



Base 802738 (B01340) 2-01

## SECURITY BRIEF

---

### **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: BOZIZÉ REPLACES PATASSÉ**

On the afternoon of Saturday 15 March 2002, about 1,000 rebel troops loyal to erstwhile chief of staff General François Bozizé entered Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, virtually unopposed and seized control of the airport and presidential palace before securing the entire city. President Patassé, returning from a regional summit in Niger, learned of his predicament when his aircraft was fired upon as it approached Bangui. The pilot diverted to Cameroon, where Patassé was given refuge.

On local radio on Sunday night General Bozizé was introduced to listeners as the new head of state. He announced that he was suspending the constitution and dissolving parliament. A ten-day overnight curfew was introduced and all security forces ordered to return to barracks. Bozizé claimed that his forces had taken power “because of the mismanagement of the country and its inability to carry out its domestic responsibilities”. The new government, he said, was one “of peace and national reconciliation”. He assured his audience that he would attempt a quick reconstruction of the country, to which end he would approach the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for post-conflict assistance. He also noted a need to reconcile elements within the armed forces and to overhaul government bureaucracy.

International condemnation of Bozizé’s

seizure of power was swift in coming, though it lacked passion and, with few exceptions, seemed to be more part of the ritual deemed mandatory in such circumstances. There were many reasons why the leaders of the Central African region had little cause to appreciate the deposed leader, his domestic policies or his taste in friends and allies. This was especially so once President Patassé chose to become dependent for his security upon a narrowly-based presidential guard and, increasingly, on the forces of his ally Libya and the Congolese rebel movement of Jean-Pierre Bemba. This alienated most of the other leaders of the region as well as virtually the entire domestic military establishment.

Indeed, Chad, which many saw as supporting the rebellion, was quick to respond to Bozizé’s request for soldiers to assist in curbing the widespread looting in the capital and, remarkably, in disarming all his own rebels but his personal protection unit. The African Union’s public disapproval of the ‘coup’ notwithstanding, delegates shortly began to arrive from a number of other governments in the region, eager to engage with the country’s new ruler.

The former colonial power, France, had long become disillusioned with Patassé, and though it dispatched a force of 300 troops to Bangui, their mandate was only to protect those foreign nationals wishing to leave, and to restore the peace rather than the fortunes of a discredited leader.

Bozizé's initial moves have demonstrated a steady hand. He has appointed as prime minister the respected veteran politician Dr Abel Goumba, and has included in the cabinet and the institutions established to guide the transition to democracy prominent figures of all political persuasions, including moderate supporters of the man he replaced.

All this bodes well for the present, and the question now among interested observers is how long this can last. Will General Bozizé maintain his role as arbiter over the construction of a new democratic polity, or will he be tempted as so many soldiers before him, to assume a more permanent position at the head of national affairs? He will be constrained by his need to marshal international financial assistance, because not the least of his predecessor's problems was the government's inability to pay the salaries of its employees, civil and military.

At the moment he has the goodwill of the Central African region, happy at the discomfiture of Libya and of Jean-Pierre Bemba. Whether he can retain his evident popularity in Bangui may depend on how quickly he can fulfil some of the expectations of a turn around in the nation's fortunes.

Certainly, suspension from the organs of the African Union will be the least of Bozizé's immediate problems, though the popular reception given this irregular change of power may give that organisation pause for thought about contextualising issues of principle. For good or ill, political situations which develop on the African continent, rarely conform in their configuration to the absolutes in which principled pronouncements are couched. — RC

### MOZAMBIQUE CONTRIBUTES TO THE AFRICAN MISSION IN BURUNDI

Foreign policy decisions, particularly those involving the deployment of troops in peacekeeping operations, are rarely the product of one single factor. Mozambique's decision to contribute one infantry company to the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) is no exception. This mission, the first peacekeep-

ing operation under the aegis of the recently created African Union (AU), will see the deployment of a 3,500-strong contingent of South African, Ethiopian and Mozambican troops in Burundi for an initial period of one year. The mandate and objectives of this mission were outlined on 2 April 2003 at the ninety-first ambassadorial session of the AU's Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. This session followed the recommendations of the 3 February 2003 session of the AU's Central Organ (at the level of Heads of State and Government), where the deployment of an African peacekeeping mission to Burundi was approved.

