



Why Renamo performed below the level from where Dhlakama left the party?

The text analyses five (5) categories of factors that might concur to offer avenues for the reasons why Renamo performed below the level that, in different measures, it achieved when Afonso Dhlakama was still alive, and such factors are as follows: the apolitical vote; the wasted vote; the factor pertaining to the perceptions about Peace versus voting; the challenge of the leadership of and within Renamo; and the manipulation of the electoral process.

Nevertheless, before proceeding to the announced exercised, the text examines, briefly, two ballots that, in the party's perspective of Frelimo and Renamo constituted, for each case, their best elections, judging from their results, while underscoring, in each case, the factors behind that electoral success. Here, the selected ballots were those of 1999 – that presented the best result from the point of view of Renamo – and 2009 that, undoubtedly, were so far the best results for the Frelimo Party taking into consideration both the results obtained by the party and by its presidential candidate.

The best electoral year for Renamo was 1999, corresponding to the second general multiparty elections in the country. In that ballot, Renamo succeeded in electing one hundred and seventeen (117) Deputies for the National Assembly and, its presidential candidate, Afonso Dhlakama, came second in the contest for the country's presidency with 48% of the electoral vote. Turnout of the 1999 elections stood at 74% and, to a great extent, the electoral campaigns of all political parties and presidential candidates held their course in a calm and peaceful environment. It was around this time that analyses of the Mozambican elections crystalized a certain paradigm with the following contours: a certain amount of frictions among the supporters of di-

fferent parties and candidates before the elections – or during the electoral campaigns -, followed by a voting process generally calm and peaceful, leading afterwards to a post-electoral moment characterised by the contestation of the electoral results and occasional eruption of violent acts.

In the run out to the 1999 elections Renamo formed an electoral alliance with twelve (12) small political parties and its presidential candidate, Afonso Dhlakama, obtained the explicit support of the leaders of these parties – among which stood up well known politicians at the time, such as Domingos Arouca (FUMO), Máximo Dias (MONAMO) and Lutero Simango (PCN) who abdicated the possibility of contesting the presidential election in order to support the candidacy of Afonso Dhlakama that included their addition to his electoral campaign machine. With this accomplishment, Renamo was able to attain an urban and political dimension that allowed the party, at the time, to lessen its strong rural and military origin and *raison d'être*.

Frelimo, on its part, had 2009 as its best electoral year, corresponding to the fourth general multiparty elections. On this occasion Frelimo succeeded in electing one hundred and ninety one (191) Deputies for the National Assembly and, its presidential candidate, Armando Guebuza, won the keys of the presidential palace at *Ponta Vermelha* with 75% of the electoral vote. These elections were marked by low turnout – about 44% - with even lower levels (more than 60% of abstentions) in the provinces of Zambézia, Nampula and Niassa. The electoral campaign on this occasion was overshadowed by the spectrum of fraud and inter-party mistrust. However, the paradigm observed in the previous elections was still prevalent in its basic features: frictions between political parties and presidential candida-

tes before the elections, i.e., during the electoral campaigns, peaceful voting and without major incidents, followed by post-elections' contestation of the results and threats of return to violence.

It was around the 2009 elections that, at the level of the Academy and of well-informed circles of public opinion, was developed, with certain intensity, the idea according to which Renamo was slowly abandoning its space in the political chess table nationwide and Frelimo, on its side, was becoming a dominant party for some, and a hegemonic party for others. To a certain extent, the blame was pointed to the personal leadership style of the Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, who was being singled

out as part of the problem that Renamo was facing, mainly following the expulsion from the party of influential figures, such as Raúl Domingos and Deviz Simango.

Taking as point of departure the performance of Frelimo and Renamo in all general multiparty elections, from 1994 to 2014, in a historical perspective, and looking attentively at the results of the last ballot, it is possible to describe the factors that influences the electoral results and, by the same token, providing clues for the reasons why Renamo performed below the level that, in different degrees, it achieved when Afonso Dhlakama was still alive, as follows.

First: the apolitical vote.

The apolitical vote is associated with a certain set of perceptions and behavior of citizens who do not believe on the efficacy of their vote, or on the functionality of the political system or regime in which they find themselves in and, for that reason, they decide to remain alien to the respective political processes. This sort of attitudes leads to diverse forms of political abstention. In the case of the multiparty elections in Mozambique, since October 1994, and due to the spectrum of fraud and profound mistrust between and among political parties, it is possible to observe that enormous segments of the potential electorate of opposition political parties tend to opt for this type of vote, particularly starting from the third general elections of 2004 a fact that, naturally, breeds the possibility of the incumbent party obtaining substantial electoral victories.

