

# AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL

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### Maize power

Maize meal helped drive Kenneth Kaunda from power and may do the same to the MMD which defeated him in the 1991 elections.

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### Later rather than sooner

Forget serious efforts to end the guerrilla war and hold elections, at least until 2003 or 2004. Angola's oil is ever more valuable to Western customers wanting to cut their reliance on the Middle East. Western finger-wagging at corruption in President Dos Santos' government will be even less energetic in the coming months.

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### Hard pressed

All South Africa's main newspapers lose money. Journalists fear that their publishers, by sharp cuts in editorial staff, will make the papers even blander and limit investigation of powerful political and corporate interests in a landscape dominated by the ANC. Most of the old press barons were compromised by apartheid but the new ones aren't much better when it comes to criticising government or business.

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### The focus shifts

This week policymakers in Washington are debating what to do about Islamist terrorists in the Horn. There is excited talk about joint anti-terror operations involving American, Ethiopian and even British forces. The most likely target is the *Al Itahaad* group in Somalia.

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### Congo-Kinshasa, Sudan & Madagascar

## Too close to call

### The gap between the leading presidential contenders is narrowing fast in this landmark election

It looks like Zambia's closest election ever, as eleven runners sprint, hobble and lurch towards the finish of the first-past-the-post contest on 27 December. The real prize is the presidency, with its supreme power, and its ability to assemble a coalition in parliament, where no party is likely to win a majority (AC Vol 42 No 21). The winner could obtain fewer than a third of the votes cast.

Outgoing President **Frederick Chiluba** faces many of the same allegations as his neighbour in **Zimbabwe**, President **Robert Mugabe** – assassination of opponents and grand corruption. Yet Chiluba has confronted only his domestic opponents, winning cautious approval from Western governments by his tough economic reforms and his (belated) sale of state interests in the copper mines. Far from attacking white farmers, Chiluba has invited white Zimbabweans to move north to Zambia. In the short term, Zambia has benefited financially from the chaos in Zimbabwe (AC Vol 42 No 23).

His domestic opponents insist that Chiluba cannot allow his Movement for Multi-party Democracy to lose, for fear of prosecution on charges of corruption and human rights abuses. So much mud has been thrown at Chiluba, especially by former close associates, that the election is as much about his personality as about policies.

The governing MMD's candidate, picked by Chiluba, is **Levy Mwanawasa**. The other front-runners are **Anderson Mazoka** of the United Party for National Development and General **Christon Tembo** of the Forum for Democracy and Development. The vote will be further fragmented by the candidates of smaller parties: **Michael Sata** (Patriotic Front), Gen. **Godfrey Miyanda** (Heritage Party) and **Benjamin Mwila** (Zambia Republican Party). The election date, 27 December, favours the MMD, which wants and will probably get a low turnout. Many families in the towns go to the country for the Christmas holiday; for rural voters, it comes in the middle of the heavy rains and the planting season. Foreign observers aren't keen to interrupt their holidays to monitor Zambian polls.

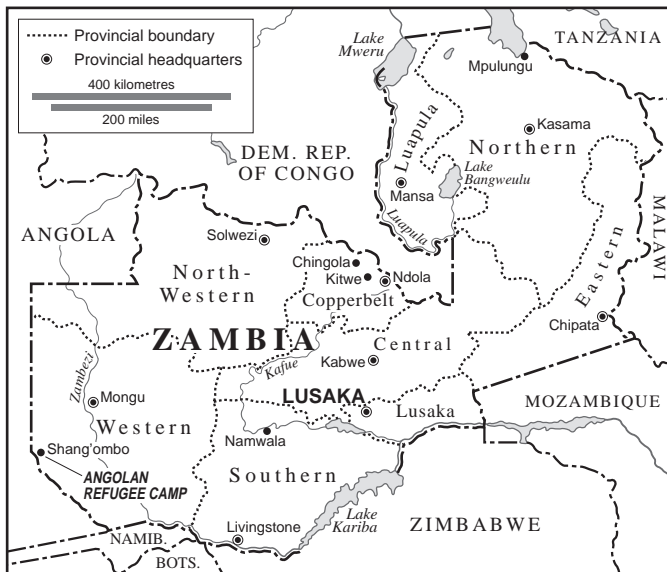
### Splitting parliament five ways

Only 2.6 million voters – just over half those eligible – have registered. Turnout could be as low as 40 per cent and heavy rain could prevent the opening of remote polling stations. Yet the political landscape is set for change. At least five of the new parties are likely to win seats, depriving the MMD of its dominance of the 150-member National Assembly. No party is likely to get the 72 seats, plus the eight presidential appointees, needed for control. An FDD official predicted that none of the six parties listed above could hope for more than 20 to 30 seats each. Only Sata, the PF strongman, claims he will land 100 seats and 68 per cent of the presidential vote, saying his six years as MMD National Organising Secretary will bring name recognition. Some of the original leading lights of the MMD, such as **Guy Scott**, are backing Sata. He also has plenty of enemies.