The AMIB is expected to stay in Burundi for an initial period of one year subject to renewal and pending the deployment of a United Nations' (UN) peacekeeping force, as foreseen in the 7 October 2002 and 2 December 2002 ceasefire agreements between the belligerents in Burundi. Its mandate includes: overseeing the implementation of the ceasefire agreements; supporting disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration initiatives; ensuring that conditions favourable for the establishment of a United Nations' peacekeeping operation (envisaged in the ceasefire agreements) will be in place and, finally, contributing to political and economic stability in Burundi. South Africa has been appointed lead nation and entrusted with the responsibility of planning the deployment of the force, whose core will largely be South African. Operational planning for the mission has already begun (as of 10 April 2003), with a visit to Bujumbura by a 50-strong planning team under South Africa's Maj-Gen Siphso Binda, who has been appointed commander of the AMIB.

Mozambique's involvement in this mission has been regarded as an ingenious foreign policy move to increase its continental prestige, at a time when its responsibilities in (and engagement with) Africa will steadily increase. In a domain where perceptions are so important, Mozambique's contribution of only 200 infantry soldiers will certainly produce results far exceeding this nominal, often referred to as 'token', contribution. After all, compared with Ethiopia's deployment of one battalion

plus two additional companies (between 950 and 1,000 peacekeepers) and South Africa's contribution of one battalion, Mozambique's participation may seem, at first sight, insignificant. In addition, because the AMIB will gradually incorporate South Africa's Protection Support Detachment currently in Bujumbura with a mandate to protect Hutu political leaders taking part in the transitional government, South Africa's contribution will reach the combined force level of two battalions (approximately 1,500 troops). What real difference can a company make?

There are several reasons for Mozambique's involvement in the AMIB. By deciding to send troops to Burundi, President Joaquim Chissano will strengthen his credibility in the eyes of his African counterparts, smoothing the way for his chairmanship of the AU to follow the Maputo summit in July 2003. Active participation in the AMIB will demonstrate President Chissano's historically strong endorsement of continental cooperation in matters of defence and security, backing it up with concrete action. This will undoubtedly give him added confidence, legitimacy and clout to speak to (and on behalf of) his African counterparts. After all, Mozambique is often considered Africa's most successful case of peacemaking, post-conflict reconstruction and development and sees its own experience as a valuable asset to be used in the resolution of current African conflicts. Keen to share this experience, post-war Mozambique has become an active player in regional diplomacy and peacemaking, most notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and the Great Lakes. Symbolically, Chissano hopes that active participation in the AMIB will assure his African peers that he too can match the prolific diplomatic activity of his South African counterpart, current chair of the AU, President Thabo Mbeki.

Mozambique's foreign policy has been strongly guided by the need to strengthen its presence in the international scene, particularly within the Southern African context, where priority has been given to integration within the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Mozambique's trading

links with SADC countries, particularly with South Africa and Zimbabwe, have steadily increased. Its main trading partner, South Africa, now accounts for over a quarter of Mozambique's exports and over half of its total imports. Relations with Pretoria are therefore vital, and Mozambique has often backed President Thabo Mbeki's pursuit of negotiation in regional conflicts. During March 2001, strategic regional concerns underpinned Mozambique's support to other SADC countries in removing Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's President, from his position as head of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. However, even though Maputo has expressed its concern that Mugabe's policies may seriously affect the whole region, Chissano has closely mimicked Mbeki's quiet diplomacy approach to the crisis in Zimbabwe, refraining from outright criticism. As the current Chair of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, Mozambique has been consistent with this approach, deviating little from Pretoria's stance.

Active participation in the AMIB will also strengthen Mozambique's position and credibility vis-à-vis the outside world, and in particular towards the G8, with whom the AU will have thorny and difficult negotiations to kick-start the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Increasingly considered the AU's vehicle for economic development in Africa, NEPAD entails a commitment by African leaders to African people and the international community to place Africa on a path of sustainable growth, accelerated by the integration of the continent into the global economy. In practice, NEPAD's purpose is to attract foreign direct investment and development assistance by making Africa an attractive investment opportunity. And in this regard, Mozambique has a particular interest, and it is likely that Chissano's tenure as Chair of the AU will concentrate on NEPAD. Mozambique's economy is highly dependent on foreign direct investment (FDI), which since the late 1990's has displaced development assistance as the principal motor of the Mozambican economy. In fact, Mozambique ranked 7th in sub-Saharan Africa as a destination of FDI during 2000. As

reported by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2001, Mozambique saw new FDI projects valued at some \$ 1 billion USD approved with an additional \$ 84 million under study.