The fact is that, electoral fraud – irrespective of its magnitude -, as it is perceived by a non-negli-

gible part of the electorate, insinuates itself as a malign virus surrounding the members and sympathisers of opposition political parties: why vote, if the Frelimo Party will perpetuate itself in power via electoral fraud made possible by its overall domination and control of the bodies responsible for the administration and management of the electoral process? The spectrum of the legal exaggeration of the National Electoral Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE) that led to the refusal of the candidacy of Samora Machel Júnior for the 2018 municipal elections, coupled with their stubbornness in sticking to the inflated numbers of the electoral census in the province of Gaza despite the timely intervention of the National Statistics Institute (INE) and a chorus of contrary voices from civil social entities, constitutes a sort of iceberg of the monster of electoral fraud that, most certainly, played its role in the predicament of the opposition political parties, in general, and for Renamo, in particular.

Second: the wasted vote.

The wasted vote is any vote deposited for a political party or candidate that, at the end of the voting process, does not help to elect the party or the candidate. In a broader sense, the notion of wasted vote includes votes for winning candidates in excess of the minimum needed to win (the useful votes) and, narrowly, it refers to those votes which are for the losing party or candidate. In the latter

narrow sense, of votes deposited in favor of losing candidates or parties, the wasted vote presents perverse effects in the behavior of those segments of the electorate affected by it. The fact is that in the presence of a sizeable segment of the electorate who, consistently, vote for a certain political party or presidential candidate without them ever assuming the commands of power, it can be expect-

ted that they will succumb to the effects of frustration and discouragement, thus opting for a solution closer to the one followed by the apolitical voters just described above: keeping a distance from the electoral process.

The thought of these type of voting motivations by the electorate led the leadership of Renamo, mainly through the actions of its leader Afonso Dhlakama, to demand a certain mechanism for power sharing with the Frelimo Government, be it at the central, provincial or municipal levels, specifically via the designation of provincial governors in those provinces where the party had received the

majority in the legislative ballot, or even through the nomination of administrators for public enterprises in the country. Without ever succeeding with those requests, despite a few cosmetic measures taken by President Joaquim Chissano during his tenure. The fact is that, though contesting the elections, systematically, since October of 1994, Renamo and its presidential candidate, Afonso Dhlakama, always found themselves in the losing corner. And, thus, the notion of a wasted vote when depositing a vote in favor of Renamo and its presidential candidate might have played a role in the withdrawal of the traditional electorate close to them in the last ballot.

Third: the factor pertaining to the perceptions about Peace versus voting.

The founding general multiparty elections of the pluralist political regime in Mozambique – of 1994 and 1999 – registered turnout well above eighty percent. One interpretation advanced by a number of analysts who followed closely these elections' processes was that considerations pertaining to Peace in the country, might have determined that sort of results. This kind of interpretation was equated while observing the fact that the 16 years' military confrontation between the Frelimo Government and Renamo guerrilla forces had enormous implications, not only in terms of the country's economic development, but also in relation to the social fabric of the country given its duration, its territorial coverage and in a more poignant way its imbrication with the daily life of the populations given the fact that, in most cases, villages and whole families were indistinct of the concentrated guerrillas and, as such, also integral part of the battle fields. It was, for all senses and purpose, a kind of human existence that the Mozambican elector did not wish to experience again. To a large extent, this sort of voting motivation was, undoubtedly, used by a diversity of actors in view of directing the electoral vote to the extent that was noticeable in those founding ballots: for example, the community and church leaderships – and here it is important to bear in mind that at the time Renamo had sizeable parts of the national territory under its control – might have influenced the perceived equilibrium in the voting pattern for Frelimo and Renamo in those ballots.

The fact is that, in tandem with the entrenchment of the perception of effective Peace in the country,

also the lack of interest of the Mozambican elector for the electoral process grew. It came as no surprise when in October of 2012 Renamo – through its leader Afonso Dhlakama – decided to relight the spectrum of war by going back to *Satunjira* (in the Gorongosa mountains), precisely on the 17th of October, the date that coincides with the anniversary of the first Renamo commander, André Matsangaísa. It is the case that the predicament of Renamo and its presidential candidate was very different in 2014 comparing to 2009: turnout went from 45% to more than 50%, Renamo doubled, practically, its presence in the National Assembly and its leader, Afonso Dhlakama, went from the modest 16% obtained in 2009 to 37% in the 2014 ballot.

