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HUNGARIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN AFRICA AND A HUNGARIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE UN MISSION IN MOZAMBIQUE

BESENYŐ, János (Major)*

(Megjelent: *Romanian Military Thinking*, 2011, 2., 174–182. pp.)

The significance of the NATO/EU and UN missions in the life of Hungarian Defence Forces is well known. Most of the people know that 1000 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers can serve abroad at the same time. There is a training centre in Szolnok, where applicants can prepare for international service, yet, there still can be noticed some deficiencies as far as training is concerned. Although there is a huge number of experienced people from various missions, there are not enough manuals or pieces of information based on the experience about Africa.

In this article, the author shares some information about the UN mission in Mozambique where 23 Hungarian Army officers and 20 police officers served under the UN flag as peacekeepers. The UN Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) was one of the most successful second generation peacekeeping efforts in the '90s.

Keywords: Hungarian peacekeepers; ONUMOZ; Africa; Mozambique

The *UN Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)*¹ was one of the most successful second-generation peacekeeping efforts in the '90s. Moreover, the ONUMOZ is particularly important to the Hungarian

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¹ *United Nations Operations in Mozambique* or, in Portuguese, *Operação das Nações Unidas em Moçambique, ONUMOZ*.

national armed forces since it was here that the greatest number of UN officers, 23 in total, serving under the UN flag, were stationed as military observers². The Republic of Hungary's Police Force also made considerable effort towards resolutions in Mozambique, with 20 Hungarian police officers serving in the bounds of ONUMOZ³.

Until 1975, Mozambique was an African holiday paradise, with at least half a million visitors annually from all over the world. Among the major tourist attractions available, there were national parks, sandy beaches, as well as the possibility of snorkelling, sport fishing and hunting. Then, the revolution broke out.

Mozambique⁴

Geography

The country lies on an area of 801 590 square kilometres, south of the equator on the eastern side of the African continent. From northeast to southwest, the country spans 2000 km in length, while in the east-west direction it is 50–600 km wide. The coastline is 2700 km in length.

Natural Environment

The southern portion of the country is characterised by lowlands, while the central region is characterised by the protrusions of the Zimbabwe Mountains. Finally, in the north, there are the highlands of 600–1000 m in height from which individual mountains emerge.

Climate

The country is characterised by a variable moist tropical climate, with a wet season lasting from November to March. The amount of precipitation is high at the coast with a decrease towards the western border, though still high in the mountains.

² <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/196/62/PDF/N9419662-.pdf?OpenElement>, accessed on 29.07.2009.

³ Dr. Boda József: *A rendvédelmi békefenntartás kialakulása, fejlődése, helye és szerepe a XXI. században*, doktori (PhD) értekezés, ZMNE, Budapest, 2006, p. 25.

⁴ <http://bora.cmi.no/dspace/bitstream/10202/240/1/WP2000-10.pdf>, retrieved on 29.07.2009, and <http://www.umsl.edu/services/govdocs/wofact92/wf-930171.txt>, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

Plant and Animal Life

The northern areas are characterised by tropical rainforests, while the central and southern areas are characterised by savannah plant life. As a result of excessive hunting and for tourist purposes, wildlife reservations have been established, however, these were destroyed in great number during the civil war, with many animal species (giraffes, elephants, rhinoceros) being declared “*endangered*”. Moreover, there is a great number of antelopes, zebras, buffalos, baboons, lions and crocodiles.

Political System

Originally given the name “*People’s Republic of Mozambique*”, in 1987, the country was later renamed, in the name of democracy and with the introduction of multiple political parties, the “*Republic of Mozambique*”. Until the 1992 ceasefire, the only legal political party was the Marxist-oriented “*Liberation Front of Mozambique*” (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, FRELIMO*) and the *Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana, RENAMO)* was the most significant armed opposition party. The country was divided into 10 and, from 1990, into 11 provinces. According to the new constitution of 1990, the President, who is directly elected by popular vote, is also the armed forces Commander-in-Chief and the one responsible for appointing and changing the Prime Minister. The legislative body is the unicameral Assembly of the Republic and judicature is governed by the supreme court.

Population

In 1992, the population was 15 469 150, with an annual growth rate of 4,1%. The population consists of 47% macua, 23% tsonga, 11% sena, as well as numerous other ethnic groups. Less than 1% of the population is white. 16% of the population lives in cities. The proportion of the population under 15 years of age is exceptionally high at 45%. The official language is Portuguese. 60% of the population represents followers of natural religion, 30% are Christian and 10% Muslim. The social welfare and health care systems are exceptionally poor and the rate of illiteracy is 60%.

