recognising the legal existence of a state that is called the People's Republic of Mozambique, which is independent and has a government with which they will have to talk.

There is still a need for a greater foundation, a better understanding of the stand of these Renamo leaders to enable us really to have a proper platform for dialogue. There are now new indications that they have begun to accept the existence of a platform of principles which they usually call preconditions, but we consider them to be principles that will guide the process of dialogue. A dialogue without principles will not take us anywhere.

[Q] Therefore, there are no signs with regard to the removal of fundamental obstacles, such as their integration into society and their being recognised as a party?

[A] Well, we have not discussed these issues of integration or non-integration. This issue will be the result of dialogue, because what we have said is that we only have to discuss the normalisation of life of all Mozambican citizens. What form will this normalisation take? This will be discussed during our talks. What is important is that this normalisation should lead to the possibility of every citizen being able to participate freely in the country's political, economic and social life; participate freely in our country's democratic life.

With regard to a one-party or multiparty system in Mozambique, as you are aware, we have launched a debate and this debate will take an even more concrete shape as of next month to know whether the people favour a one-party or a multiparty system. The debate to be carried out by the entire Mozambican people will decide this. In this debate, every Mozambican will be given opportunity to express his or her views. This does not exclude Renamo elements. They are Mozambican citizens and we want to see them taking part in this debate by freely airing their views.

We, as leaders of the Mozambican state, will limit ourselves to obtaining a consensus out of this debate, and should this not be possible, there are various democratic methods available to draw up an objective conclusion, such as the holding of a referendum. What we want to see is a democratic decision which will embody the principle that the sovereignty of the People's Republic of Mozambique lies with the people.

Accordingly, we think that we cannot place a cart in front of oxen. Renamo will have to submit to the will of the majority and find ways of adapting itself. Nevertheless, each and every Renamo component or the group as a whole, organised in different other forms, will be guaranteed the right to participate in our country's political, economic and social life.