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RENAMO UNIÃO ELEITORAL

Understanding the Longevity and Challenges of an Opposition Party Coalition in Mozambique

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of political party coalitions in Mozambique is not a new phenomenon. By the run-up to the first multiparty elections, in 1994, leaders of some of the so-called small political parties had realised that the existence of a minimum electoral threshold of 5 per cent of the national vote in parliamentary elections for a political party to gain representation in the National Assembly would make it an uphill race for them to get into Parliament. They therefore entered into a pre-election coalition. Had they not done so, votes for them would have been wasted. Since then the country has seen the formation and collapse of about half a dozen political party coalitions nearly all of which have fallen, between elections, into a vegetative state. However, one coalition, formed in 1999 around the Resistência Nacional de Moçambique (RENAMO), has managed to survive (for seven years, at the time of writing). It is known as the RENAMO União Eleitoral (RENAMO UE).

There are virtually no studies of political party coalitions in Mozambique, an important aspect of the political process that has often been touched on only in passing. This study attempts to fill the gap by collecting data and recording relevant aspects of the formation and management of the RENAMO UE. Data were gathered through interviews based on a pre-established questionnaire which was essentially directed to key people from selected political parties and individuals within the RENAMO UE (see the list of interviewees in Appendix 1). The respondents included a senior leader of RENAMO, a former top leader of RENAMO and two leaders from the so-called small parties, which have congregated around RENAMO in the RENAMO UE. Among the respondents was a senior official from the

governing Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), who was included in order to capture the view of the largest party in Mozambique about the most important political party coalition in the history of the country in particular and on party coalitions in Mozambique in general. The responses helped us understand, from various perspectives, the dynamics within the RENAMO UE coalition. Many unstructured and informal interviews were also conducted with Mozambican electoral stakeholders, including middle level cadres of various political parties. Secondary sources were also consulted.

This study attempts to grasp the *raison d'être* of the RENAMO UE, its management and longevity, with a view to drawing lessons from this party coalition experience for Mozambique and for Africa as a whole.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first describes the electoral history of the country under the multiparty dispensation, provides a brief history of RENAMO from its creation as a military organisation to its transformation into a political party, with an emphasis on its organisational arrangements and internal procedures, and lists all the party coalitions in the history of the country up to the 2004 general elections. It is followed by an analysis of the constitutional and legal provisions governing party coalitions in Mozambique. The three sections preceding the conclusion represent the nucleus of the study. They examine the driving forces behind the formation of the RENAMO UE, its objectives, and the selection of partners. They go into some detail on aspects of the management and maintenance of the coalition with a special focus on the challenges of sustaining it. Finally, the study explains the reasons for the survival and longevity of the RENAMO UE coalition and assesses its effectiveness. The conclusion draws lessons from the RENAMO UE experience.

Two main challenges were confronted in conducting the research. First, it was not easy to gather relevant information from secondary sources given that there has been virtually no major research on party coalitions in Mozambique to date. Second, the fact that the first set of interviews took place just before the December 2004 general elections might have limited the ability of the respondents to speak without reserve.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL PARTY COALITIONS

A Brief History of Elections in Contemporary Mozambique

The establishment of multiparty politics in Mozambique resulted from a constitutional amendment in 1990 following the signing of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) by FRELIMO and RENAMO, which ended nearly 16 years

of civil war. The pre-GPA Constitution, enacted after independence in 1975, and its subsequent amendments, provided for a one-party state, that party being FRELIMO. Thus, the period between 1975 and 1990 was marked, among other things, by the gradual institutionalisation of a monolithic system of Marxist government (with some relevant changes along the way) as well as the restriction of fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of association and assembly. Elections only took place within the party leadership, with national, provincial and district assemblies representing the people at these levels. This was the so-called popular democracy.

The global revival of democracy that was precipitated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the end of Cold War and the wave of changes that swept through the African continent, giving expression to a long-repressed internal aspiration for democratic change, left FRELIMO with no alternative but to change the political dispensation in the country. In contrast to the experiences of most African countries, where the quest for democratic and accountable governance by political pressure groups, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and social movements began soon after independence and persisted throughout the years, in Mozambique events took a different course. Civil society movements were weak, probably because most of the mass organisations were historically affiliated to the governing FRELIMO party.

One of the salient features of the 1990 constitutional amendment was the provision that, to win, a presidential candidate had to obtain more than 50 per cent of the valid votes in the entire country. In the absence of a clear winner in the first round, the Constitution provides that a second round of elections had to be conducted between the two candidates with the most votes. A fixed presidential term (two five-year terms) was also introduced without retrospective effect. President Joaquim Alberto Chissano, who had replaced the late Samora Machel and had served for four years from 1986, was therefore eligible to contest the subsequent two presidential elections. He was, indeed, FRELIMO's presidential candidate in 1994 and 1999. The period after 1990 was characterised by the creation of a large number of political parties, which subsequently contested the 1994 general elections with the results shown in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 shows that FRELIMO's Chissano won the 1994 presidential election with an absolute majority. His party also won the legislative elections, securing an absolute majority of seats, as shown in Table 2. RENAMO came second in both the presidential and parliamentary elections, and the União Democrática (UD) was third, winning nine parliamentary seats.