It is perceptible the fact that since the inauguration of the new Renamo leadership – including the subsequent peace accords signed with the Frelimo Government – the thought regarding the precarious nature of peace in the country that could be made possible through the intervention of the armed wing of Renamo has diminished considerably in the country. In spite of the phenomenon associated with Mariano Nyongo and his Military Junta – or even because of it, to some extent – it is hard to prevent the perception that, for the majority of the citizens of this country, the military force of Renamo has collapsed entirely. In the conscience of the majority of the citizens of Mozambique, the backbone of the military force of Renamo has been definitely broken and, given that, it raises the opportunity for the emergence of a Renamo as a political party freed from the strings of its enduring military wing. In a certain sense, this can be benefi-

cial for the entrenchment of Renamo as a credible political party but, in a short period context, that means that its key politico-military argument, so far used, has lost its vigor as perceived by the majority

of those within the segments of its traditional electorate. This factor, also, might have contributed, decisively, for the poor performance of Renamo in the last ballot.

Fourth: the challenge of the leadership of and within Renamo.

One visible aspect of the leadership of the Frelimo Party is the endurance of what can be considered as the “hard core” of its leadership throughout the period of post-independence Mozambique up until to date – cases such as those of Joaquim Chissano, Armando Guebuza, Alberto Chipande, Graça Machel, Raimundo Pachinuapa, Mariano Matsinha e a few others – despite the cleavages that, from time to time, surfaces due to the internal disputes of diverse nature between and among them: but, they always stood together. Renamo has a different trajectory in this domain: very influential figures within this party had been, successive and definitively, marginalized or expelled from the party; with the emblematic cases being those, as referred to above, of Raúl Domingos and Deviz Simango. Despite this pattern of leadership management, while Afonso Dhlakama was at the helm of Renamo, that hardly affected, in a negative and noticeable way, the political performance of the party. To a certain degree because, in large measure, Afonso Dhlakama was, himself, Renamo.

Afonso Dhlakama had three strong points: (a) he had led the armed resistance against the Frelimo Government to a standstill military position that forced the Government to seek a negotiated solution to end the military hostilities; (b) he commanded effective control over all of the members of Renamo – both civilians and military men alike – and his word in the management of Renamo was, usually, final and unquestionable; and, more relevant still (c) he had the habit of reminding the ruling party that he represented the aspirations of all those who did not feel represented in the prevailing political order and, contrary to everybody else among the

Mozambican people, not only he did not fear the power of Frelimo, but also he was always prepared to challenge it whenever he deemed it necessary to restore the interests of those he represented, or those who sought in him a certain sort of refuge from the mighty power of the Frelimo Government.

General Ossufo Momade, on his part, emerged with three “ghosts” overshadowing his leadership of Renamo: (a) though he is a military man with higher graduation, he has spent the greatest part of his political life as a Parliamentarian and urban politician a fact that, in a certain sense, made it difficult his rapid acceptance as a legitimate leader by the military commanders, a fact that obliged him, first are foremost, to opt for a long stay in the Gorongosa mountains with them, with obvious defaults for his more general political endeavors; (b) right from the onset he was challenged in his route to leadership by people close to the late leader, Afonso Dhlakama, be they family members or simply close collaborators, a fact that led him to dismiss them with a view of consolidating his power – cases such as those of Ivone Soares, Manuel Bissopo, Elias Dhlakama are the most noticeable – in a move that further diminished the hard fought projection of Renamo as a credible party far and beyond its core members and sympathisers; and last but not least (c) the frontal and muscular challenge to his leadership posed by Major General Mariano Nyongo and his Military Junta worsened his cause in the drive towards his affirmation as a suitable successor for Afonso Dhlakama. It was with this leader that Renamo contested the last ballot with only meagre hypotheses of emulating the performance of the Renamo of Afonso Dhlakama.

Fifth: the manipulation of the electoral process.