Economy

Mozambique is essentially an agrarian country, with a GDP of 120 USD per capita, of which 50% comes from agriculture, 20% from industry, 20% from commerce and services and 10% from other activities. 4% of the land area is used for agriculture, while 57,5% is used for grazing. In terms of mining, coal mining is noteworthy. The Cabora Bassa hydroelectric power plant (2000 MW), operating on the Zambezi River, essentially generates energy for South African consumption. The country has 3288 km of railway lines, 26 498 km of roadways and two airports. Following the 1994 elections, the country has undergone considerable economic changes.

History

Around 1000, Mozambique's original inhabitants, the *Khoikhoi*, were forced out by the *Bantu* tribes arriving from the north. At the same time, Arab merchants also appeared establishing settlements along the coastal strip⁵. In the southern region, the Monotapa Empire was established in the 12th century and flourished in the 15–16th centuries. Mozambique was discovered by Vasco da Gama in 1498, and then, in 1505, the Portuguese established a base⁶ and brought the empire under their control until 1626. In 1752, Mozambique was fully colonised by Portugal. In 1951, it was given the status of overseas province and gained independence on 25 June 1975. The political party, *FRELIMO*, was founded in 1962 in order to fight for the liberation of Mozambique from Portuguese colonisation⁷. In April 1974, the dictatorship fell in Mozambique and, in September, a transitional government was formed with Joaquim Albert Chissano as Prime Minister. On 25 June 1975, Mozambique regained its independence under a *FRELIMO* government headed by Samora Machel, who became President of Mozambique⁸. With the help of the neighbouring country, Rhodesia's (now Zimbabwe) security services, *RENAMO* was founded. In 1976, within the confines of economic sanctions, the Mozambique government closed its shared borders with white-controlled Rhodesia. The white Rhodesian leadership regime

⁵ Mary Fitzpatrick, *Mozambique, Lonely Planet*, 2007, p. 21.

⁶ M. D. D. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 15–19.

⁷ Mary Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

collapsed in 1981 and the new state was named Zimbabwe. RENAMO accepted South Africa's support and, in 1983, leaders of Mozambique and South Africa began negotiations⁹. In March 1984, the two governments signed the peace pact – *Nkomati Accord*. In August, new RENAMO guerrilla attacks were carried out against government control and the government warned South Africa to discontinue rebel support.

In June 1986, Mario da Graca Machunga became Prime Minister. In October, President Samora Machel was killed in a plane crash and, in November, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chissano, became President¹⁰. In December, through National Assembly elections, all FRELIMO and government leaders were reelected. In September 1988, Chissano and the South African President, P. W. Botha, established a joint commission on cooperation and development. In 1989, South Africa supported the USA peace initiative; however, both RENAMO and FRELIMO rejected it. In April, RENAMO called for a general ceasefire, which was not implemented. In June, the government announced a 12-point peace initiative. At the RENAMO congress, held in July, the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of FRELIMO was cancelled and the party opened up the membership different groups. In January 1990, presidential elections were held and, in July, the first direct negotiations between FRELIMO and RENAMO took place in Rome. In the official statements released following negotiations, both participants expressed their hope for a peaceful conflict resolution. In August, the government changed the country's name from People's Republic to Republic, which meant that multi-party democratic elections would take place the following year (actually held in October 1994). In November, the National Assembly accepted the new constitution and a new FRELIMO-RENAMO negotiation took place in ROME. In June and August of 1992, several declarations were signed by both parties. On 4 October, President Chissano and RENAMO's President Afonso Dhlakama signed the *General Peace Agreement (GPA)*, which included the issues of free elections as well as the establishment of new military forces. The peace agreement officially went into effect on 15 October¹¹.

⁹ M. D. D. Newitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 562–565.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 569.

¹¹ <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N92/490/12/IMG/N9249012.-pdf?OpenElement>, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

The UN Operation ONUMOZ

The Marxist government that rose to power in 1975 inherited a country rife with political instability and struggling with economic chaos. Out of fear of the left-wing governed Mozambique, Rhodesia, followed by South Africa, supported the RENAMO uprising. RENAMO's strategy to destabilise the government involved impairing the country's entire area and seizing transportation and communication systems. In response, the government initiated its fight against rebellion, thus bringing about the civil war. According to the peace agreement signed in Rome on 4 October 1992, a ceasefire was implemented and the parties agreed to disarm armed forces. Several commissions supported the agreement, achievement of elections, establishment of political parties and refugee issues. Pursuant to the agreement, the UN participated in monitoring the ceasefire, disarmament, election preparations and transactions as well as supervising the withdrawal of foreign troops¹².

