

Statement by Frelimo Executive Committee on the Events in Portugal

On 25 April, 1974, we learned from radio broadcasts about the coup d'état in Portugal by the armed forces which resulted in the ousting of the government of Marcelo Caetano and its replacement by a 'Junta of National Salvation'. This movement, according to its promoters, is intended to provide a solution to the present crisis which the Portuguese regime and society are going through after 13 years of colonial war.

The coup d'état which has just taken place cannot be seen in isolation. It is a result of the new awareness of growing sectors of the Portuguese people that the purpose of the colonial war launched by the fascist regime is to suppress the colonised peoples' aspiration to independence and freedom and is against the desire for well-being and political and social democracy of the Portuguese people themselves.

At this time we had, in the first place, the Portuguese democratic forces which for many years have been actively and courageously opposing the colonial war. This growing awareness is closely bound up with the affirmation of the unshakable will of the Mozambican people, and of the peoples of Angola, Guine-Bissau and Cabo Verde Islands, to achieve independence and freedom. This will has taken on material form in the armed struggle for national liberation, which has been steadily growing and has already reached vital regions of our country. The coincidence between the crisis of the regime in Portugal and the great advances of the national liberation struggle in Mozambique over the past two years is no accident, but additional proof of the impact of our struggle on the situation in Portugal. The determinant factor of the situation in Portugal and the colonies has been and still is the struggle of our peoples. And the fundamental issue upon which the solution of all other problems depends is the independence of the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and Guine-Bissau and Cabo Verde Islands, as well as that of the remaining Portuguese colonies.

As far as the Portuguese people are concerned, to the extent that the principles contained in the proclamations that the leaders of the coup d'etat have made up to now are put into force, this will doubtless be a step forward towards the establishment of democracy in Portugal. The young people who engaged in action aimed at putting an end to 48 years of uninterrupted dictatorship in Portugal, acting in line with the aspirations of the Portuguese people to realise their legitimate right to democracy, liberty and real independence, are the same young people who, when they were made to fight against our people, understood the unjust nature of the war in which they were engaged and the character of the regime which forced them to give up their lives for the defence of interests contrary to the interests of their people. The establishment of democracy in Portugal would be a victory for the Portuguese people, a victory at which we would rejoice.

For the Mozambican people, under the leadership of FRELIMO, the correct definition of who is the enemy has always been an essential point of principle. The enemy of the Mozambican people is not the Portuguese people, themselves victims of fascism, but the Portuguese colonial system. And an important section of the Portuguese army itself was made to understand that it was not defending the interests of its people in the colonial war when it felt the growing disaffection of Portuguese opinion with regard to the war it is waging in the colonies. If our struggle thus contributed to the Portuguese people's struggle against fascism and to win their right to democracy, FRELIMO cannot but congratulate itself for having contributed to this. But just as the Portuguese people have the right to independence and democracy, this same right cannot be denied the Mozambican people. It is for this elementary but essential right that we are fighting. The objectives of FRELIMO are very clear: the total and complete independence of the Mozambican people and the liquidation of Portuguese colonialism. The Mozambican people are an entity quite distinct from the Portuguese people, and they have their

own political, cultural and social personality which can only be realised through the independence of Mozambique.

We are not fighting to become Portuguese with black skins. We are fighting to affirm ourselves as Mozambicans, without this meaning contempt for the Portuguese people or any other people. In this respect, FRELIMO reaffirms its wish to fully co-operate with all peoples in the world on a basis of independence, equality, respect and mutual interest. FRELIMO also reaffirms that the definition of a Mozambican has nothing to do with skin colour or racial, ethnic religious or any other origins. Members of FRELIMO are all Mozambicans who adhere to its programme of struggle against Portuguese colonialism, for the independence of Mozambique. FRELIMO is not a racist organisation and it is not waging a racist war. We reaffirm here what we declared in July 1972 when we opened a new front: 'On starting the struggle in Manica e Sofala where an important section of the Portuguese community in our country is established, we reaffirm that our struggle is not against them, that our victory can only benefit those who live from honest labour, those who suffer from colonial and fascist exploitation. The Mozambican people fraternally call upon the Portuguese soldiers, the Portuguese people to join the common effort of liberation. At the same time as hailing the growing support from white Mozambicans for the struggle for national liberation, we wish to warn certain sectors of the European population of Mozambique against the attempts of the ultra-racist forces, encouraged by the neighbouring racist countries, to transform our armed struggle for liberation into a total war between whites and blacks. This manoeuvre has as its purpose to make the white settlers participate actively in suppressing our people. That attitude makes them instruments of other forces and does not serve their own interests or the interests of the Mozambican people.'

Freedom and independence, the affirmation of our own personality — these then are the objectives of our struggle. FRELIMO fighters are not professional soldiers. They are the Mozambican people in arms. They are, before all else, political militants who have taken up arms to put an end to the daily violence of colonial domination, exploitation and repression. It is up to the Portuguese government to learn from past experience and understand that only through recognition of the right to independence of the Mozambican people, led by FRELIMO, their authentic and legitimate representative, will the war end. Any attempt to elude the real problem will only lead to new and equally avoidable sacrifices. The way to solve the problem is clear: recognition of the Mozambican people's right to independence. If, however, the objective of the coup d'état is to find new formulae to perpetuate the oppression of our people, then the Portuguese leaders are warned that they will face our firm determination. The Mozambican people, over 10 years of heroic armed struggle, have endured heavy sacrifices and shed the blood of their finest sons and daughters to defend the inalienable principle of their sovereignty as a free and independent nation. Politically and militarily tempered, encouraged by the growing successes of the armed struggle for national liberation, more united than ever under the

leadership of FRELIMO, the Mozambican people will not retreat before any sacrifice in ensuring that their rights and fundamental aspirations triumph. We cannot accept that democracy for the Portuguese people should serve as a cover to prevent the independence of our people. Just as Caetano's era clearly demonstrated that liberal fascism does not exist, it must also be understood that there is no such thing as democratic colonialism.

At this moment it is important that all the forces in solidarity with the people of Mozambique and with the peoples of Angola, Guine-Bissau, Cabo Verde and Sao Tome e Principe, continue their action for the recognition of our right to complete independence. They must remain vigilant in the face of any manoeuvres aimed at blocking the process of our total liberation coming not only from the Portuguese government, but from the regimes in South Africa and racist Rhodesia. It is also essential that the forces which support our struggle step up their assistance of every kind to the liberation movements, so that with the end of Portuguese colonialism, the aspirations of our peoples, which are those of all of mankind, may be fulfilled.

INDEPENDENCE OR DEATH
WE SHALL WIN
THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FRELIMO
27 April 1974

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