

The Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (C O R E M O)

Memorandum Submitted To The United Nations General Assembly

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The Head of the Delegation*

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates and

Dear Comrades - in - arms,

It is a great pleasure and honor to me to have been assigned the task of presenting the plight of the fighting Mozambican people on behalf of the Central Committee of COREMO.

It would be illogical if the COREMO delegation came here to present, for the first time, a different view from what has been part of the life of the Mozambican people for the last eight years or so. Coming from a dependent country - Mozambique - where the African people are engaged in armed struggle to free themselves from the Portuguese colonialism and international imperialism, the COREMO delegation wishes to express its appreciation and a sense of profound gratitude to all those who made it possible for us to submit this memorandum to the United Nations General Assembly.

The existence of an international forum such as the U.N., is to us an important source of strength, and a light that illuminates the tortuous road that should lead mankind to self-determination and independence. It is within this context that we in COREMO feel we shall have failed all peace-loving and progressive member States of this international community if we do not fight for and win our independence. And we equally feel the progressive members of the United Nations will have failed us if they do not help us, by concrete means, in our struggle for self determination and national independence.

Our coming to submit this document to the United Nations General Assembly has been inspired by the knowledge that the question of African territories under Portuguese administration will be one of the focal points in the agenda for this year's General Assembly session, and by our conviction that our struggle against colonial oppression and racism in Mozambique is an integral part of the world-wide struggle for human rights and dignity guaranteed by the U.N. charter.

For this reason, this COREMO delegation expects from this 27th session of the General Assembly concrete, positive steps in the direction of speeding the liberation of millions of Africans who are still languishing under Portuguese colonialism and racist white minority re regimes in southern Africa. In the past the United Nations' organs with primary responsibility for international peace and security have passed resolution after resolution condemning, in the strongest terms, all forms of colonialism and racial discrimination.

We know, through our own experience, that colonialism and imperialism are still strong. The very existence of the United Nations Organization is sufficient evidence that colonialism and imperialism have not yet lost their wolfish appetite to oppress and exploit

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other countries and peoples. No wonder, the United Nations was brought about "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to maintain international peace and security.

Thus the creation of the United Nations Organization was the determined will of the peoples of the entire world to promote international peace and security by waging a fierce struggle to destroy colonialism and imperialism root, stem and branch. However, some member states of this international community have tried by all means to disturb peace and social progress of other countries and peoples. In this connection, I dare to say that the United Nations Organization has failed us in the past, because some of its members have time and again failed to implement the recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly and Security Council, respectively.

Mr. Chairman, it is in view of these shortcomings that our delegation has not come to New York to beg for peace. We have not come here to beg peace from the Portuguese Government because we are a people of nearly 8 million men and women, capable of fighting for their own rights. Moreover, it is the belief of our party and, indeed, of the entire Mozambican people that the primary responsibility of the present struggle for freedom belongs to the Mozambicans themselves. There is no international organization within or outside Africa which can liberate us.

Who are these people in Mozambique, who desire and fight for liberation and self-determination? Our party, COREMO, has always relied on the African people as the basis of our struggle and has been guided by the principles of Pan Africanism. But the African people are by no means alone in this struggle. There are other national groups that are today faced with fascist laws and repression. There are, in fact, all those who are suffering because of the existence of a colonial regime in our country. Like African people they are under constant police surveillance and intimidation. Such people are part and parcel of the oppressed majority in our country, and their destiny is inseparable from that of our people. Whenever they wish, the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee gives them place alongside the African freedom fighters.

In any case, we know there are many members of national minority groups that do not understand our policy and are prepared to sell themselves for money and favors from the Portuguese colonial Government. Nevertheless, our policy remains the same: to secure unity in struggle among all oppressed and exploited people.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, in the past the Mozambican people tried to achieve freedom and self-determination by travelling down every road offered by conventional legal means and approach: petitions, demonstrations, strikes, appeals and pleas. But, our people found police repressions and political murders, demagoguery and promises of reforms by the Portuguese Government and, indeed, the perfidy and reactionary violence by its agents.