As the civil war intensified, with the approval of the Mozambique government, Malawi and Zimbabwe troops occupied the main transportation roads and secured free passage between Indian Ocean ports and those of Africa's southern regions. On 13 October 1992, in Resolution 783, the Security Advisory Council appointed Aldo Ajello, of Italian origin, as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative (SRSG) and with 25 military observers proceeded to Mozambique to assist in setting up the peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Security Council's Resolution 782. The team arrived in the capital city, Maputo, on 15 December.

The *Mandate of ONUMOZ* expresses the political and military aims of the mission. On 12 December 1992, Resolution 797 of the Security Council gave mandate to ONUMOZ to install its force of 7 500 soldiers, police officers, and civil servants. The tasks of the mission defined in chapter III, paragraph 18 of the Resolution, are listed as follows:

- ceasefire and partition of power, disarmament, supervision and monitoring of the collection and destruction of weapons;
- supervision and monitoring of the full withdrawal of foreign troops;

¹² *Ibidem.*

- supervision and monitoring of the dissolution of non-organised armed forces and securing of necessary infrastructure;
- close cooperation of the UN civil police and local police and provision of support as needed;
- facilitation of the building of confidence;
- further tasks towards refugees, demobilisation of soldiers and armed forces, as well as handling of issues pertaining to groups suffering humanitarian needs and long-term settlement of problems¹³.

The mission was declared on the basis of the paragraph VI of the UN constitution. On 5 November 1993, Security Council Resolution 882 extended the mission's mandate for an additional six-month period and commanded to Mozambique 128 police observers, whose number was then increased to 1 144 on the basis of Security Council Resolution 898.

On 5 May 1994, Security Council Resolution 916 ordained the establishment of the new *Mozambican Defence Force (FADM)* and the mandate was extended by an additional 6-month period until 15 November.

The first ONUMOZ peacekeeping force (Italian), along the Beira Corridor (between Zimbabwe and the Indian Ocean port city Beira), started its service in April 1993, after a six-month delay. In May, the number of peacekeepers reached the amount delineated in the Security Council Resolution.

Mission Conformation

Aldo Ajello was the leader of the mission and three organisations were its subordinates: *Military Forces*; *Elections Department*; and *United Nations Office for the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHOC)*.

The commander of the military forces was Major General Lelio Goncalves da Silva (Brasil) and his deputy was Brigadier General A. T. Scheffers. Military forces were stationed in three sectors (north, south, and central). The elections department was also stationed in three sectors and 10 provinces.

UNOHOC, under the leadership of Bernt Barnauder, attended to the coordination of humanitarian efforts of non-governmental

¹³ http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/onumozM.htm, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

organisations (NGO) and volunteer organisations (PVO, also called NGO) in three sectors and 10 provinces.

Other UN organisations acting in the country included: UN Development Program (UNDP), UN refugee agency (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO) and UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

In accordance with the peace pact, ONUMOZ also maintained contact with variously defined committees (UN-RENAMO-FRELIMO): supervisory and observational, ceasefire monitoring, integration committees or for establishing new military, police, information, election and public administration.

*Participating Forces*¹⁴

- *Military forces*: 354 military observers, 6625 armed peacekeepers (rifle battalions, 1 engineer battalion, logistics company, combat support company, motion detecting company, health and aircraft units). Soldiers and police from 35 countries took part in ONUMOZ.
- *Civil body*: 355 international, 506 local staff.
- *Police force*: 1144 civil police¹⁵.
- *Elections department*: 2100 persons, among whom 278 diplomats and 200 persons from the European Union¹⁶.

Evaluation of the Mission

The activities of ONUMOZ contributed, to a great extent, to the success of the General Peace Agreement in 1992. In the interest of adhering to the agreement, peacekeepers performed patrolling, security, monitoring, demobilisation and election supervisory tasks in the mission area.

¹⁴ Richard Synge, *Mozambique: UN Peacekeeping in Action, 1992–94*, US Institute of Peace Press, 1997, p. 192.

