



## Florida High Schools Model United Nations

### FHSMUN 35

### SECURITY COUNCIL CRISIS

### THE SITUATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

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#### **Introduction**

The United Nations System and the wider international community are too often confronted with instances of conflict and/or perceived failure to resolve and end wars such as the current conflict in Syria. Understandably, then, the UN System and its international partners feel great pride when they are able to defuse and/or prevent violence, or in the most celebrated cases, end wars entirely and create a lasting peace. Given this duality of successes and failures, and the consequent emotions that they engender, it is abundantly clear that the UN Secretariat, the members of the Security Council, and the international community in general are alarmed by recent developments in Mozambique, a country where the UN helped negotiate a peace accord that was in place for 21 years until October 2013, when the main opposition political party/movement, *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*, commonly known by the acronym RENAMO, announced that it would no longer honor the peace agreement in response to government raids on a RENAMO base at Sathunjira. The Security Council must act quickly, decisively, and comprehensively to stave off a potentially impending civil war as well as wider regional conflagrations throughout southern Africa.

#### **What's So Civil About War Anyway?<sup>1</sup>**

The end of Portuguese colonialism in Africa in the mid-1970s unfortunately degenerated into bloody civil wars in both Angola and Mozambique. In both civil wars, Cold War rivalries provided critical and lethal support that killed hundreds of thousands of people and left Angola and Mozambique littered with landmines and ensured that they would remain two of the poorest countries in the world. In Mozambique, the ruling Socialist government party, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, commonly known as FRELIMO, assisted by the Soviet Union and Zimbabwe, confronted RENAMO, which drew considerable support from the United States and South Africa. While the destruction and death toll within Mozambique was quite considerable, the impact on the wider southern Africa region was equally significant.<sup>2</sup> While the civil war would rage from 1975-1992, one of the critical points in the war occurred in October 1986 when the presidential plane carrying then President Samora Machel crashed in South Africa as he

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<sup>1</sup> Axl Rose, *Use Your Illusion II* Geffen Records 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Sheila Rule, "600,000 Mozambique Refugees Tax an Already Desperate Malawi" *New York Times* July 18, 1988.

returned from a summit in Zambia.<sup>3</sup> Even now, over 27 years after Machel's death, many observers from both within and outside the region suspect that the then *apartheid* government of South Africa was involved with this particular plane crash. As will become more apparent below, suspicious plane crashes are not necessarily just a relic of Mozambique's civil war.

### **Peace and Prosperity...for Some**

Two decades of peace have been extremely beneficial for Mozambique overall but the distribution of these benefits has often been highly concentrated. Significant mineral and natural gas deposits have lured foreign direct investment (FDI) in Maputo as well as in Tete in the west and Cabo Delgado along the northern coast. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by over 7% in 2011<sup>4</sup> and the recent announcement by the Italian oil company, ENI, that it is considering building a major floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) platform off the coast of Mozambique<sup>5</sup> has only reinforced projections that Mozambique may become one of the largest producers and exporters of natural gas worldwide. Living standards have improved across Mozambique but the disparities between different communities are still quite glaring and inform the most pointed critiques by RENAMO. Christof Lehmann recently noted that "Renamo...began rebuilding its armed insurgency in 2012, after surveys of the country's gas resources set Mozambique on the path to becoming the world's second largest exporter of liquefied natural gas."<sup>6</sup> While greater mineral wealth is a potential boon for Mozambique, threats and/or disruptions to the production of coal and natural gas may adversely impact development efforts and create greater potential for future strife.

### **A Generation of Peace – Long Enough to Forget What War Really Means?**

Politically, FRELIMO has consistently dominated Mozambican politics since the 1992 Rome peace accords with RENAMO frequently claiming that FRELIMO's electoral successes are the result of corruption and fraud.<sup>7</sup> In 2009, current President Armando Guebuza, a Marxist intellectual turned wealthy businessman, won approximately 75% of the popular vote and FRELIMO won over 55% of the seats in the Mozambican parliament with RENAMO winning 51 seats, just over 25% of the seats. "Unless there will be found a peaceful resolution to the conflict, or unless the government and armed forces of Mozambique succeed in uprooting the insurgency before the October 15, 2014 parliamentary and presidential elections, there exists the very real risk that Mozambique will descend into a second civil war."<sup>8</sup>