Why did negotiations and conventional means fail to work and give way to armed struggle? Without going into the details of specific causes in our country, I can say that the general explanation is to be sought in the political atmosphere rather than in physical or geographic factors.

Given a colonial-type situation, armed struggle becomes feasible if and only if there is not only complete disillusionment on the part of the majority of the people with the prospect of achieving its liberation by nonviolent means but also if the prevailing social or political system is inadequate to meet the demands and aspirations of the popular masses. Throughout centuries, the methods and strategy of political reforms or constitutional farces have been played time and again and played well until they were

played out in the beginning of the 1960's. The long-confronting forces - the colonial and imperialist forces on one side and the forces of freedom and change on the other - finally reached the boiling point, the point of no return. This the decision to take up arms has not been made over a night. The Mozambican people have resorted to revolution in a round-about way, through successive attempts for just and peaceful change.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, there is armed struggle in Mozambique because social and political reforms within the framework of the Portuguese colonial system can no longer satisfy the demands of our people. In fact, experience has shown that social and political concessions or reforms granted under pressure can be snatched back by the colonial government. It is therefore the unacceptability of the policy of so called reforms that have led the people of Mozambique to resort to the use of revolutionary violence - the right of a people to self-defense.

Today, when popular discontent takes more positive forms, revolution, and not reform, is the answer which leaves behind all that which obstructs the historic march of the Mozambican people who long for freedom and independence. That is why, in the face of hunger, misery, military and police repression and the policy of blackmail and obscurantism, the only way left is armed struggle. Not because the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee and our people enjoy killing and being killed, but because the Portuguese Government pretends to ignore and refuses to meet our demands for self-determination and independence. This inevitable and timely decision, which is in keeping with actual experiences and in fulfillment of our international obligations to safeguard a lasting peace and security in that part of Africa, has proven to be the only right alternative, not only for our people but also in the opinion of this international body as can be evidenced by resolutions of the United Nations' organs and its specialized agencies. The people of Mozambique are therefore making use of a right: our right to self-defense and to suppress acts of aggression since colonialism is a permanent act of aggression over a people. Furthermore, every country and people, large and small have the right to determine their own affairs and have the right to fight against a social system that oppresses, humiliates, discriminates and exploits; a social system that has proved itself incapable of satisfying the needs and aspirations of the great majority of people.

Having made our stand clear, I want to set straight some other points which have been spread by the Portuguese press and propaganda because such views and lies are supported by some quarters of the international press. The friends of Mozambique revolution are advised not to succumb to our enemy propoaganda. The enemy has been alarmed and shocked by the potential of the revolutionary situation and has therefore resorted to the usual method that forces of colonialism and reaction use: a campaign of lies.

In the past eight years of our struggle, the world has been told that large numbers of freedom fighters have been killed, captured and that other large numbers surrendered to "forces de order" (colonial troops); that the villagers are informing on the movement of freedom fighters (thus implying that the colonialists enjoy massive support of our people); that there exists an atmosphere of coercion imposed by our guerrillas on the rural populations and that their collaboration and participation in the struggle have been given out of fear.

Yet the same enemy propaganda press issues regular war communiques in which they announce only minor losses on their side and the wiping out of large numbers of "terrorist bands coming from the exterior", one month after another, year by year.

These and other allegations are not only false but also utterly irresponsibly malicious. The truth of the matter is that our strength is derived from the African populations and the security for our guerrillas and organizers comes from their support;

moreover, the majority of volunteer recruits come from rural populations because they know we are fighting for them and who we are. Not incidentally, present guerrilla-peasant interactions are based on a spirit of brotherhood, mutual aid and common goals. Every African peasant and worker who participates in the struggle under the leadership of COREMO and helps us otherwise is conscious of his action and knows how to evaluate a just cause from a wrong one. In other words, they come to join guerrilla forces voluntarily.