¹⁵ <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/044/41/PDF/N9404441.pdf?OpenElement>, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

¹⁶ <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/411/21/PDF/N9441121.pdf?OpenElement>, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

Results

By 1994, the political situation stabilised, national reconciliation and the normalisation of everyday life began. In order to prepare for the first multi-party elections, 81% of the voting public (7,9 million) was registered. The elections took place on 27–28 October 1994, with the participation of 18 parties. The fair and democratic elections were won by FRELIMO. At the presidential elections, Chissano and Dhlakama obtained 53,3% and 33,7% of the votes, respectively. The results of the representatives' elections saw the 250 parliamentary seats divided between three parties (FRELIMO – 129, RENAMO – 109, Unicio Democratica – 12). An extraordinarily high percentage of voters (87,9%)¹⁷ participated in the elections. The ONUMOZ information programme provided the locals with an understanding of the aims and activities of the UN. Both parties respected the ceasefire. ONUMOZ disarmed 75 000 government and RENAMO soldiers and collected 111 532 weapons from the two parties, as well as additional 43 491 weapons from various paramilitary organisations. The new army of 30 000 was successfully set up and trained (in a 50–50 ratio of the former enemy's soldiers), ONUMOZ effectively secured and supervised the main traffic routes. The opposing parties secured free passage for UN staff. Finally, the resettlement of 1,4 million refugees and 3 million deportees was achieved.

Unfulfilled Objectives

Following the elections, armed gangs remained throughout the country. Trade, in and outflow of weapons, ammunition and explosives were also not successfully stopped.

Due to occasional problems in coordination between opposing parties and ONUMOZ, armoury of some of the military and police bases were not registered.

Of the UN staff, 23 soldiers, 2 police officers and 1 civil servant lost their lives¹⁸.

¹⁷ http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/onumozFT.htm, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

¹⁸ http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/onumozF.html, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

In December 1994, UN soldiers, police, and civil participants left the country. At the end of January the following year, the mission was permanently closed down.

The UN considers ONUMOZ one of its most successful missions, playing an important role in achieving democracy and stabilisation in Mozambique¹⁹. ONUMOZ successfully achieved the mandate by disarming and integrating soldiers into society and by establishing and training the new military and police forces. ONUMOZ prepared and provided support for free elections, coordinated humanitarian support, resettled refugees and deportees²⁰. Various national organisations continue their rebuilding, restoration and demining activities.

Mozambique Following the First Free Elections

The government is extraordinarily popular in the more densely populated areas in the southern region of the country and in the capital city. Unlike other African examples, the 1992 Peace Agreement brought about peace to Mozambique. Following the 1994 elections, RENAMO assumed the role of parliamentary opposition and did not return to the use of weapons (as UNITA did in Angola on several occasions). President Chissano contributed significantly to the consolidation of the political system, taking several measures to appease RENAMO. He irrevocably abandoned the persecution of traditional tribal religions and folk healers, as well as forced the issue of collectivism. Although foreigners cannot actually own land, there is nonetheless a significant number of “*perpetual*” land rental contracts with South African farmers. Of the countries population, 70% is unemployed, and 50% of the adult population is still illiterate. Infant mortality is extraordinarily high (13,4%) and at least half a million landmines have not yet been gathered up.

Not too long ago, Mozambique was the world’s second poorest country. By 2000, however, according to the World Bank, it has become one of Africa’s economic “*examples*”. The economy has also achieved significant results in the area of inflation reduction with a

¹⁹ Richard Syngé, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²⁰ <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N94/515/76/PDF/N9451576.-pdf?OpenElement>, retrieved on 29.07.2009.

decrease from 70% in 1994 to 2,5% in 1998. In 1997, GDP growth was 12,4%, while the following two years it was 10%, thus Mozambique becoming one of the fastest developing economies²¹. The establishment of a market economy, as well as the attainment of political stability since 1995 has inspired investor confidence. Within the scope of significant investment, the aluminium processing industry has developed. Furthermore, numerous investors have come forward for the purpose of tapping natural resources such as titanium, coal and natural gas.

Privatisation of state companies has also been achieved. A significant boom in tourism has been observed in areas where holiday resorts and wild animal reservations have been built up. One of the influences in the economic growth is that the ports of the Indian Ocean are indispensable to the industrial centre of the South African Republic, Gateng. The World Bank has provided further alleviation by dismissing a significant part of the country's debt²².

Unfortunately, flooding of Rivers Save (Sabi) and Limpopo at the beginning of 2000 brought great destruction to the country. The evaluation of the damages caused is currently in progress. It can be safely said that the fulfilment of the African "*economic wonder*" has unfortunately been delayed.

The UN mission in Mozambique proves that the world organisation is prepared and capable of bringing about stable and reassuring crisis resolution. However, it is also apparent that peace, security and development cannot be achieved through the influence of external force without the cooperation and will of opposing parties and the citizens.

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***, *Charter of the United Nations*, United Nations, New York, 1993.

²¹ <http://www.iss.co.za/Af/profiles/Mozambique/Economy.html> retrieved on 29.07.2009.

²² <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMOZAMBIQUE/Resources/WB-20anos.pdf> retrieved on 29.07.2009.