Table 1
Results of the 1994 Presidential Elections

Rank	Party* and Candidate	No. of Votes	% of Votes
1	FRELIMO Joaquim A Chissano	2 633 740	53,30
2	RENAMO Afonso M M Dhlakama	1 666 965	33,73
3	PADEMO Wehia M Ripua	141 905	2,87
4	UNAMO Carlos A dos Reis	120 708	2,44
5	MONAMO – PMSD Máximo D J Dias	115 442	2,34
6	PACODE Vasco C M Alfazema	58 848	1,19
7	PIMO Jacob N S Sibindy	51 070	1,03
8	FUMO – PCD Domingos A M Arouca	37 767	0,76
9	Independent Candidate Carlos J M Jeque	34 588	0,70
10	SOL Casimiro M Nhamithambo	32 036	0,65
11	Independent Candidate Mário F C Machele	24 238	0,49
12	PPPM Padimbe M K Andrea	24 208	0,49

Source: Brazão Mazula 1994; 1996

* The list of abbreviations on p xiii gives the full names of the parties

Table 2
Results of the 1994 Parliamentary Elections

Rank	Party	No. of Votes	% of Votes	Elected MPs
1	FRELIMO	2 115 793	44,33	129
2	RENAMO	1 803 506	37,78	112
3	UD	245 793	5,15	09
4	AP	99 031	1,95	0
5	SOL	79 622	1,67	0
6	FUMO -PCD	66 527	1,39	0
7	PCN	60 635	1,27	
8	PIMO	58 590	1,23	0
9	PACODE	52 446	1,10	0
10	PPPM	50 793	1,06	0
11	DRP	48 030	1,01	0
12	PADEMO	36 689	0,77	0
13	UNAMO	34 809	0,73	0
14	PT	26 961	0,56	0
	Total	5 402 940	100	250

Source: Brazão Mazula 1994; 1996

The results of the 1999 parliamentary and presidential elections were almost identical to those of the 1994 general elections. Chissano, who was running for his second and last term, won the presidential elections with 52,29 per cent of the total vote (Table 3). FRELIMO also won a majority of votes in the 250-member National Assembly, gaining 133 seats, an increase of four from the 129 it won in 1994, as illustrated in Table 4. The UD's failure to be returned to the National Assembly was one of the dominant features which differentiated the 1994 and 1999 electoral outcomes. Luis de Brito advanced two hypotheses to explain the UD's surprising good performance in the 1994 general elections. The first was that of 'a symbol effect' – the UD chose as its symbol a cashew nut, well known, especially in rural areas. The second related to the party's position at the bottom of the ballot paper,

suggesting that because FRELIMO's presidential candidate, Chissano, had been at the bottom on the presidential ballot paper, many FRELIMO voters had marked the bottom square on the parliamentary ballot paper too, thus voting accidentally for the UD (de Brito 1996, p 467). Thus, the 1999 Parliament consisted only of representatives of FRELIMO and RENAMO and its allies, reinforcing Mozambique's two-party system. The second hypothesis seems to be more plausible

Table 3
Results of the 1999 Presidential Election

Rank	Party and Candidate	No. of Votes	% of Votes
1	FRELIMO Joaquim A Chissano	2 339 848	52,29
2	RENAMO UE Afonso M M Dhlakama	2 134 255	47,71

Source: STAE 2001

Table 4
Results of the 1999 Parliamentary Elections and Parties' Representation in Parliament

Rank	Party	No. of Votes	% of Votes	Elected MPs
1	FRELIMO	2 008 165	48,55	133
2	RENAMO UE	1 604 470	38,79	117
3	PT	111 280	2,68	0
4	PALMO	102 115	2,47	0
5	SOL	83 515	2,02	0
6	PADELIMO	33 247	0,80	0
7	PIMO	29 456	0,71	0
8	PANAOC	24 615	0,60	0
9	UMO	64 182	1,55	0
10	UD	61 276	1,48	0
11	PPLM	11 684	0,28	0
12	PASOMO	2 153	0,05	0
	Total	4 136 158	100	250

Source: STAE 2001

Another characteristic of the 1999 elections was that there were only two presidential candidates: President Joaquim Alberto Chissano and Afonso Marceta Macacho Dhlakama. The formation of RENAMO's electoral coalition in 1999 largely explains the reduction in the number of presidential candidates as well as the decrease in the number of political parties that contested that year's general election. Similarly, the formation of the RENAMO UE coalition explains the substantial increase in RENAMO's share of vote in both the presidential election (from 33,73% in 1994 to 47,71% in 1999) and marginally in the parliamentary election (from 37,78% to 38,81%). The RENAMO UE secured 117 seats, up from RENAMO's 112 seats in 1994.

In 2004 FRELIMO nominated a new candidate, Armando Guebuza, the governing party's secretary general, since Chissano was constitutionally ineligible, having run the country for two consecutive terms under the new Constitution. The election was characterised by a record low voter turnout of 36,3 per cent, compared with 87,9 per cent in 1994 and 69,5 per cent in 1999. Moreover, in contrast to the 1999 presidential election, which was contested by only two presidential candidates, Chissano and Dhlakama, several other candidates stood for the 2004 presidential election, including Raúl Domingos, formerly RENAMO's parliamentary chief whip, who had earlier been expelled from the party, as will be explained below.

Table 5
Results of the 2004 Presidential Election

Rank	Party and Candidate	No. of Votes	% of Votes
1	FRELIMO Armando E Guebuza	2 004 226	63, 74
2	RENAMO UE Afonso M M Dhlakama	998 059	31, 74
3	PDD Raúl M Domingos	85 815	2, 7
4	PIMO Jacob N S Sibindy	28 656	0, 91
5	MBG Carlos A dos Reis	27 412	0, 87

Source: Conselho Constitucional 2005

FRELIMO's Guebuza won the presidential election with the highest percentage recorded since 1994 (Table 5), while his party fell short of winning a two-thirds majority in Parliament. The main opposition candidate, Dhlakama, came second in the presidential race, with a meagre 31,74 per cent of the vote, and his party coalition also came second. The RENAMO UE lost a total of 27 parliamentary seats to FRELIMO, which won a total of 160 seats. The RENAMO UE secured only 90 seats (Table 6), losing its status in the political life of the country. The 2004 elections marked the death of the two-party system in Mozambique, transforming the country into a virtual dominant-party system like those of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Table 6
Results of the 2004 Parliamentary Elections and Party Representation in Parliament