Finally, and following from the above, the decision to contribute to the AMIB and the expected foreign policy benefits that Mozambique expects to reap, may also be a reflection of President Chissano's internal political motivations. Close to reaching the end of his second and last mandate, at the top end of Joaquim Chissano's internal agenda is the concern that Frelimo, the ruling party, wins the October 2003 municipal elections as well as the crucial Presidential and legislative elections at the end of 2004. Frelimo has gradually lost its popularity, as evidenced by its marginal victory in the Presidential elections of 5–6 December 1999. Against Chissano's 52.3% of the Presidential vote, Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of Renamo, won 47.7% of the vote. And, although most analysts consider that in the upcoming elections a victory by Renamo is highly unlikely, largely because of its organisational weakness, Frelimo has been under considerable pressure internally and externally. There is a growing concern in the international community that Mozambique's recovery may be hampered by governance issues including corruption in the banking sector, allegations of senior government officials' involvement in organised criminal networks and inefficiency in the justice sector. The election of Armando Guebuza as Frelimo's Secretary-General and likely Presidential candidate in the coming 2004 elections has also raised fears that the conservative faction within the party will reverse the deepening of democratisation in Mozambique, jeopardising this country's spectacular but still evolving recovery from years of civil war.

A small contribution to a regional peace-keeping force such as the AMIB is of course, and if seen in isolation, a miniscule step as foreign policy decision-making goes. Militarily, it does not constitute a significant commitment for Mozambique's 5,000–6,000 strong Armed Forces for the Defence of Mozambique (FADM), even if Mozambique will need to find international financial spon-

sorship for this deployment. As reported by the EIU, much of the FADM's budget (US\$87 million in 2000) is believed to be earmarked for pensions and other benefits for the large number of retired officers and war veterans. In terms of strategic doctrine, such deployment will be consistent with Mozambique's post-war defence policy by which the FADM do not become engaged in internal security issues. Nevertheless, as part of a strategic and coherent approach to diplomacy in the continent, with the ultimate aim of benefiting the economic and social development of Mozambique, the contribution to the AMIB will undoubtedly, and perhaps disproportionately (when compared with costs incurred), bear fruit. This would hold whatever the outcome of the mission; another case proving that in foreign policy, perception is paramount. — *JP*

## POLITICAL TRANSITION IN BURUNDI

The beginning of May 2003 marks a critical date in Burundi. Under a power-sharing agreement, the current Burundian president, Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, is scheduled to hand over to the vice-president, Domitien Ndayizeye, a Hutu.

What is certain though, is that Burundians desperately need peace. Not only have an estimated 300,000 Burundians lost their lives since the beginning of the crisis in 1993, the social and economic development of the country has also been seriously disrupted. Government military and rebel groups alike have coerced men, women and children into transporting goods, they have raped women, pillaged and burned homes, and violated the ceasefire by continuing to enlist combatants, many of them children.

The humanitarian situation in Burundi is very fragile. Since the beginning of the year living conditions have deteriorated steadily and the ceasefire has been violated daily. The sense of insecurity is pervasive. International humanitarian organisations report regular ambushes and the looting of aid supplies by rebels, as well as sporadic fighting between government and rebel forces, resulting in civilian deaths and the displacement of people on

a scale not seen for many years. By February 2003 it was reported that as many as 100,000 people were being displaced internally every month, moving from hill-top to hill-top in an attempt to escape the violence.

By mid-April some 525,000 people were displaced within Burundi, three-quarters of them living in 226 camps. Additional pressure on already overstretched food-aid resources is caused by a period of abnormally dry weather that has led to a massive drop in the level of food stocks in most parts of the country. The marked decline in the production of beans, the main source of protein for most Burundians, is particularly worrying. Under the current circumstances there is great concern about the prospects for the next harvest, as the scarcity of basic commodities, coupled with depreciation of the local currency, has increased the likelihood of people being reduced to eating the seeds needed for planting. Over and above this, relief agencies remain short of funds because donors are reluctant to resume major aid programs until an effective cease-fire is in place and the transitional government has begun to implement the reforms in the Arusha Agreement.

More than 840,000 Burundians live as refugees in the region. Most of them are in Tanzania and some 470,000 of these are integrated with the local population and do not receive UNHCR assistance. In March 2002 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) implemented a voluntary repatriation program for the return of refugees from Tanzania. Tensions have increased amid accusations that camps have served as a base for FDD rebels (*Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces de Défense de la Démocratie*, CNDD-FDD). There is also growing resentment in local Tanzanian communities who have borne the brunt of the social, environmental and economic impact of sharing scarce resources with the refugees.

