

Preface

Since the early 1980s, Mozambique has undergone a series of remarkable transitions. Where powerful neighbours once strived to destabilise the country, they now seek to guarantee and gain from its stability. Commercial interests long helped to drive Mozambique's destructive war, but later bank-rolled efforts to end it. The churches, once were marginalised from state affairs, subsequently came to play a key role in reconciling the warring parties. Guerrilla warfare and terror tactics were key opposition strategies, yet the former rebels operate today in the mainstream of parliamentary politics. Where *a luta continua* (the struggle continues) was the government's Marxist battle-cry, its rhetoric is now infused with political and economic liberalism.

Five years on from the negotiated settlement which brought to a close 30 years of near-continuous warfare in Mozambique, the country remains remarkably stable. The transitions under-pinning this stability merit close study by those with an interest in how armed conflicts in other countries can be prevented or resolved. While recognising that Mozambique's story is by no means complete, this issue of *Accord* documents its slow retreat from war, drawing on the benefits of hindsight and a variety of local perspectives. The articles highlight that the 1992 settlement, while made possible by the ending of the Cold War and the demise of apartheid, was ultimately engineered through the diverse initiatives of a wide range of state and non-state actors.

Stepping Stones to a Durable Settlement

Martin Rupiya's introductory *Historical Context* piece argues that attempts to resolve Mozambique's civil war need to be understood with reference to the broader historical and external context in which the post-colonial state was formed and sought to develop. In the years following Mozambican independence in 1975, government attempts to consolidate power and legitimacy created significant grievances among many Mozambicans, especially in the rural areas. With Rhodesia and, later, South Africa bent on exploiting and exacerbating these tensions, the principal drivers of Mozambique's war moved beyond its borders. Only a decade and a half later would conditions finally be right for a workable, intra-Mozambican settlement of the conflict.

The gradual evolution of the Mozambican peace process and the roles played by key national and international actors are detailed in the *Chronology* and *Key Actors* sections towards the back of the issue. The primary texts of the political settlement are laid out in the centre pages. Broadly speaking, Mozambique's transition from war to peace can be broken down into five phases, the last of which is ongoing.

The first phase was between 1983 and 1985 when the Frelimo government first sought to end the war by signing the Nkomati non-aggression pact with South Africa and entering into a series of talks with Renamo in Pretoria. These talks were destined to fail due to South African duplicity and pres-

asures brought to bear on Renamo to halt the dialogue. Nevertheless, this period marked the beginning of intense regional diplomatic manoeuvring which over the next ten years would alternately promote and hinder the search for peace in Mozambique. In *Ideological Shifts, Economic Imperatives*, Fernando Gonçalves examines the interests of key regional actors throughout the Mozambican crisis and describes how they were gradually disentangled from the strictly internal dimensions of the war.

It was only following the onset of military stalemate between the government and Renamo during 1987/88 that a negotiated settlement became a real possibility. This marked the beginning of a second phase during which President Joaquim Chissano began to heed the Mozambican churches' persistent calls for dialogue and encouraged leading clerics to make contact with Renamo. While two rounds of talks in Kenya in 1989 between the churchmen and the rebels made little concrete progress, they forced Renamo to articulate its political demands for the first time and confirmed there was a desire on both sides to achieve a non-military solution to the war. In *A Calling for Peace*, Bishops Dínis Sengulane and Jaime Pedro Gonçalves give a unique account of their own role and that of the Mozambican churches in initiating and nurturing the dialogue between Renamo and the government.

Parallel overtures were also made to Renamo in the late 1980s through key individuals in contact with its internal leadership. Presidents Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe facilitated early communications with the rebels, mediated the Nairobi talks, and encouraged the Mozambican government to engage in direct dialogue with Renamo. At the same time, recognising that international support for his Marxist regime would continue to decline, and keen to establish early control over the process of political liberalisation which had to occur, Chissano initiated a far-reaching programme of constitutional reform. This would provide a crucial framework for the upcoming negotiations and the eventual drafting of a peace settlement.

The direct negotiations between the Frelimo government and Renamo which began in July 1990, hosted by the Sant' Egidio Catholic lay community in Rome, marked the start of the third phase. Coinciding with the dramatic political transition occurring in South Africa, a devastating drought throughout the Southern Africa region, and the ending of the Cold War, this phase proved a critical watershed in the peace process. After 12 – often tortuous – rounds of negotiations, the General Peace Agreement (GPA) was signed in Rome on 4 October 1992.

While the Rome talks are not examined in detail in this issue, Alex Vines' *The Business of Peace* offers a fascinating, little-known story of the build-up and background to these events, focusing on the dynamic role played by 'Tiny' Rowland, chief executive of the UK-based multi-national, Lonrho. Vines highlights how, despite favourable external circumstances, the 'political will' to reach a final settlement could only be mustered through intense international pressure, regional diplomacy and the provision of significant financial incentives to both Renamo and the government.

Although the signing of the GPA formally ended the war, the events which followed have been no less crucial to its long-term success. Implementation of the GPA, overseen by the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), was the fourth phase in the peace process which concluded with the holding of multi-party elections in October 1994. During this phase, the presence of ONUMOZ helped build Renamo's confidence in peace and allowed it to transform itself from a guerrilla army into a political party. Despite Renamo's initial boycott of the elections, successful mediation efforts by regional leaders and the United Nations ensured that the rebels would proceed with the polls and, once defeated, accept their loss gracefully.