Rank	Party	No. of Votes	% of Votes	Elected MPs
1	FRELIMO	1 889 289	62,03	160
2	RENAMO UE	902 289	29,73	90
3	PDD	60 758	2,00	0
4	PAZS	26 686	0,88	0
5	PARENA	18 220	0,60	0
6	PIMO	17 960	0,59	0
7	PASOMO	15 740	0,52	0
8	PT	14 242	0,47	0
9	SOL	13 915	0,46	0
10	PEC-MT	12 285	0,40	0
11	MBG	11 059	0,36	0
12	UD	10 310	0,34	0
13	PVM	9 950	0,33	0
14	PALMO	9 263	0,30	0
15	PAREDE	9 026	0,30	0
16	USAMO	8 661	0,29	0
17	FAO	7 591	0,25	0

18	PADELIMO	3 720	0,12	0
19	CDU	1 252	0,04	0
	Total	3 321 926	100	250

Source: Conselho Constitucional, 2005

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL PARTY COALITIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE

The recent history of party coalitions in Mozambique can be traced to the period preceding the 1994 elections, when a coalition named the União Democrática (UD) was formed. At that time the UD consisted of three new political parties, namely, Partido Renovador Democrático (PRD), Partido Nacional Democrático (PANADE) and Partido Liberal de Moçambique (PALMO), created especially to contest the first democratic elections. The UD managed to win nine seats in the first multiparty legislature, as explained above. By the second democratic election, in 1999, other party coalitions had emerged, including the RENAMO UE, the largest ever coalition in Mozambique. The number of party coalitions increased further ahead of the 2004 general elections. Table 7 shows the evolution of party coalitions in Mozambique from 1994 to date. This list is restricted to those coalitions which contested at least one general election.

Table 7
History of Party Coalitions in Mozambique (1994 – 2004)

General Election	Coalition	Affiliated Parties
1994	União Democrática (UD)	PRD PANADE PALMO
1999	União Democrática (UD)	PANADE PANAMO
	União Moçambicana da Oposição (UMO)	PADEMO PACODE PAMOMO

	RENAMO União Eleitoral (RENAMO UE)	RENAMO PPPM PRD FAP ALIMO PUN PCN MONAMO/PMSD UDF FUMO/PCD UNAMO
2004	RENAMO União Eleitoral (RENAMO UE)	RENAMO ALIMO FAP PRD PUN PPPM PCN FUMO/PSD MONAMO/PSD UDF PEMO UDF
	MBG	UNAMO PARTONAMO
	FAO	LF PAC
	UD	PANADE PLDM
	USAMO	PADRES PSM PSDM UM

The formation of a party coalition in Mozambique has been largely an adventurous enterprise. Indeed, most coalitions have failed to gain access to Parliament. Apart from the UD, which won representation accidentally and ephemerally, the RENAMO UE has been the sole coalition to have gained and maintained a significant presence in the National Assembly since that political organisation's inception in 1999. Yet, together, Mozambique's so-called small parties were able in the past to garner about 13 per cent of the national vote. However, past election results have also shown that the small parties are just too small to be effective on their own. Coalitions of small parties tend to mushroom only around election time in an attempt to comply with the minimum 5 per cent electoral threshold required to gain representation in Parliament. The emergence of these coalitions only around election periods has not allowed them to organise properly in time to contest the elections successfully. Furthermore, they have not been prepared to accept the leadership of one of their peers in a broad-based coalition which might allow them to win a significant number of parliamentary seats and balance the dominance of FRELIMO and RENAMO.

Given the above constraints, the small political parties were left with very few options. FRELIMO was not inclined to enter into a coalition with other political parties. According to a RENAMO UE respondent, 'FRELIMO does not see the need to build any party coalition because it is already in coalition with the state apparatus', insinuating that the Mozambican governing party has used its position in public office to abuse public resources for its own electoral advantage. It is, however, worth highlighting that FRELIMO has so far been able to secure an absolute majority of votes (at least 51%) in every general election. While entering into a coalition would help consolidate its position the party has, thus far, not been in favour of such an arrangement.

In contrast to FRELIMO, RENAMO sees coalition as an opportunity to improve its chance of winning elections; hence its initiative in creating an electoral union with ten other opposition parties. Because the RENAMO UE coalition is organised around RENAMO it is important to devote a section of this study to the party's history, its organisational structure, processes and challenges as a political party in order to identify the needs of the RENAMO UE and understand the challenges confronting it.

RENAMO: HISTORY, ORGANISATION & INTERNAL PROCEDURES

The success of a party coalition depends not only on the coalition's own organisational capacity but also on the organisational arrangements within

each of its affiliates. This is even more so when there is a dominant political party in the coalition, as in the case of the RENAMO UE, where RENAMO is ultra-dominant. Indeed, every aspect of the coalition's strategies and operations virtually centres on RENAMO. It is not surprising, then, that the coalition and its largest member share a name. Mozambique became independent in 1974 after many years of anti-colonial struggle waged by FRELIMO against the Portuguese colonial administration. In 1977 RENAMO was born as an armed group, sponsored by Southern Rhodesia (known today as Zimbabwe) and apartheid South Africa, who were frightened by FRELIMO's support for liberation movements fighting the racist regimes in these two countries as well as by the Mozambican governing party's Marxist-Leninist ideology (Lodge, Kadima and Pottie 2002).

Internally, the population in the centre and centre-north of the country was frustrated by the political domination of the south, from which most FRELIMO cadres and leaders originated; the centralisation of power by FRELIMO; the establishment of a political system characterised by the supremacy of the ruling party over the state; the marginalisation of the traditional chieftaincy system of government and the neglect of rural areas in favour of urban and industrial zones, through forced resettlement and villagisation programmes. Over time RENAMO's guerrilla warfare received considerable support from customary chiefs and local communities in central Mozambique, thus transforming the rebellion from the creation of the intelligence services of Southern Rhodesian into a Mozambican indigenous phenomenon (Vines 1996).

RENAMO's guerrilla warfare methods, which included sabotage, destruction of the infrastructure, and raids, were widely decried for their brutality. An estimated 900 000 people were killed between 1980 and 1988 (Abrahamsson & Nilsson 1995) and more than one million people fled to neighbouring countries during the 16-year civil war. Both FRELIMO and RENAMO share responsibility for these killings, though FRELIMO's propaganda was extremely successful in portraying RENAMO as a brutal and bloodthirsty armed movement, a reputation the opposition party still carries in some sectors, both internally and externally.