Several thousand refugees, hoping that the agreements signed at the end of 2002 might bring peace, returned to Burundi to assess the situation only to head back to Tanzania in disillusionment. Continued fighting in 2003 sent new waves of refugees into Tanzania, where

the UNHCR has had to make contingency plans for as many as 60,000 newcomers.

The refugees are in an invidious position: even if an improved security situation opened the way for their return, there is the real fear that their return could derail the peace process because of the lack of absorptive capacity within Burundi. Not only are general conditions not conducive, but also a major obstacle to a long-term solution for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees is the scarcity of land, with disputes over land worsening considerably in recent years. Population density in the country is over 240 per square kilometre, the second most dense in Africa after Rwanda, and 766 per sq km of arable land with 90% of the population dependent on subsistence farming.

Access to health care is limited throughout Burundi, and services are generally sub-standard. Malaria is the leading cause of death; Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Yellow fever, Cholera and Meningitis are all prevalent. HIV presents in over 10% of the adult population. Life expectancy in 2000 was an average of 40.6 years.

### Future prospects

The general mood in Burundi is not optimistic. The impending transfer of power to a Hutu president appears to be the main catalyst for increased political and military manoeuvring, with all sides re-evaluating their positions, and trying to increase areas under their control. The transitional government is trying to implement change under enormous pressure—urged by the international community to meet the set deadlines while the political situation remains seriously fragmented. Although international donors have been making substantial aid commitments since 2000, disbursements have lagged far behind and this will continue until a comprehensive ceasefire is in place.

Until the political situation improves, fighting is contained and different elements of the ceasefire implemented, the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate. At the same time, the humanitarian conditions are impacting negatively on the political situa-

tion: continuing degradation of the socio-economic situation increases social tension, the failure to respond to humanitarian needs is causes a deepening sense of despair. Burundians are desperate for resources. Neglect of the structural problems that continue to fuel tensions has created an environment in which peace seems continuously out of reach. Recognising that donors can play an essential role in building peace and that they need to support positive developments to push for change, donors are urging that a transition should take place while continuing to withhold support until true peace is achieved. International aid has been reduced to a third of the levels prevailing from 1981 to 1995. The resulting civilian suffering appears to not have been sufficiently anticipated, or was merely considered inevitable in a region engulfed in conflict. It is questionable whether withholding the aid has been productive. Recently the German donor, GTZ, promised food aid for FDD rebels on the understanding that they could be confined to the cantonment areas to stop them preying on civilians. However, the FDD rebels have proved unwilling to co-operate and there seems no possibility of achieving encampment by 1 May. The two main parties have now also called for sanctions against the *Front National de Liberation* (FNL) rebels, so they too will be less inclined to lay down arms. There is some hope that the African Union's 3,500-strong peacekeeping force, due to be active by the beginning of June, will be effective. The deployment of a peacekeeping force is indispensable to the process of encampment and the introduction of a true ceasefire.

Nevertheless, political insecurity is likely to be aggravated further by the fragility of the current regional situation. Demobilization and reintegration of returning forces from DRC has the potential to exacerbate insecurity; this is against a backdrop of concerns over how the reform and integration of the government and rebels armed forces will be handled.

Political developments over the coming months will continue to be a major factor in determining levels of security. A critical issue is that of who will be appointed as Vice-

President and what his relationship will be with the Hutu President to be appointed. There is the potential for government institutions to be paralysed by an uncooperative relationship that feeds into and aggravates divisions. Given the depth of poverty, the prevalence of violent conflict, and the scale of human rights violations, the humanitarian situation will not improve unless and until the government upholds human rights, ends impunity, protects civilians and the displaced, improves the justice system, and the international community develops an integrated approach to working in support of such government actions. However, so long as political agendas continue to be determined by elites jostling for power and not working towards peace, the absence of peace, and thus also of funds, will continue to destabilise the state of Burundi. – *JC*

### WESTERN SAHARA: OIL ON TROUBLED WATERS

Oil fields found off the coast of the of Western Sahara have raised the profile of this disputed territory. Among the first indications of this was the United Nations Security Council vote in March to extend by two months the mandate of Minurso, its mission in Western Sahara. Until the game was changed by the discovery of oil, the UN was keeping this 12-year-old mission only just alive by extending its mandate a month at a time.

The Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara has to all intents and purposes completed its task of drawing up a roll of the 200,000 Saharawis eligible to vote in the envisaged referendum on the future of the territory. Morocco has occupied it in defiance of the UN since 1975. The UN force also polices a ceasefire that has held since 1991, whereby the Moroccan forces remain behind a sand wall in the West of the occupied territory. The Saharawi fighters of the Polisario Front move freely about the rest of the zone.