For instance, when our members reach an area, they call together the villagers and explain to them the cause and objectives of our struggle, but never do they force them to collaborate or participate in the struggle. They are only asked to maintain absolute secrecy on the movements of our forces.

In the case of "punitive campaigns", our freedom fighters find them safer places against indiscriminate air attacks on villages and burning of crops. It is our forces of freedom that help the peasants to defend their crops and villages. Despite the limited resources at our disposal, our militants are ready to help the civilian population in every way. We give them medicine and shelter. We supply them with such agricultural or farming implements as hoes and hatchets, free of charge.

For these and other reasons, the rural population love and trust our guerrillas and place their lives and hope for a brighter future in the hands of militants under the leadership of the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee. For example, when our organizing units leave a region, we see many evidences of sadness and disappointment because they do not want to separate from us, all of them want to follow us; the old and the young. But the policy of COREMO is not to encourage rural populations to follow us to the mountains and forest because our capacity to meet all out air bombardments is still far from ideal. Only in extreme cases, have we allowed them to follow and stay with us.

Another field of Portuguese fascist propaganda includes the accusations and attacks on neighboring independent African states that are committed to the total liberation of Africa and recognize the legitimacy of the armed struggle by our people. It has become part and parcel of Portuguese colonial strategy to promote aggression against neighboring African countries when colonial troops meet one blow after the other from the forces of the Mozambique liberation movement. The world is very familiar with such desperate acts of colonialists and imperialists. With the ease with which the Portuguese Government claims to have destroyed "all terrorist groups and camps", why do colonial troops have use helicopters, jets and bombers? Why the attacks, threats and pressures against Zambia, Senegal, Tanzania and other African countries? If they enjoy the support of the masses, why do they issue constant appeals for surrender?

The distinguished delegates of the General Assembly will recall that last year the Portuguese colonial regime made an embargo on goods to and from Zambia after COREMO forces undertook a successful campaign against Portuguese positions in the Cabora Bassa area. In addition to the embargo, five (5) Zambians were abducted by the Portuguese (see Zambia Daily Mail, March 8, 1971). In March, this year, the people of the whole world was once again shocked at news of Portuguese aggression against the United Republic of Tanzania, to mention just a few cases.

Due to the continued violation of the territorial integrity of Zambia, by the Portuguese Government, it was announced in August, 1972, that "all Zambian villages bordering the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique will be evacuated soon" and the reason was that "the move follows increasing violation of Zambia's territory by Portuguese troops stationed in the two colonies". (The Times of Zambia, August 18, 1972.

As far as cases of vandalism and torture are concerned, there is much going on in our country.

In January, 1972, Mr. Antonio Khembo, a former driver of the administrator at Mopela, in the province of Zambezia, was subjected to untold suffering before he was buried alive. After six months of detention without trial, Mr. Khembo saw his fingers cut one by one during an interrogation that lasted one month. Not satisfied with all this inhuman treatment, the Portuguese troops went as far as to cut Mr. Khembo's testicles when he refused to violate his own daughter before a cheering band of Portuguese troops and a weeping crowd of Africans. His only crime was to be suspected member of COREMO in the region.

In July 30, 1972, Portuguese fascist police got hold of Mr. Chico Meke, a shop-keeper at Zambwe post, in the Tete province. Mr. Meke served a 5-year sentence at Machava maximum security prison in the province of Lourenco Marques and he was "released" on the 10th of the same month. He was one of those who had "benefited" by the much propagated "amnesty" of political prisoners by the Government of Mr. Caetano. Before his "release", Mr. Meke had promised not to be in contact with terrorist groups and to lead a peaceful life under the Lusitanian flag" in the so-called protected villages in the Zambwe area ("protected villages" are military positions and places surrounded with iron-wire fences where the rural populations are being grouped in a vain attempt to prevent them from having contacts with the members of guerrilla units). In the early morning of July 30, 1972, he was rearrested because of his "doubtful movements which endangered the security of the village". Mr. Meke's ear was cut off and he had his skin taken off the head before he was finally shot dead before four other people who were alleged to "have contacts with racist murderers of COREMO".