Ahead of the 1994 elections RENAMO faced manifold challenges. These included clearing its name, transforming itself from a military organisation into a democratic political party, and recruiting successfully in urban areas outside its rural comfort zone. Comparing RENAMO with other African opposition political parties Carrie Manning (1998) explains that 'it is not an intellectual, urban-based party trying to put down roots in the

countryside, but a military organisation with weakly developed administrative and political wings having to downplay its military character and strengthen its political and administrative side, largely by recruiting in the cities’.

On the other hand, since its inception RENAMO has always been an opposition movement. It has therefore not had access to public resources and the exposure that the FRELIMO cadres, appointed at all levels of the state throughout the period from independence to the early 1990s, have enjoyed. During the civil war, RENAMO operated clandestinely, counting on networks organised around traditional chiefs in those areas under its control. These networks have continued to be more or less effective in the opposition party’s traditional strongholds.

Since the political liberalisation of the 1990s, efforts by some international organisations to help RENAMO develop an effective and democratic organisation have had mixed results. Obviously, RENAMO, like other opposition parties in Africa, has been under-resourced. The ability of FRELIMO to appoint its members to the public service has made the governing party a more attractive option than RENAMO. Nonetheless, RENAMO received massive support (amounting to US\$17-million) from a United Nations Trust Fund ahead of the 1994 general elections. After the election it continued to receive close to US\$1,5-million of public funding per year by virtue of being a parliamentary party with 112 seats.

On the other hand, the continued centralisation and control of RENAMO by its historical leader, Afonso Dhlakama, has been seen as a major problem that has prevented the transformation of the party into a democratic organisation. According to Giovanni M Carbone (2003a), ‘internal rules have little relevance. While party congresses should be organised every two years, for example, none was held between 1994 (when a small general meeting took place in Maringue district) and 2001. In October 2001, a Congress re-elected Dhlakama as party president against two hopeless contestants whose candidacy was intended as a façade of internal democracy. A new statute was also approved, but the re-structuring of the party was again marred by confusion and over-concentration of power.’

RENAMO’s entry into the National Assembly was a new development. Because Dhlakama had not stood in the parliamentary election but only in the presidential election, in which he was defeated, the RENAMO party leader was absent from Parliament. The party chose Raúl Domingos, who had been its chief negotiator during the political negotiation of the early 1990s, as its chief whip. As a result of his increased visibility in Parliament

and his moderation and wisdom during parliamentary debates, Domingos grew substantially in stature outside the party machinery. He was eventually removed from RENAMO, reportedly under questionable circumstances. 'It was widely believed that Domingos was perceived by Dhlakama as a threat in view of the party Congress and of the internal election for the party leadership' (Carbone 2003b).

Describing what Michel Cahen (1995) termed RENAMO's 'legendary disorganisation', Carbone (2003a) reported that

following the controversial expulsion, in late 2000, of the increasingly influential chief of the parliamentary *bancada* (feared by party leader Afonso Dhlakama as a potential challenger), the marginalisation of prominent RENAMO figures developed into a pattern in mid-2002. A well-known MP was controversially suspended and another one resigned from the parliamentary group. The secretary general of the party was dismissed only months after he took office, as were the head of the party's National Council and eventually, on grounds of 'unpatriotic' and 'undemocratic' behaviour, the whole Political Commission. Dhlakama himself took over as interim secretary general, combining the latter position with that of party leader and thus further concentrating power and control over the party in his hand.

This was the situation that prevailed in RENAMO ahead of the 2004 general elections.

Obviously, during the war it was crucial for RENAMO to centralise its decision-making process, which proved to be helpful in getting all RENAMO troops throughout the territory under its control to abide by the peace deal when the party leader instructed them to do so in the early 1990s. However, the continued concentration of power in the hands of the party leader after 1994 was anachronistic. This trend has also affected the functioning of the RENAMO UE. In interviews with the authors, coalition partner parties complained about the organisational and democratic deficits within the coalition.

The RENAMO UE came into being at a time when power was being further concentrated in the hands of the RENAMO party leader, a process that accelerated ahead of the 2004 general elections. In interviews, some leaders of the RENAMO UE indicated clearly that both RENAMO and the coalition were run in an erratic and undemocratic manner and that this has caused a great deal of discontent in both structures. It appears that the

organisational and democratic deficit in RENAMO may explain, at least partly, the coalition's dismaying performance in the 2004 general elections, compared with that in the 1999 elections. It is our hope that future research will provide an in-depth analysis of this coalition in the area of policy formulation.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING PARTY COALITIONS

The transition from a single-party state to a multiparty democracy in Mozambique was accompanied by the necessary constitutional and legal reforms to uphold democratic development in the country. Although the 1990 Mozambican Constitution does not explicitly provide for the formation of party coalitions it leaves the space open for citizens to form or be affiliated to any political party of their choice. All citizens have the freedom to form and to participate in political parties (Art 77.1) and party membership is voluntary, and derives from the freedom of citizens to associate on the basis of the same political ideals (Art 77.2). Article 31.1 recognises that parties are the expression of political pluralism, competing to form and express popular will, and are the fundamental instruments for the democratic participation of citizens in the government of the country. In addition, Article 31.2 stipulates that the internal structure and operation of political parties shall be democratic. Article 32.2 declares that the formation and operation of political parties shall, in particular, be national in scope; uphold national interests; contribute to the formation of public opinion, especially on major national issues; and strengthen the patriotic spirit of citizens and the consolidation of the Mozambican nation. This provision underscores the will of the legislature to avoid ethnic parties, favouring nationally based political parties. Article 32.4 states that the formation, structure and operation of parties shall be regulated by law.

The Mozambican Constitution does not refer to the possibility of merging an existing party with another party. However, Article 1 of the Law on Political Parties, as well as the electoral law, says that citizens may contest the elections as a political party, a coalition of political parties or a group of citizens.

