

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Also in this issue:

Minimum wage & exchange rates

Cease fire after 6 Renamo attacks in 6 days on N1

Renamo Wednesday afternoon declared a ceasefire, after six attacks in six days in the 100 km stretch of the N1 (main north-south road) in Sofala between Muxungue. Traffic in this area normally only passes in military convoys.

Renamo spokesperson António Muchanga at a 1400 press conference Wednesday in Maputo announced a national cease fire: "We guarantee that we will not attack in Gorongosa, Muxungué, or any other part of the national territory, so long as we are not attacked."

Muchanga stressed that the cease fire was to allow registration to start tomorrow in rural Gorongosa. Electoral registration could not take place in eight locations in rural Gorongosa district because of on-going fighting between Renamo and the government. Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama is in hiding at a Renamo base on the Gorongosa mountain, and he told a recent interview that he would register in Gorongosa. There are only two days of registration left, and he must register if he is to stand for president. *CanalMoz* reports that he will register in Vunduzi Thursday.

Chronology of recent military events:

Wednesday 7 May. A convoy was attacked at 08.30 with at least one person injured, report Rádio Moçambique, AIM and *@Verdade*. Then at 14.00 Renamo declared a national cease fire.

Tuesday 6 May. Renamo dug a trench across the road to stop traffic - a tactic used frequently during the 1982-92 war, as a way of stopping traffic which was then attacked. Along this stretch of road, the army goes through first in the morning to fill the trenches, and Renamo attacked those soldiers. There was a subsequent attack on a convoy. *O Pais* reports no injuries. *CanalMoz* quotes the spokesman of the army provincial command to say that some Renamo attackers were killed but no soldiers. But *CanalMoz* "assumes" there were government casualties, and *@Verdade* reports "dozens" of government casualties.

Monday 5 May. Renamo tells Mozambicans not to use this section of N1 because it is attacking the transport of troops and supplies to Sofala, reports *@Verdade*.

Sunday 4 May. Attack on a convoy at 09.00, reports *CanalMoz*.

Saturday 3 May. Two attacks on convoys, at 08.00 and 17.00, with 3 soldiers dead and 3 injured, according to *CanalMoz*. Both attacks confirmed by *@Verdade* and *O Pais* but with disagreements about the time of the second attack.

Friday 2 May. Renamo spokesperson Antonio Muchanga told a press conference that Renamo could unleash an offensive on a national scale. He claimed that "over the past ten days there has been a heavy concentration of troops from the riot police and the armed forces in Gorongosa, transported from several provinces in buses and trucks". He said they intended to "liquidate physically" Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama, reports AIM and *Notícias*. Faced with this, commanders will activate Renamo forces in other regions of the country, Muchanga said – even if this is against Dhlakama's own wishes.

Ministry of Defence spokesman Cristóvão Chume told *Notícias* that there was no such troop concentration and that "this is pure invention of Renamo." But there were various credible reports that the army was stepping up its presence in Gorongosa district. *CanalMoz* claims the army has attacked the former Renamo base at Casa Banana. AIM reports a confrontation between army and Renamo forces in Gorongosa.

Minimum wages reach \$100/month

Minimum wages have been increased substantially, and for the first time most minimum wages are near to, or more than, \$100 per month. In an election year, the rural minimum wage was raised 26% to \$105 per month. For the first time, the rural minimum wage is higher than the civil service minimum, now \$99 and only increased by 10%.

There are now 15 different minimum wages, including \$130/month in construction (up 12%), \$145 in manufacturing (up 10%), \$176 in mining (up 14%), and \$245 in banking (up 8%).

In US dollar terms, minimum wages have doubled since 2007, when they were \$43 for agriculture and \$64 for non-agriculture. The minimum wage was only \$24 in 1996 (about \$34 in current US dollars).

We do an annual summary of minimum wages and exchange rates. The combined file is too large to circulate on a listserve, so the exchange rate part is attached and the minimum wage part will be circulated later on Wednesday.

The exchange rate against the South African Rand is most important, and an overvalued exchange rate makes imported food and consumer goods cheaper in Maputo. In November 2013 for local elections the exchange rate was pushed to a low of 2.9 Meticaís to the Rand. For 2008 local elections, the Metical was also very briefly pushed down to 2.4 Meticaís to the Rand. The overvalued Metical is good for Maputo consumers and voters, but makes it much more difficult for Mozambican producers to export to South Africa.

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The next book

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento

by Teresa Smart & Joseph Hanlon will be launched 2 July in Maputo.

Zimbabwe takes back its land

by Joseph Hanlon, Jeanette Manjengwa & Teresa Smart is now available from the publishers https://www.riener.com/title/Zimbabwe_Takes_Back_Its_Land also as an e-book and <http://www.jacana.co.za/book-categories/current-affairs-a-history/zimbabwe-takes-back-its-land-detail>

Now in paper at a reasonable price

Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique?

by Joseph Hanlon & Teresa Smart

is now available in **paperback**, for £17.99 (+ p&p)

from the publisher <http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/store/viewItem.asp?idProduct=13503>

Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South

by Joseph Hanlon, Armando Barrientos, and David Hulme

Most of this book can now be **read on the web**

tinyurl.com/justgivemoney

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NOTE OF EXPLANATION:

This mailing list is used to distribute two publications, both edited by Joseph Hanlon. This is my own sporadic "News reports & clippings", which is entirely my own responsibility. This list is also used to distribute the *Mozambique Political Process Bulletin*, published by CIP and AWEPA, but those organisations are not linked to "News reports & clippings"

Joseph Hanlon
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Mozambique media websites:

Noticias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O Pais: www.opais.co.mz

On Facebook:

@Verdade: <https://www.facebook.com/JornalVerdade>

CanalMoz: <https://www.facebook.com/CanalMoz>

Macauhub English: www.macauhub.com.mo/en/

AIM Reports: www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news

Carlos Serra Diario de um sociologo: <http://oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com>

Good daily newsletters:

English: Mozambique Investor. Send e-mail to theinvestor@clubofmozambique.com

Portuguese: Mozambique Hoje. <http://mail.clubofmozambique.com/mailman/listinfo/mhoje>

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