The bulk of the Saharawis (about 160,000 people) live in refugee camps in Algeria. They survive on the grace and favour of the UN and a range of mainly European humanitarian organisations. King Mohamed VI of Morocco

confessed earlier this year that Morocco's promise eventually to go along with the UN peace process in Western Sahara amounted to little more than a stalling tactic. Meanwhile, thorough work by Minurso in compiling the voters' roll has foiled Rabat's attempt to manipulate the process by pouring Moroccan settlers into the occupied territory and registering them as voters. Moroccans are, however, well aware that the Saharawis under their heel in the occupied territory would vote with their refugee compatriots in the camps, and they have no intention of going through with the referendum, which was proposed by the UN Security Council, let alone accepting its outcome.

Morocco's defiant stand on Western Sahara has exacerbated its relations with neighbouring Algeria, which supports and shelters the Saharawis and has paralysed the Maghreb Arab Union comprising Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Morocco has, however, staked everything on France and the United States managing to strong-arm the Saharawis into accepting less than complete independence. The Saharawis, with the consistent support of Algeria, reject any notion of a partial or conditional independence should the people opt for Morocco's departure. Herein lies the deadlock: Morocco cannot risk withdrawing its troops from the occupied territory and have them return to a kingdom that has unemployment approaching 40%, because it fears that idle soldiers would only contribute to the seething discontent over the new king's failure to deliver promised reforms.

Until now both France and the United States have concurred with this analysis. They have supported a so-called third way proposed by former United States secretary of state, James Baker, acting as special envoy for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. After failing three times to get UN Security Council approval of what became known as the Baker Plan, Annan attempted a pressure play and threatened that the withdrawal of Minurso was one of four options. The second option was to implement the 1998 peace plan, which would mean holding the election. The other options were to discuss a division of the territory and

to revise the Baker plan.

Baker has no illusions that Morocco will ever agree to any plan that could result in its having to quit the territory. His new proposal thus still amounts to a Moroccan wish list and is unlikely to have any more success on a Security Council that currently includes Spain. Madrid has recently had something of a crisis of conscience about abandoning its former colony in 1975. In addition, Spanish relations with Morocco hit an all-time low last year when Moroccan soldiers had to be ejected from the Spanish Mediterranean island of Persil. Morocco's vigorous opposition to the Iraq war has, moreover, soured its relations with Washington.

### Support for the SADR

Not surprisingly, Baker Plan II met with a decided thumbs down from the Saharawis and their supporters. The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is a member of the African Union and can count the vast majority of African states among its supporters. South Africa has given *de facto* recognition to the SADR, which has an ambassador in Pretoria. The Saharawis continue to press Pretoria to fulfil written promises made by former President Nelson Mandela and Foreign Minister Nkosazana Zuma to establish formal ties between the two countries. President Thabo Mbeki, who is under pressure from Washington, Paris and Annan to maintain the status quo, has said he is waiting for an opportune time to do this. In addition to its advocates in Africa, the Saharawis enjoy significant moral support from political parties in Europe and the Americas.

When the Australian-based Fusion Oil & Gas Company was looking to explore off the Western Sahara coast, it was pointed to the SADR government by British civil servants. Fusion struck a deal with the SADR that allowed drilling now and getting first option after independence to pump any oil it found. Morocco's state-owned oil company Onarep, meanwhile, gave exploration rights in the disputed territory to multinational oil companies Kerr-McGee and TotalFinaElf. This prompted the Security Council to seek an opinion from

UN legal counsel Hans Corel, who found that Morocco's illegal occupation of the territory did not give it any jurisdiction—and certainly no right to issue licences over its mineral resources.

The Norwegian company TGS-NOPEC has subsequently stopped its seismic exploration on behalf of the Onarep licensees and admitted that it was imprudent to have operated in the occupied territory. TotalFinaElf and Kerr-McGee have held their fire, insisting that the Onarep licence is for exploration not exploitation. The need to achieve a political

solution becomes more pressing as the oilrigs move in and money blurs the issues.

The UN's very survival has been thrown into the balance by the attack of US-led coalition on forces loyal to Saddam Hussein. Another crisis of credibility would lead yet more people to question the usefulness of the UN. However, this is exactly what Morocco threatens. The Western Sahara peace plan that was approved by the Security Council is still on the table. Morocco, having repeatedly promised to implement it, remains unconvinced.