The Electoral Law is one of the most important factors in understanding the formation and practice of party coalitions. Article 203 establishes that a party must win a minimum of 5 per cent of the votes at national level in order to secure seats in the National Assembly. This 5 per cent minimum

threshold has a great impact on the formation of political party coalitions in Mozambique. The electoral system provides for proportional representation through party lists, and votes are converted into parliamentary seats (250 seats in a single chamber) through the d'Hondt method. The distribution of seats in each of the eleven constituencies (ie, provinces plus Maputo City) is in accordance with the number of voters registered in each constituency (see Article 150 of the Electoral Law). The result is that the small political parties are effectively marginalised. The system has been decried not only because it sets a high barrier for entry to Parliament but because all the wasted votes are eventually shared between FRELIMO and RENAMO in proportion to their shares of the vote, thus unduly increasing their parliamentary representation.

It is worth highlighting that the adoption of the current political regime and electoral system was not a product of public debate and broad-based internal political consensus. It formed part of the negotiation between the two political parties at the time of conflict, which culminated in the signing of the GPA. Many analysts have advocated electoral reform, which will include, among other things, the scrapping or lowering of the electoral threshold.

THE FORMATION OF THE RENAMO UNIÃO ELEITORAL

A Partnership of Unequal Status

Mozambique has seen the formation of about half-a-dozen political party coalitions, each of which has collapsed for several reasons, including a lack of strong leadership, weak organisational capacity, personal ambition (everyone wanting to be the leader), and financial difficulties. The RENAMO UE is the only coalition to have secured substantial representation in Parliament and to have survived. This section examines the *raison d'être* of the RENAMO UE, identifies the selection criteria of the coalition's partners and the procedure of selecting candidates for legislative and presidential elections, and assesses to what extent the coalition has achieved its objectives.

Objectives and Driving Forces Behind the Coalition

After losing the 1994 presidential election to FRELIMO by about 20 per cent, and with the small political parties together having received a total of about 13 per cent of the popular vote, RENAMO realised that if it joined forces with these small parties the opposition would stand a better chance of winning the presidential election in 1999. In addition, the success of the

joint boycott of the 1998 local government elections by RENAMO and many of these small parties, which had resulted in an unprecedented low voter turnout of about 15 per cent, confirmed that, arithmetically, RENAMO and these parties could make a difference should they come together in a pre-election alliance.

The small parties wished to be represented in Parliament and were aware that if they continued to contest elections individually or in weak alliances they would not achieve the minimum threshold of 5 per cent and would continue to waste their votes in favour of FRELIMO and RENAMO. Moreover, they were conscious that RENAMO needed them more than FRELIMO did. A pre-election coalition became of paramount importance for both RENAMO and the smaller parties.

The formation of the RENAMO UE coalition seemed, therefore, to offer the most likely opportunity for Dhlakama to win the presidential election and for his coalition partners to secure seats in the National Assembly. Indeed, the coalition enabled Dhlakama and RENAMO to win more votes in 1999 than they had in 1994 when they had contested the elections alone. RENAMO increased its share of the popular national vote from 33,73 per cent in the 1994 presidential election to 47,71 per cent in 1999, and from 112 parliamentary seats in 1994 to 117 in 1999, a gain attributed to the small parties, as the coalition ensured that no party other than RENAMO competed with FRELIMO in the presidential race that year. While Dhlakama has not yet attained his goal of ruling the country, the coalition partners have secured their place in Parliament.

In the view of one respondent the RENAMO leader supported the formation of the coalition in order to avoid competition from the other opposition leaders, and to ensure that not many people stood in the presidential election, hoping, in this way, to win the entire opposition vote. He illustrated his argument by recalling that 'in 2004, Dhlakama tried to prevent Raúl Domingos from running for the presidential election by fear of losing votes, and wrote to the Constitutional Court claiming that it was illegal for Domingos to stand for election in both presidential and parliamentary elections as he did, and therefore requesting the Court to invalidate his candidature.' The Constitutional Court rejected his application.

Another respondent, however, argues that small parties do not help. 'With or without them, Dhlakama and RENAMO would receive more or less the same result, he contends. The respondent illustrates this argument with the results of the 1994 and 1999 elections, reporting that in 1994 RENAMO won 112 parliamentary seats and in 1999 the RENAMO UE

won 117 seats, of which 19 were given away to the coalition partners, with nine of them securing two seats each and one partner being granted one seat. In real terms, RENAMO's representation had decreased from 112 to 98 MPs.

The results of the 2004 general elections tend to support the second position, given that, in these elections, RENAMO together with its RENAMO UE partners received a share of parliamentary seats just below RENAMO's 1994 electoral performance when it had run for election alone. It must, however, be recognised that Dhlakama has been skilful in 'uniting' most of the opposition behind him, which allowed him to increase his share of the national vote in the presidential election in 1999 by 13 per cent, a figure which represents the share of the vote secured by the small parties in the 1994 presidential election. On the other hand, the fact that Dhlakama won only 31,74 per cent of the popular vote in the 2004 presidential election (from 47,71% in 1999) does not necessarily mean that the small parties contributed little. Additional factors must be taken into account before drawing a conclusion. These factors include the overall low voter turnout in 2004 (36,3%) compared to that in 1999 (69,5%), the reported 'legendary disorganisation' in RENAMO, the expulsion of senior cadres from RENAMO, and the subsequent creation by Raúl Domingos of a new party, the Partido para Paz, Democracia e Desenvolvimento (PDD), which draws its support mainly from former RENAMO supporters. Two additional factors were that more presidential candidates were fielded in 2004 than in 1999, which disadvantaged the RENAMO candidate, and the withdrawal of two parties (the UNAMO and the PIMO) from the RENAMO UE.

The respondents admitted that Dhlakama was the driving force behind the formation of the RENAMO UE, while recognising that the majority of RENAMO officials were opposed to the coalition as it now stands.