With the presidency in their sights, campaigners will try to win as many votes as possible across the country, rather than in specific constituencies. The focus is on the most populous provinces. Ethnicity is important but not overwhelmingly so: it can't help the government improve its reputation but it can hurt opposition candidates.

Some opponents have accused Mazoka (UPND) of tribalism because his support is narrowly drawn from his Tonga people. That may frighten some non-Tonga voters but gives him ethnic support in three provinces: Southern (339,765 electors, the third most populous province); Western (206,628); and North-Western (163,663). A Tonga aristocrat, Mazoka may win votes in Central Province, where the dominant Tonga, Ila and Lenje groups share history and identity. His supporters claim he is ahead with 47.5 per cent; Zambia's only independent opinion poll ([www.zamservice.com](http://www.zamservice.com)) gives his nearest rival 31.2 per cent.

Mwanawasa, who is half Lenje, should be the other major contender and his Lamba background should haul in votes in rural Copperbelt constituencies. Tembo's backers assume that, as a man of the east, his success in Eastern Province (337,533 votes) is a safe bet. However, he is said to have alienated the chieftaincy in his area of Lundazi. He's also competing with **Tilyenji Kaunda**, whose father, ex-President **Kenneth Kaunda**, is quietly winning support there for his son and the United National



Independence Party. Even the confident Mazoka says the Eastern Province will be 'dicey': it has always voted for UNIP. Splits in its Central Committee have gravely damaged the former ruling party's heart but Tilyenji may cling on.

Northern Province votes could divide four ways, between 'King Cobra' Sata (PF), whose stomping ground is the town of Mpika; Mwila (ZRP), who has been campaigning hard in a region neglected during the MMD's ten-year reign; **Nevers Mumba** (National Citizen's Coalition); and **Gwendoline Konie** (Social Democratic Party). Luapula may end up in the hands of local boy Mwila.

The toughest battles will be in the densely populated urban Copperbelt (453,249) and Lusaka (399,247). The FDD is associated with Lusaka and its big fish live there: Tembo; his Vice-President **Edith Nawakwi**; party Chairman **Simon Zukas**; **Dipak Patel**, who

has sat for Lusaka Central for ten years. As a breakaway from the MMD, the FDD inherited many of that party's structures.

Shows of strength go down well in Zambia. Tembo's FDD team was smart to urge him, after he filed his presidential nomination papers on 29 November, to lead the crowd through Lusaka's streets. That may help counter some misgivings about the FDD, whose interim leaders, Zukas and Patel, promoted it as the party of integrity. Now it is haunted by doubts about some senior defectors from the MMD – old unproved rumours of Tembo's links with drug money, Nawakwi's unclear role in the Carlington maize scandal, and bribery allegations at the October party convention.

### All out for Copperbelt votes

The Copperbelt, once an impenetrable MMD stronghold, has suffered under Chiluba's botched liberalisation drive, followed by retrenchments in the mines and failed industries. The MMD is vulnerable in the towns, where opposition parties and civil society activists are busiest. The bigger parties will go all out for Copperbelt votes; Miyanda launched his Heritage Party there and is the leading candidate in the big towns, according to a recent survey by University of Zambia's Institute of Economic and Social Research.

After a trip to Northern and Luapula provinces, Mazoka will spend the rest of the campaign shuttling in his bullet-proof car between the Copperbelt and Lusaka for walk-about in the markets and sound-bites all over the radio stations. Delayed by FDD cash shortages, Tembo kicked off his campaign last weekend with his first stop, the Copperbelt. Rumours that **Rwandan** leader **Paul Kagame** will provide a campaign helicopter are 'rubbish' says an FDD source. A local plane may be chartered to help Tembo break Mazoka's grip on the Copperbelt, Lusaka, Northern and Southern provinces.

Local monitors, such as the Foundation for the Democratic Process, have provided elector education in every constituency. They expect a shift away from traditional voting patterns along party and ethnic

## Maize power

Maize meal helped drive **Kenneth Kaunda** from power and could do the same to the Movement for Multi-party Democracy which defeated him in the 1991 elections. When Kaunda cut subsidies on the staple mealie-meal, his support collapsed. The MMD's market economics strategy has been overwhelmed by a combination of drought and heavy flooding. Maize prices have shot up as shortages increase.

About 60 per cent of Zambians suffer chronic malnutrition, according to the United Nations World Food Programme. Some 80 per cent of rural people live in poverty. The Disaster Management Unit in the Vice-President's Office warns that up to 1.5 million people need emergency food aid because of a maize shortfall of 300,000 tonnes. The monthly cost of feeding a household of six in Lusaka is 360,000 kwacha (US\$90). Teachers and nurses earn about 300,000 kwacha, police officers as little as 180,000.