The spectrum of electoral fraud in Mozambique, during the ballots from 1994 to 2014, presented a third-fold dimension: (a) frictions during the electoral campaigns, led by staunch militants and sympa-

thisers from the two main political parties; (b) acts of intimidation, more often than not, perpetrated by the agents of law and order; and (c) ballot box stuffing coupled with the invalidation of ballot pa-

pers of the parties and opposition candidates and, on occasions, the refusal to count ballot papers not favorable to the incumbent party and its presidential candidate.

In the last ballot, however, the instances of manipulation of the electoral process, added new and more virulent acts: (a) the inclusion of “ghost” electors in the electoral census, with the case in point being the addition of 300.000 non-existent electors in the province of Gaza; (b) the stimulation of psychological mass violence, through

arbitrary detentions of party delegates including the spectacular assassination of a civil society leader in the province of Gaza, Inocêncio Matavele, among other actions of a similar sort; (c) the instrumentalization of disorder, including here the refusal to grant credentials to national observers from civil society groups as well as infantile gross misconducts during the counting of the ballot papers; and, finally (d) the inclusion of petty corruption tactics, as diverse as bribery, buying off and blackmail of party delegates and scrutineers appointed by opposition parties and candidates.

Why these extreme strategies of manipulation of the electoral process were introduced in the last ballot?

The first explanatory hypothesis may derive from the direction of public opinion, during the last years, that tended to point to a relatively strong positive performance by the opposition parties and candidates due to the problems lately associated with the Frelimo Government: the economic and financial crisis worsened by the impact of the illegal hidden debts, the deterioration of the image of Frelimo’s governance in the view of the new generation of Mozambicans, specifically those born after the end of war, and the visible difficulties of the Frelimo Government to find appropriate answers to the persistent problem of poverty in the country, and more specifically, to the chronic problematic of regional imbalances. The most probable assumption is that the Frelimo Government did actually believe this particular reading to be true and, as a response strategy, embarked on a process that led to the exaggeration of the contours of manipulation of the electoral process.

The second explanatory hypothesis is related to President Nyusi himself. To a great extent, President Nyusi has been trailed by a deficit of authority within the highest ranks of Frelimo – some have submitted before that he had been the puppet

of Armando Guebuza, and others suggested Alberto Chipande – and, adding to it, towards the 2018 municipal elections, he was clear and publicly confronted by Samora Machel Júnior and other relevant figures within the historic leadership of Frelimo. And, obviously, he might have decided to force his hand in order to reassert his power in his second mandate by, among other things, activating a robust machine for the control and manipulation of the electoral process to ensure any non-contestable victory. It is worth recalling here that, to a certain degree, President Nyusi had been publicly humiliated, immediately following his first inauguration, by Afonso Dhlakama during those lengthy public rallies in which he advocated for the right to nominate provincial governors in those provinces where Renamo obtained the majority of the legislative vote in the 2014 general elections a fact that, most probably, prompted the national defense and security forces to attempt the physical elimination of the Renamo leader in a process in which the figure of President Nyusi was hardly absent, as was practically equivalent to his notorious presence in the assault and occupation of the Renamo military bases in the Gorongosa mountains when he was, then, the country’s Defense Minister.



Mozambique's Defense Minister, Filipe Nyusi, visiting the Renamo base in Satunjira after it fell under the control of the country's National Defense Forces of Mozambique (FADM).

The third and final explanatory hypothesis may be that the Frelimo Party had the perception of the demise of the effective military force of Renamo and, therefore, even in the presence of the Military Junta of Major General Mariano Nyongo or even the DDR process still in its infant stage, the President of Frelimo can, without deterrents, resort to any use and demonstration of force with the confidence that there will be no credible response. The international donor

community, the external investors and other international cooperating partners have all demonstrated enough deference towards the power of Frelimo and of President Nyusi that, understandably, cannot be expected to provide appropriate checks in the instances of arbitrary practices beyond the habitual scale. Power is assured, decisively. Who can contest that and with what means? And, obviously, these can be a prelude for the installation of tyranny in the country.

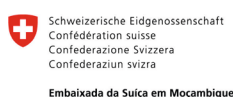


Property: Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento (CDD)
Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Team: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga, Selma Inocência, Narciso Cossa, Déborah Capela, Agostinho Machava, Denise Cruz, Isabel Macamo
Layout: CDD

Address: Rua Eça de Queiroz, nº 45, Bairro da Coop, Cidade de Maputo – Mozambique

Twitter: CDD_moz
E-mail: info@cddmoz.org
Website: http://www.cddmoz.org

Partners



COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL