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, this is a brief outline - although I may have overlooked certain malpractices of Portuguese colonialism which are important for all member states of the United Nations Organization to know - of what is roughly taking place almost everyday in our country, Mozambique.

Mr. Chairman, our Party and people know the multiple problems facing such an undertaking as armed struggle. We have analyzed them thoroughly and we know the nature of the disease that still afflicts not only our people in Mozambique but also humanity itself. We need medicine for the cure of this chronic disease. The COREMO delegation therefore hopes that this current session of the General Assembly will not only be able to prescribe the medicine that will dislodge Portuguese colonialists from our national territory but also take practical deterrent measures to protect the violation of territories of independent African states such as Senegal, the Republic of Guinea, Tanzania and Zambia so that the Portuguese colonial troops may no longer disturb the peace and social progress of these countries.

Mr. Chairman, we know the appeal to international public opinion, the denunciation of Portuguese colonialism clearly expressed by the U.N. and O.A.U., the direct and repeated appeals to the Portuguese Government by some neutral countries and individuals have not succeeded in changing the colonial situation in the African territories under Portuguese administration.

Guerrilla warfare has therefore emerged as the principle form of our struggle. We have been forced to embark on a long and hard struggle because we are conscious that the enemy is still powerful and must be destroyed little by little. This, in the past few years, the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee has given priority to the mobilization and politicization of the masses and its consolidation among African population in the countryside and gradual penetration into urban areas. At this moment, our forces have grown to

such a level of development that they have become powerful and indestructible within the Mozambique liberation movement. We, in Mozambique as elsewhere in a dependent territory of Africa, are waging this struggle to establish, in the land of our birth, "government of Africans, by Africans, for Africans." Of course, this our stand has brought us some troubles. The colonialists, imperialists and their henchmen have time and again accused us of racialism, but what is wrong with "government of Europeans, by Europeans, for Europeans" in Europe? If the existence of these governments is not racialism, then "government of Mozambicans, for Mozambicans" must not be racialism either.

Here is where our Party, COREMO, has come to the real trouble between Portuguese colonialists and their allies, and the Mozambican people under the leadership of the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee. The Portuguese and all those who make their living from the oppression and exploitation of our country and people are determined that Mozambique shall be ruled for the benefit of foreign interests. On the other hand, the Mozambicans are determined that their beloved country shall be ruled by the Mozambicans themselves and for the interests of the Mozambican masses. Briefly stated, the problem in Mozambique is one of self-determination as against foreign domination.

We subscribe to self-determination. There can be no compromise on this issue. We must be allowed to determine our own future; we must be allowed to determine and run affairs of our own country.

Mr. Chairman, we are ready to die for the achievement of this goal. We are not afraid to die. We are a brave people. We have fought for nearly 500 years in the past. The history of our struggle is not a new history. We have a 500-year history of confrontation and battles. We can continue fighting.

Nevertheless, what makes it puzzling is that some big countries are standing on the side of Portugal. Without active support of some NATO member countries, the Portuguese Government would not have been arrogant enough to defy the will and decisions of the United Nations. Today, we are confronting not only Portugal, but also the political and economic power of big capitalist countries to which the Mozambican people have done no harm whatsoever.

Mr. Chairman, we have never wronged the United States, France, Britain, West Germany, South African and others. We cannot understand why the above-mentioned countries and their allies are being parties to our oppression and exploitation. What wrong have the Mozambican people done to the United States, Britain, France, West Germany, South Africa, Belgium and others? If these countries and others were not parties to this exercise, we would not be facing the situation our delegation has brought to the attention of this international body.