Most households eat about three 25 kilogramme-bags of mealie-meal a month. The price has recently almost doubled to nearly 30,000 kwacha. The government reacted slowly and the latest maize orders may not arrive before the election. Long queues are common. The MMD's presidential candidate, **Levy Mwanawasa**, at a rally on 25 November in Ndola, blamed the shortage on 'unscrupulous' millers who stockpile maize to push up prices 'because they want the people to rise against the MMD during the elections'.

Inflation, at 19 per cent, may rise further as the currency weakens after Mwanawasa's declaration last month that a new MMD government would impose foreign exchange controls. President **Frederick Chiluba** claims people are short of cash because the government has contained inflation. The kwacha, he said at a rally, is prized because it is scarce: 'You have to move around to find a beautiful woman. That is how much our money has

gained respect.'

The countryside is even more miserable than the townships. Higher transport costs push up prices; impassable roads and disastrous policies have destroyed much agriculture. Villagers say they want to vote for a change but only 55 per cent of eligible voters have registered.

In places where the MMD feels vulnerable, such as Lusaka townships, party activists buy voters' cards, sometimes for cash, often for bags of salt, sugar or meal. It is not clear whether the cards are destroyed or handed to fraudulent voters. Opposition parties also woo voters with gifts, especially colourful *chitenge* cloth. Women told us that, at previous elections, they collected cloth from each party then voted as usual.

The MMD threw money at the June by-election in Kabwata, Lusaka, but it was trounced by the Forum for Democracy and Development. Opposition parties say that the MMD has lost its power-base in the Copperbelt because of the devastation wrought by its slow mishandling of the copper-mine sales. Anglo American is deferring the massive Konkola Deep Project and is also cutting output from 240,000 tn. to 200,000 tn. The **South African** Metorex mining group has its Chibuluma South Project on care and maintenance, i.e. it's not producing.

The MMD still has cards to play. A survey in August by the University of Zambia's Institute of Economic and Social Research suggests that selling off government houses could win it votes. Many people who bought houses years ago still haven't received their title deeds; they worry that a change of government could mean a change of policy. The MMD's opening campaign rally in Kitwe publicised this issue. The real question is whether the disillusioned miners will vote at all.

lines towards a choice of those who look as if they can deliver. Primary and secondary teachers often back Miyanda, citing improvements he made as Education Minister.

The FDD should pick up a few southern seats from the personal followings of regional stalwarts such as the former Local Government Minister **Ackson Sejani** in Mapatizya or the former Agriculture Minister **Suresh Desai**. Tembo hopes to use the campaigning skills of former Legal Affairs Minister **Vincent Malambo**, the man he beat in the leadership fight; but Malambo is said to feel aggrieved about Tembo's leadership and he's not alone. Some southerners condemn Malambo for staying too long in Chiluba's camp. One analyst predicts that the MMD is so unpopular in Southern Province that it may not get a single seat there.

Gen. Tembo's advisors think that large public meetings are too expensive and take up too much time: 'We're going to let him loose, soap-box style, in the compounds, door-to-door with final rallies on 26 December in the Copperbelt and Lusaka.'

Having been whisked around the country by Chiluba – at neck-breaking speed in a government vehicle at taxpayers' expense – Mwanawasa must now fend for himself. He has bolted to the Copperbelt, where the usual rent-a-crowds have deserted him. He runs a presidential-style campaign; surrounded by security men, he addresses rallies from the podium. He and all the MMD's parliamentary candidates have boycotted public debates, organised by the Electoral Commission with European Union money. They argue that too many insults are flung around; opposition critics say that they are scared of being shown up. Mwanawasa has contradicted the MMD manifesto several times, with talk of foreign exchange controls and the re-introduction of subsidies.

The UPND's Mazoka has the personality and the message but hardly enough time to build a national following. The FDD's Tembo inherited much of the MMD's support when its key leaders defected this year. The MMD has the resources, the determination and the incumbency. No one knows what electoral tricks Chiluba's party could play if it believed it were losing a free election.

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## **ANGOLA**

# **Later rather than sooner**

## **Hopes for peace and for votes are once again put on hold**

The blip of optimism has gone, the agony will continue. Forget serious efforts to end the guerrilla war and hold elections, at least until late 2003 or 2004. Angola's oil and gas are ever more valuable to Western customers anxious to cut their reliance on Middle East suppliers. Western finger-wagging at President **José Eduardo dos Santos'** government will be even less energetic in coming months.