Selection of Partner Parties and Incentives for Joining the Coalition

The successful boycott by RENAMO and a group of opposition parties of the 1998 local government elections gave impetus to the formation of a coalition around RENAMO. Negotiations took place between 1998 and 1999. At first there were no criteria for selecting coalition partners, everyone being welcome in order to avoid vote splitting. A respondent argued that this procedure was changed in 2004 and, as a result, a political party wishing to join the RENAMO UE coalition was required to demonstrate grassroots support. It was not clear how this support was assessed between elections.

Some coalition partners were willing to join a RENAMO-led coalition

because their leaders had historical links with the party during the civil war. Others had no real choice, given that FRELIMO enjoyed more than an absolute majority of the votes on its own and did not, therefore, need the support of another party to remain in power. In addition, coalitions formed by leaders of small parties have proved to be unsustainable. A coalition with RENAMO was clearly the only viable option, given that the RENAMO leader was a well-known historical political figure in the country and the party already held a large number of seats in the National Assembly, which guaranteed seats for its coalition partners.

All the respondents argue that the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of the country played a limited role in the formation of the RENAMO UE coalition. Nonetheless, one admitted that the Aliança Independente de Moçambique (ALIMO), a political party with Islamic leanings, was brought into the RENAMO UE alliance to balance the representation of religious groups. More importantly, the literature on the political history of Mozambique refers abundantly to the geographical divide between the south, on the one hand, and the centre and centre-north, on the other. The south (Maputo City, Maputo Province, Gaza, Inhambane) and the far northern province of Cabo Delgado, are seen as FRELIMO's bastion, while the centre and centre-north (Sofala, Manica, Zambézia, Tete and Nampula) have traditionally been considered RENAMO strongholds. Niassa is often split more or less 50/50. The results of the three general elections have confirmed this geographical divide, though the 2004 election saw FRELIMO make considerable inroads in the centre and centre-north, and win in Tete and Nampula. In Manica, a province won by RENAMO in 1994 and 1999, FRELIMO and RENAMO UE won seven seats each in the 2004 election.

Reinforcing the geographical divide, RENAMO's partner parties in the coalition are largely led by individuals from the centre and the centre-north. The leader of UMO is the only one of 11 party leaders to come from the south. It is therefore curious that, despite this reality, none of the respondents acknowledged the regional or geographical cleavages as possible factors in the decision of certain parties to join the RENAMO UE and of others not to do so. Table 8 shows the parallels between these geographical boundaries and the voters' support for the parties.

The incentive for the small political parties to join the coalition is fundamentally the possibility that their leaders will be elected to Parliament. The selection of parliamentary candidates starts with their nomination by each partner party. Prior to the 1999 general election each coalition partner

outside RENAMO had the right to have two members placed in winnable positions on the provincial party lists. The first name on the RENAMO UE provincial list came from RENAMO and the second from the coalition party member (normally the president of the party). A selection committee was put in place for this purpose, though the RENAMO leader had the last word. This allocation ensured the election of 19 MPs from the small parties at the expense of RENAMO, causing tensions within the majority party, and between RENAMO cadres and the RENAMO UE coalition.

This method changed in response to strong pressure applied by party members on RENAMO's leadership. Although each partner party continues to nominate two candidates to the RENAMO UE political committee for

Table 8
Parliamentary Seats won by FRELIMO, RENAMO and the União
Eleitoral by constituency, 1994, 1999 and 2004 elections*

Constituencies		FRELIMO			RENAMO (UE)			União Democrática
		1994	1999	2004	1994	1999	2004	(1994 only)
South	Maputo City	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	1	2	2	–
	Maputo Province	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	1	1	1	–
	Gaza	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	0	0	0	1
	Inhambane	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>15</u>	3	4	1	2
Centre	Sofala	3	4	6	<u>18</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	–
	Manica	4	5	7	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	7	–
	Tete	5	8	<u>14</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	4	1
	Zambézia	18	15	19	<u>29</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>29</u>	2
North	Nampula	20	24	<u>27</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>26</u>	23	2
	Niassa	7	6	<u>9</u>	4	7	3	–
	Cabo Delgado	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	6	6	4	1
Africa (only from 2004)			1			0		
Rest of the World (only from 2004)			1			0		
Total		129	133	160	112	117	90	9

* Underlined figures indicate the party/coalition that won the majority of seats in a given provincial constituency

inclusion in the provincial electoral list, from 2004 only one candidate per RENAMO UE-affiliated party is placed in a winnable position. The performance of the party in the pre-election phase is a key criterion in determining the position on the coalition lists of its second member. But it is not clear how this performance is determined. One respondent complained that RENAMO had violated the alliance agreement, accusing the party of arbitrarily allocating the second seat to the affiliated parties.

In the case of the presidential candidate, RENAMO, being the largest party in the coalition, proposes the candidate and the other parties invariably support the nomination.

The fact that the selection of parliamentary candidates has resulted in RENAMO members losing seats to small partner parties has caused serious tension. Most RENAMO members believe that while the RENAMO UE has been important in improving the RENAMO leader's chance of being elected president, the alliance has been counterproductive for the party itself, given that it has decreased the chance of party members being elected to the National Assembly, a fact born out by the reduction in the party's representation from 117 to 98 seats.

The RENAMO UE and Challenges to Women's Representation

Unlike FRELIMO, RENAMO has no quota for women standing for election to Parliament. As a result, it has contributed little to the relatively high number of female MPs in Mozambique's Assembleia da República since 1994. It is believed that the share of RENAMO's female MPs decreased even further in 1999 and 2004 because of the RENAMO UE coalition. Coalition politics brings with it a second level of competition for party members, who must first go through the internal selection of candidates in the party and then surmount another hurdle – the fact that various coalition partners must be accommodated.

Given that neither RENAMO nor the RENAMO UE has a quota for women, and that all the leaders of the 11 partner parties constituting the RENAMO UE are male and are assured of winnable positions on the electoral lists, the opportunities for women to be placed in favourable positions on the lists, or, in fact, to be elected at all, is considerably reduced.