As far as the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America are concerned, the people of Mozambique have this message for them. We are part and parcel of the so-called Third World. We know that the majority of countries in the Third World have always stood by our side and the Mozambique people are grateful to all these countries. The only thing we ask of these countries is not to forget us, because we never can forget all those who are fighting for the same goals.

In the past eight years we have been faced with many problems and we also had moments of victory and joy. Our deep roots among the masses made us survive all pressures from outside. Even if, in the future, we encounter more difficulties and more problems, I am convinced that COREMO shall finally succeed because, now more than ever, our Party enjoys massive support and the confidence of the Mozambican people.

Mr. Chairman, war by its nature involves the loss of lives. Some of our bravest and most dedicated comrades have made the ultimate sacrifice for Mozambique. They knew this would happen and we know it is inevitable that before we overcome the present difficulties and achieve our final goal, many, many more sons of Mozambique will have to give their lives!

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, our delegation cannot, as a matter of course, reveal all the details of our past work and plans, achievements and preparations, since some of our men are within reach of the enemy. There is much going on inside Mozambique with which we are very satisfied and which the enemy would like to know. The needs of our struggle preclude more than this passing reference. The fact that our men could enter the Cabora Bassa area - a maximum security zone - and deal a crushing blow to the enemy soldiers is in itself a clear evidence that our Party has firm roots among masses in the area.

As you know, Mozambique is one of those countries where education is not the duty of all citizens but a privilege for the few. As the first step in the educational program, the Central Committee of COREMO has decided, early this year, to establish an autonomous institution - the Mozambique Social Services Centre - to provide not only the most elementary things for civilian populations in the mountains and forests but also education for Mozambique children in those parts where we exercise political control, while at the same time scholarships to foreign institutions of higher education will be arranged for those young promising Mozambicans with suitable qualifications.

The other field to which we have begun to pay attention is the health service. Our advance and influence in certain areas have made the situation even worse in some cases, because these people have no other resources other than our poor medical facilities. COREMO has started to organize its own medical services with little or no resources at all. We have to rely on the services of one qualified African doctor and a few nurses.

Experience has taught us that our Party should also be engaged in a preventive medicine campaign. In a country where smallpox and typhoid reign unchallenged, vaccination campaigns are of vital importance.

Thus the immediate tasks of the Mozambique Social Services Centre are: relief service for civilian population in the bush, to provide education opportunities for young Mozambicans, to take care of orphans, to provide health facilities for the civilian populations under our direct responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, before we come to an end of this memorandum we would like to draw your attention to the following remarks or observations:

- 1... In Mozambique we are faced with this serious problem. The white settlers with firm support from Lisbon and the imperialist camp are determined to see to it that the 8,000,000 Africans shall be ruled by the white man, for the primary benefit of the white settlers.
- 2... On the other hand, the stand of our people under the leadership of the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee is crystal clear. Our struggle is not a movement for civil rights. We are not asking for the Portuguese Government's favors, privileges or reforms. Our present struggle is aimed at full self-determination. Our armed struggle expresses the general and deep desire of freedom and the restless concern for human rights and dignity. It is the struggle for new human relations which confer on the exploited and working people the material claims they deserve.

3... Finally, our Party has a message and a warning to all economic interests in Mozambique. It has become fashionable within big economic circles in the capitalist countries to hear that foreign investments stand to benefit, in the long run, the African people themselves. This is absurd and misses the crucial point either deliberately or because those capitalists are simply ignorant of the needs and aspirations of the Mozambican people at the moment. Our people are not interested at all in money which deprives them of freedom and independence; they want political power in their own hands so that they do not remain helpless victims of racialism and white supremacy theories which they have been experiencing since the 15th century.

Money is not our problem but self-determination and independence now.

The struggle continues.

Our Country now or death! We shall win!

COREMO Information Office, October 11, 1972