With the post-war political and economic aspirations of many Mozambicans still unfulfilled, the 'consolidation' phase of the peace process, which followed the departure of the United Nations in 1994, remains

precarious. The eagerness of soldiers to demobilise and reintegrate into peace-time society, along with the spontaneous return of hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries, has confirmed a deep and generalised feeling of conflict fatigue among the population. While this has served to safeguard the new political dispensation, the widespread availability of light weapons around the country and the acute tensions surrounding the reconstruction process mean renewed violence is an ever-present threat.

Alcinda Honwana's *Sealing the Past, Facing the Future* emphasises that the overwhelming urge for peace and reconciliation in Mozambique cannot be fulfilled unless the individual traumas and communal rifts stemming from the war are confronted and addressed. Recognising the costs and limitations of state and internationally-sponsored healing initiatives, she argues forcefully that rehabilitating Mozambique's ravaged social fabric will depend, to a large degree, on cultural and institutional resourcefulness at the local level.

Lessons for peace-building

Because the Mozambican peace process has been unique in many ways, it does not offer a blueprint for other war-torn countries engaged in the search for peace. There are, nonetheless, a range of useful lessons that can be drawn from Mozambique's experience.

- The war between Mozambicans was inextricably linked to conflicts with and among neighbouring states and to the Cold War. Efforts to thrash out the differences between the government and Renamo were severely constrained as long as outside factors continued to influence local war dynamics. Separating the internal and external interests driving the war took a long time. However, as outside military support to both sides declined in the context of the global shift toward neo-liberal economics and 'democratisation', the parties had little choice but to negotiate.
- Multi-track initiatives were important in bringing about and sustaining dialogue between the Mozambican parties. The agendas of church mediators, state actors and individual peace brokers were not always compatible, and co-ordination was often lacking. Nonetheless, the diversity of initiatives ensured that once the peace process gained momentum, it was rarely allowed to flag. If the Mozambican case shows anything, it is that key forces favouring peace exist at many different levels of societies which can and should be harnessed.
- Once direct dialogue became feasible, the choice of third-party mediators was especially critical in building a climate of trust and confidence between the government and Renamo. Mario Rafaelli, Archbishop Gonçalves and the two Sant' Egidio representatives had the credentials to mediate due to their long-standing familiarity with Mozambican issues and because they were well known to one or both belligerents. Whereas mediators are often chosen for their ability to apply leverage on parties in order to advance the negotiations, the strength of the Rome team was its very willingness to bear patiently with the quibbles, doubts and stalling tactics of the various parties while keeping them focused on the ultimate objective of forging an agreement.
- Key personalities also played critical roles in hastening a negotiated settlement, though they were far from disinterested players. Businessman 'Tiny' Rowland's regional network of high level contacts, along with the seemingly endless resources at his disposal, made him an important match-maker, marriage councillor, bank manager and travel agent. His involvement almost certainly quickened the pace of the peace process, as did that of Zimbabwe's President Mugabe. Mugabe was instrumental in 'summitising' and

'Africanising' the peace process when the remaining areas of contention between Renamo and the government fell beyond the negotiating capacities of their representatives in Rome.

- The Mozambican case underlines the crucial need for peace-making initiatives to come to terms with the underlying, often hidden, factors driving armed conflicts. From the early stages of the peace process, both sides agreed on the principles of ending the war and establishing reconciliation. Negotiations revolved therefore around who should govern and how state resources should be distributed. With the war, especially in its latter stages, sustained by the significant economic gains enjoyed or desired by groups on both sides, it became almost inevitable that aid packages and other financial incentives would be needed to cajole the parties into reaching a final settlement. The Italian government, which backed Sant'Egidio's mediation efforts, understood this well and was willing to provide generous incentives to move the process forward.
- While little pressure has been exerted on the warring parties to account for their past political blunders and human rights atrocities, 'reconciliation' in Mozambique seems to have proceeded remarkably well. The sustainability of such an approach remains questionable, however, even if the absence of any public calling-to-account has not so far undermined political stability and the reconstruction process. Many Mozambicans do not even know where the bones of their murdered relatives lie and, while the present generation may cherish stability over vengeance, there is no guarantee that their children will feel the same.

Consolidation or Reversal?

Mozambique's political settlement holds today due to the diverse interests which coalesced over the 1980s in favour of peace. Continued stability and further reconciliation depend, however, on how far the present reconstruction process addresses the abject poverty and political divisions which helped precipitate the war, while dealing with the new tensions and traumas it engendered.

Thus far, there have been immense difficulties in translating political stability into tangible socio-economic benefits at all levels of Mozambican society. In the face of the social and physical devastation visited upon the country during 30 years of war, recovery was bound to be difficult and prolonged. Mozambique remains one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, however, and the international role in the post-war rebuilding process must also receive scrutiny.

The ambitious political and economic reforms underway have not always been suitably tailored to Mozambique's special circumstances. The harsh, orthodox economic policies imposed by international financial institutions have been insufficiently flexible to avoid creating further vulnerability among ordinary Mozambicans, many of whom also grumble that "democracy does not fill our stomachs". While international assistance has gone far in cementing co-operation between Renamo and the government, it has yet to expand sufficiently the economic opportunities available to a range of social groupings including youths, ex-combatants and women, especially in Mozambique's rural communities. As long as this situation persists, the possibility of discontent politicising and erupting violently can not be ignored.

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and Alex Vines,
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