Table 9 shows the number of female MPs from FRELIMO, RENAMO and RENAMO UE in 1994, 1999 and 2004. The candidates were not distinguished by gender. Although the table does not show the ranking of women on the lists, the number of elected women MPs indicates how many were placed in winnable positions. It is clear that the existence of a quota in

FRELIMO has contributed to the overall increase of women MPs in Mozambique. The absence of such a quota in RENAMO and its alliance has limited the ability of the RENAMO UE to advance the cause of women's representation.

Table 9
Number of Women Candidates and Number of elected Women MPs

Year of Elections	Total FRELIMO		Total RENAMO and/or RENAMO UE		UD	
	Candidates	MPs	Candidates	MPs	Candidates	MPs
1994	-	48	-	15	-	1
1999	-	55	-	25	-	0
2004	-	69	-	20	-	0

Source: Compiled by the authors

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PARTY COALITIONS

In order to understand how decisions are made and how the party coalition functions and maintains itself, this study attempts to determine whether there are explicit management procedures in the RENAMO UE. Respondents were asked the following questions: Are there explicit coalition management procedures? How are decisions made? Are the respective coalition partner parties' support bases consulted in the decision-making process? Are there conflict management mechanisms? What are the challenges of keeping the RENAMO UE together?

Coalition Management Procedures

According to one respondent, the RENAMO UE does not have explicit management procedures and even when articles in the coalition's constitution provide for regular meetings of the executive committee, which is made up of all the leaders of the affiliated parties, 'Dhlakama decides and we simply obey'. The coalition agreement provides that meetings should take place monthly. In reality, meetings are held only when there are problems to solve or decisions to make. According to one respondent, at times the leaders of the small parties have to put pressure on their RENAMO colleagues to have meetings convened.

It was, however, observed that the RENAMO UE partners meet on a daily basis in Parliament and this provides an opportunity to interact regularly. Following RENAMO's debacle in the December 2004 elections, a sizeable number of representatives of small parties were not returned to Parliament, making it crucial that meetings of the coalition be held regularly and periodically outside Parliament.

Table 10
Performance of Leaders of RENAMO's Allied Parties in the 1999 and 2004 Parliamentary Elections

Party	Name of Leader	Elected in 1999	Elected in 2004
PPPM	Padimbe Mohosse Kamati	Yes	No
PRD	Maneca Daniel	Yes	Yes
FAP	Raul José Xavier da Conceição	Yes	No
ALIMO	Khalid Hussein Mahomed	Yes	Yes
PUN	Hipólito de Jesus F. Xavier do Couto	Yes	Yes
PCN	Abel Gabriel Mabunda	Yes	Yes
MONAMO	Máximo Diogo José Dias /PSD	Yes	Yes
UDF	Janeiro Mariano	Yes	Yes
FUMO	Pedro Loforte	No	No
UNAMO	Carlos Alexandre dos Reis	Yes	<i>Out of coalition</i>
PEMO	<i>Newcomer to the Coalition</i>	N/A	N/A

Source: Compiled by the authors

The Council of Leaders, which comprises all party leaders, is supposed to meet quarterly. Several respondents have observed that these meetings do not often take place at the times provided for in the coalition's by-laws. It was also noted that the Council of Leaders meets when the RENAMO leader wants it to. 'The RENAMO leader decides alone. Both the organs of RENAMO and those of the RENAMO UE hardly function. These organs serve to rubberstamp the unilateral decisions made by the RENAMO leader.'

Similarly, respondents agreed that partner parties had no mechanisms for consulting their own support bases. Parties are highly centralised and

decisions are taken by the leaders, who seldom see the need for consultation and, when they do, it is merely to inform their supporters about decisions made by the coalition. It was reported, for example, that an affiliate party, the Partido da Convenção Nacional (PCN), had quietly dissolved itself into RENAMO without officially informing its base.

Challenges of Sustaining Party Coalitions

The maintenance of the RENAMO UE is challenging for several reasons, including the lack of internal democracy within the coalition, the inadequate organisational capacity, the resistance of RENAMO members to the coalition itself, infighting over resources and discontent about the selection of parliamentary candidates and appointments to positions such as the National Electoral Commission.

The mechanism used for the redistribution of funds allocated by government to the parliamentary parties in support of the electoral process was at the heart of the disagreement. RENAMO was accused by its coalition partners of benefiting more from the public funds than the other members of the coalition. The Electoral Law provides that each party (and implicitly each coalition) receives an amount proportional to its representation in Parliament, as a single party as opposed to a coalition. The Ministry of Finances gives Parliament a total of 115-billion Meticaís annually (equivalent to US\$ 4 618 474) to be distributed to the parties represented in Parliament proportional to the number of seats they occupy. Accordingly, with its 160 MPs, FRELIMO receives US\$ 2 981 423 and RENAMO, with its 90 MPs, gets US\$ 1 677 050. The funds are distributed within the party or coalition at the discretion of the leader.

Partner parties have also accused RENAMO and its leader of dominating the coalition and of not wanting open debate within it on issues of common interest, resulting in their exclusion from opportunities and from the decision-making process. They complain that the main weaknesses of the RENAMO UE are its lack of vision about how to access power and a lack of organisational capacity, which affect the coalition as a whole.

On the other hand, RENAMO's partners in the RENAMO UE coalition are blamed for being under resourced and unable to determine their membership size, thus making it difficult to gauge their real weight and contribution to the coalition. Most coalition partner parties are just too small, with an insignificant membership, and cannot, therefore, make a difference. As a result, they are carried as 'passengers' at the expense of RENAMO members. The small parties, seen as bringing too little and

benefiting too much from the coalition, are hardly accepted by most RENAMO cadres. This causes tension between the RENAMO UE and RENAMO on the one hand, and between RENAMO members and their party leader, on the other.

Inadequate internal democracy has also resulted in discontent and frustration among the small parties. Reportedly, UNAMO and its leader, Carlos Reis, left the RENAMO UE in 2004 as a protest against the lack of democracy within the coalition.

There has also been limited consultation of the support base of the affiliated parties, which, according to one respondent, went into the coalition without consulting their supporters.