### **Violence Begets More Violence**

Throughout 2013 and the first two months of 2014, there have been periodic clashes between FRELIMO and RENAMO forces, including a RENAMO attack on the police station in the city of Maringue the day after RENAMO's announcement that the peace accords were no

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Biles, "Mystery still surrounds Machel death" *BBC News* October 19, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Fauvet, "Mozambique: From Marxist to Market" *BBC News* March 24, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley Reed, "ENI of Italy Considers Large Gas Project in Mozambique" *New York Times* October 3, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Christof Lehmann, "Mozambique poised for civil war. Renamo reactivates Inhambane Base" *NSNBC International* January 7, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Barry Bearak, "Party's Power in Mozambique Is Criticized as a Barrier to Democracy" *New York Times* October 26, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Christof Lehmann, "Mozambique poised for civil war. Renamo activates Inhambane Base" January 7, 2014.

longer in effect.<sup>9</sup> The escalating tensions within Mozambique are now threatening to spill over into the wider southern Africa region, with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe already issuing a warning about the reemergence of RENAMO and the possibility “that regional body SADC [Southern Africa Development Community] would consider sending troops to help the government if the security situation deteriorated.”<sup>10</sup> In early January 2014, FRELIMO and RENAMO forces fought their most significant battle in over 20 years in the town of Homoine, site of a 1987 RENAMO massacre of over 400 civilians<sup>11</sup>; understandably, the local civilian populations are terrified of a potential return to civil war.

### **Fly the Unfriendly Skies**

Air travel in Mozambique may at times be politely described as not for the faint of heart. Recently, an alarming and mysterious plane crash has brought back to the surface many of the unpleasant memories and suspicions that featured quite prominently in the aforementioned October 1986 plane crash that killed President Samora Machel. On November 29, 2013, a Mozambique Airlines flight crashed in Namibia killing all 33 people on board and within a few weeks, official sources had labeled the plane crash “intentional.”<sup>12</sup> Both formal and informal channels of communication throughout Mozambique and the wider southern Africa region were rife with rumors about the involvement of RENAMO, FRELIMO, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and everyone’s favorite hotbed of conspiracies, the CIA. While no direct links to any governmental, political or insurgent agencies or groups have been established to date, the continued speculation and rumormongering speak clearly to a climate of overall heightened tensions and fear throughout Mozambique and southern Africa.

### **Crashing the [Political] Party**

If Mozambican politics was a sport, it would be akin to televised mixed martial arts (MMA) *sans* the ubiquitous *Tap Out*<sup>TM</sup> gear. The stakes in this year’s electoral contests have ratcheted up exponentially in the last few months. Initially, all eyes were on the October parliamentary and presidential elections but events within the past few days have both compressed that political timetable and intensified the respective foci and intensities of the affected parties. Starting Thursday (February 27, 2014), FRELIMO opened its presidential nominating convention in the city of Matola, just to the west of Maputo. While FRELIMO increased the security presence at the convention as a preventive measure, RENAMO fighters were able to disrupt the proceedings through the detonation of a series of small but lethal bombs near the entrance to the convention headquarters. While President Guebuza and the primary leadership of FRELIMO escaped the scene with only minimal injuries, several veteran party functionaries were killed and a fierce gun battle ensued between FRELIMO and RENAMO forces, with an undetermined number of resultant casualties, including at least 1 national each from South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. A few hours later, a package containing a bomb was intercepted by the security forces at the South African Embassy in Maputo; within hours, South African politicians and pundits were accusing RENAMO of sending the bomb.

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<sup>9</sup> *BBC News*, “Renamo attack’ on Mozambique’s Maringue police station” October 22, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> *BBC News*, “Zimbabwe warns Mozambique’s Renamo not to resume war” October 23, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Hanlon, “Mozambique: Renamo and Army in Battles in Homoine, Gorongosa” *allAfrica.com* January 9, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> *Associated Press*, “Pilot is Found to Have Crashed Plane in Namibia Intentionally” December 22, 2013.

RENAMO's official response was that FRELIMO had ordered the delivery of the bomb in order to frame RENAMO and to draw in South African forces to capture and/or kill all remaining RENAMO members. As of 10 P PM EST, no one had claimed responsibility for the attempted bombing at the South African Embassy.



Map of Mozambique and the surrounding region in southern Africa – Courtesy of Nations Online Project.

