

# Interview With President Machel

On October 3, Mozambique's President, Samora Moises Machel, addressed the United Nations General Assembly. In an exclusive interview in New York, Africa News representative Ruth Minter spoke with President Machel about recent developments in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

## Zimbabwe Nationalists Move Toward Unified Army

**AN:** Please clarify how much progress has been made towards unifying the armed forces of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU). Do the forces with rear bases in Zambia and those with rear bases in Mozambique collaborate?

**Machel:** It is the desire of all of us that there be only one army in Zimbabwe. We admit that there are various parties, in the same way as there are various parties in the United States. But there is only one army in the United States.

That is why we insist that the army [in Zimbabwe] be unified. The army is the symbol of national unity, and therefore cannot be fragmented. Such fragmentation would mean retreating to a state of primitivism—of tribal armies, of feudal armies. We have already gone beyond this.

The job of the army today is to guarantee tranquility, and permit the development of the country. [The army should] also participate in national reconstruction. If it is divided, it cannot carry out its essential tasks of security, tranquility, peace, mainte-



Samora Machel

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nance of order, and maintaining people's confidence.

In this respect the steps already taken have been positive. There is already a secure platform around which the two armies can unite.

Unification of the army could only become possible once the top leadership itself understood and promoted the necessity of this unity. The leadership at the top has already understood and carried out [acted on] this understanding.

In the second place, the officials of the two armies must assume and understand the importance of unity.

There has been progress in this matter. Further steps are under way and the current process is more promising than in the past. Conditions

are favorable now, logistics are coordinated now.

The ZAPU army is in Zambia. There is no [permanent] ZANU army in Mozambique since fighters of ZANU and ZAPU both train in Tanzania. When they come to Mozambique they are on the way to Zimbabwe; Mozambique is a transit point. We support them. We provide the rear bases, the logistic support. However, there are no forces *stationed* in Mozambique. There are refugee camps [for] about 40,000 refugees in Mozambique. But yes, you can be sure that the army of Zimbabwe will unite.

## Mozambican People Take Up Election Challenge

**AN:** Elections for People's Assemblies are in process right now in Mozambique. What is the importance of these elections and how are the local people responding to the opportunity?

**Machel:** You should come, film, see what a real election is in democracy. Come and see how the people elect their deputies.

This is the coming to fruition of the fundamental objectives for which our people agreed to make so many sacrifices—the creation of a popular democratic state.

On September 25, all Mozambican citizens began the process of effective exercise of people's democracy, electing people's assemblies at the local level and at the national level. We are building a new type of State on the ruins of the colonial State. Power belongs to, and is exercised by the broad masses through the people's assemblies.

For me it has been a tremendous education. We could not anticipate what the people would do.

The people know their own: the party proposes a candidate; they may reject [him/her]. They say, "No. We know him. He was a collaborator with colonialism" or "That one? No. He has no respect for women. He chases married women." They say this in public. It is a remarkable phenomenon.

These elections are a great education for the population—a huge school. The people are beginning to engage themselves in the political life, in the national life.

Come. Come first to the rural areas to see how it is, then to the cities. Come before December 4 when the elections end.

### **New Economic Structures Take Hold**

**AN:** Mozambican workers have been organized through production councils to participate in transforming and planning the economy. How well are these councils working?

**Machel:** The production councils are developing and consolidating very well. The workers are gaining experiences they never had before—in agricultural production, factory production, animal husbandry. All these areas of production show development.

And there is enthusiasm. I mean there is active participation of the population—of those who never knew

anything and are today capable of speaking about the economy.

**AN:** In the new Mozambique, communal villages, cooperatives, and state farms all play a role in meeting food production goals. Have there been notable successes with these structures?

**Machel:** Particularly in Gaza Province, the agricultural cooperatives and the communal villages have advanced greatly, [despite the ravages of] the floods. Collective and co-operative production have also increased substantially in Manica.

The state farms have also grown. For example, it was calculated that the production of tomatoes would perhaps be 6,000 tons, but they are going to harvest 40,000 tons of tomatoes just in Gaza province. A canning factory that never operated for more than two months a year in Gaza province during the colonial period will operate for about six months this year because the produce is there!

Production of rice in Gaza Province is approaching 50,000 tons, a quantity never reached throughout the colonial period. This increase is a result of [improved] organization—through state farms, agricultural cooperatives, communal villages and other forms of organized production.

I visited Nampula Province for fifteen days and found immense enthusiasm for building communal villages among the peasants. They see this as the backbone around which to build our economy.

This province used to produce cotton, essentially with forced labor. Then the plantations were abandoned [by the Portuguese owners]. [Now] the participation of the population in planning and programming production and defining which grain should be planted has galvanized the local peoples.

Our slogan is this: Liquidate hunger and eliminate the scarcity of clothing. This is fundamental to make other steps possible. First, hunger and clothing.

We are certain that we will succeed in this battle. It is a tough battle but a decisive one. The people have an understanding of the problems and are engaged in the necessary tasks.

**AN:** Mozambique is trying to construct a socialist economy to replace the colonial structures based on a capitalist model. It has also suffered economic dislocation as a result of its solidarity with the struggle for independence in neighboring Zimbabwe. Have you found international support for the nation's economic development plans?

**Machel:** We have found support in the world, especially in the socialist countries. As you know they were always our natural allies. We have found very active support in the Scandinavian countries for the programs outlined in our Third Congress [February 1977]. In addition there have already been contacts with some Western countries who are interested in certain sectors vital to our development. □