The fact that the coalition does not have explicit mechanisms for conflict management and that formal meetings are held irregularly means that it can take a long time for misunderstandings and differences to be addressed. Problems are dealt with on an ad hoc basis, which causes mistrust, frustrations and tension.

The flawed consultative mechanisms in the RENAMO UE, compounded by the inadequacies mentioned above, have affected the unity of the coalition. For example, in January 2005, after the results of the general election were released, conflict erupted, attracting media attention. RENAMO, alleging fraud and other irregularities, decided not to let its MPs be sworn into the new Parliament. This stand was not shared by most of the small parties in the RENAMO UE, especially those whose members had secured seats. Although the conflict was resolved and all MPs took their seats in the National Assembly on 31 January 2005, this case demonstrates the depth of the contradictions in the coalition. Indeed, at the time of the conflict, some of the small parties threatened to pull out of the coalition in protest against what they considered dictatorship, malfunctioning and incoherence.

It has been alleged that RENAMO tends to forget the small parties when selecting the coalition's nominees for appointment to parliamentary standing committees or to the National Electoral Commission, a situation which has been decried by the RENAMO UE partners and has caused friction and discontent.

Despite all these problems, the RENAMO UE undeniably has several strengths. These include electoral unity, which results in a more cohesive vote. The fact that the leaders of the small parties receive a relatively good salary as Members of Parliament ensures their financial security and continued commitment to the coalition. Very few opposition coalitions enjoy

such strengths and these characteristics are among the most distinctive features of the RENAMO UE, hence its longevity in contrast to other opposition coalitions in Africa.

Consequences of the Coalition for Affiliated Parties

While the RENAMO UE coalition has helped improve the representation of the opposition in Parliament and local government structures, the dominant opinion is that it has not done much in terms of policy formulation. This often creates the impression that it has achieved nothing. Those RENAMO cadres who believe that their party's partners have benefited disproportionately from the coalition and that all that RENAMO has achieved is the prestige of being seen to be open to others and accepted by them, argue that the low voter turnout in the 2004 general election can be explained by the fact that RENAMO supporters wondered 'do we have to vote for these people?'

The scope of this study does not cover the investigation of this hypothesis. It is hoped that future studies will analyse thoroughly the causes of the unexpectedly low voter turnout in 2004. The conclusion of such studies would enable us to determine whether or not there were consequences of the RENAMO UE coalition for the affiliated parties individually or collectively.

THE LONGEVITY OF THE COALITION

It has been observed that ruling coalitions tend to last longer than opposition coalitions. The RENAMO-led coalition is the only opposition coalition in Mozambique which has been able to secure a sizeable number of seats in Parliament and to last beyond two general elections. This section answers the question 'What factors explain the RENAMO UE coalition's survival after seven years of opposition politics?'

The respondents identified several reasons for the longevity of the RENAMO UE. First, the parliamentary representation of the opposition has been enhanced by leaders of the small parties finding a place in Parliament and by the fact that the RENAMO leadership saw the need to reach an agreement with leaders of the small parties in order to avoid dispersing votes and to enhance the prospect of Dhlakama winning the presidential election.

Second, the RENAMO UE coalition gives the leaders of the coalition partner parties financial security and provides some funds for their parties.

Although the affiliated parties have complained that their share is too small, these funds would not have been accessible to them had they not entered into a coalition with RENAMO.

The third reason is that the coalition allows RENAMO to be perceived as an open party which accepts and is accepted by others. The RENAMO leader has been prepared to compromise by accepting the sacrifice of sharing parliamentary seats, often at the expense of the party's own members.

Finally, the RENAMO UE coalition has survived because Dhlakama's leadership has never been disputed. Despite the combined 13 per cent of the total valid votes in 1994 which would have allowed the smaller parties to join up and secure a considerable number of seats, their leaders were unable to agree on which of them should lead a coalition. The survival of any coalition depends on the acceptability of its leader.

CONCLUSION

At the time of writing the RENAMO UE coalition has lasted in opposition for seven years, despite having lost two consecutive parliamentary and presidential elections as an alliance, a factor which normally causes opposition coalitions to collapse. Like opposition political parties, opposition coalitions are usually under-resourced and unable to provide for the survival needs of their members. Because opposition politics tends to be an uphill race, it often leads to the rapid disintegration of opposition coalitions. Are there lessons for opposition parties in Africa in the RENAMO UE's experience with coalition politics? More importantly, how can alliances of opposition political parties organise themselves in order positively and effectively influence policy-making?

Several lessons can be learnt from the experience of the RENAMO UE. First there is a need for clear and rational criteria for selecting partner parties. The RENAMO-led coalition initially unconditionally accepted partners as long as the partners were willing to join the coalition. As a result, some of the affiliated parties who joined this 'coalition of the willing' were too small, had an insignificant membership and therefore could not contribute meaningfully to a possible electoral victory. It is the presence of these parties in the coalition which explains the resentment of RENAMO cadres toward the whole coalition.

It is vital to understand that electoral coalitions should be able to assess the relative importance of each of their affiliates. The real strength of each party in the coalition must be measurable in order for it to reap rewards

proportional to its actual contribution. For example, the number of candidates per party in eligible positions on the coalition electoral list should be commensurate with the party's contribution to the coalition's victory in the election.

There are several ways of measuring this contribution. Among these are the support enjoyed by the parties and candidates, which can be assessed on the basis of credible opinion polls and the size of the crowds at rallies; and the parties' financial contribution to and degree of involvement in organising the electoral campaign and mobilising voters. Posts should be allotted to the partner parties on the same basis. Failure to match what an affiliated party gives to what it receives creates the impression that some partner parties are favoured at the expense of others, and this may engender tensions and disharmony within the coalition, making it dysfunctional, which, in turn, can result in the alliance being ineffective and lead to its disintegration.

The longevity and effectiveness of a party coalition depend on the ability of partners to discuss issues of common interest and iron out differences through dialogue which reinforces a sense of mutual respect. Such an approach helps to entrench democracy within the coalition, ensures ownership by all partners of the decisions and policies and motivates the coalition parties to contribute enthusiastically to the vision and objectives of the alliance.