In May, Dos Santos made seemingly pragmatic statements (AC Vol 42 No 11) about opening lines to his enemy, **Jonas Savimbi** of the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*. Dos Santos announced that he would step down from the presidency before the next election, without saying when that election would be held; next year seemed possible, if the government started a new round of peace talks with UNITA. That looks improbable now and the government may be trying a different tack, again attempting to woo senior UNITA soldiers and politicians away from Savimbi's embrace.

Dos Santos and his generals insist that they are winning the war and that it is only a matter of time before UNITA's leadership is rounded

up and extinguished. It trumpets a trickle of desertions – most recently the wife and children of UNITA Secretary General **Paulo Lukamba 'Gato'** in late November – and pushes its weight around with incursions onto the territory of its eastern neighbour **Zambia** (see Box), which it accuses of harbouring UNITA supporters. The rebels are weaker now than a year ago.

About half a million people are reckoned to be in areas under some sort of UNITA control and those crossing into government territory say the rebel soldiers are leaning more heavily on local populations for supplies. Last month, members of the ruling *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* in the National Assembly adopted an anti-terrorism motion, drawing parallels between UNITA and *Al Qaeda*. UNITA members walked out, saying the government should concentrate on dialogue with UNITA-Savimbi.

UNITA is weaker than it's been since the 1970s. However, that doesn't stop it hitting hard. Last month, it killed four **Portuguese** hunters near Ambriz. The security perimeters around large towns in the interior have shrunk since January. Humanitarian organisations restrict their staff to a small section of south-western Angola, which was never at war, and a few coastal strips and isolated pockets in the interior. Much of the rest is called MPLA territory, though it is vulnerable to attack from UNITA or independent bandits.

## **Shadows of De Matos**

Some blame for the insecurity lies with General **Armando Cruz Neto**, who took over as Chief of Staff of the *Forças Armadas Angolanas* (FAA) after General **João de Matos** was ousted in January. Cruz Neto is less able than De Matos and more open to interference by the political fixers around the presidency at *Futungo de Belas* in Luanda.

The shadow of De Matos, now studying in London, still looms. Though he strenuously denies political ambitions, many see him returning to a key position. He has many loyalists in the army, one of whom, Lieutenant Gen. **Matias Lima Coelho 'Nzumbi'**, commander of the eastern front, in October criticised the Luanda politicians for failing to tackle the humanitarian and political crises which were part of the war. This echoes De Matos' view that the soldiers have fought for almost three decades and it is now up to the politicians to find solutions.

At the heart of the MPLA's plan is its insistence that UNITA should 'resolve its internal problems'. This is MPLA-speak for killing Savimbi. Dialogue with lesser UNITA officials is seen as the way to hasten his end. 'Shall we discuss peace as we did in 1990 and allow Savimbi to create another national disgrace?' asked Dos Santos in an Independence Day speech on 11 November. 'Obviously not'. In May, President Dos Santos had suggested dialogue might be possible if Savimbi explained how he intends to submit to the terms of the peace accord signed at Lusaka in 1994.

Implementation of the MPLA's anti-Savimbi plan is in the hands of the Interior Minister, **Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos 'Nando'**, who also coordinates the National Fund for Peace and Reconciliation (Fuprena). Some had seen him as a potential challenger for the presidency but this hot job will require his full attention for a long time to come, possibly burning his long-term political chances.

Fuprena dispenses funds to woo UNITA members away from Savimbi, with some success. Nando has worked closely with various foreign embassies, hoping they will urge the civil society peace movement to ease up on demands for dialogue with Savimbi. This MPLA line is quietly supported both by the United Nations and by the 'Troika' – Portugal, **Russia** and the **United States** – set up to observe the Lusaka peace accord. They say Savimbi has failed to keep agreements in the past and that, because he wants power or nothing, he threatens foreign interests in Angola's oil and gas, as well as the lives of Angolans.

The MPLA is unfussed that the UN and the Troika have for some time been talking to UNITA officials, notably to Savimbi's impressive Paris-based representative, Brigadier **Isaías Samakuva**. The message to UNITA is: accept Lusaka, resolve your internal problems, come to Luanda but UN sanctions will stay until you do. The UN and the head of its Luanda office, **Mussagy Jeichande**, tread carefully. The UN special envoy, **Nigerian** former Foreign Minister **Ibrahim Gambari** arrives in Luanda next week and can expect a bumpy ride from civil society activists.

The UN's political operations were closed down in Angola after the Lusaka accord collapsed. Politicians around Dos Santos say they would work with the UN to disarm and demobilise UNITA but that that must involve negotiations with UNITA. The MPLA wants a UNITA surrender before talks; Luanda peace activists want an immediate ceasefire and negotiations.

Civil society activists and aid agencies are sceptical about the role of the UN, which feeds about a million Angolans a day. Agencies such as Oxfam and *Médecins sans Frontières* accuse the government of dumping its problems on international organisations although it earns over US\$20 million a day from oil, much of it wasted by corrupt officials and politicians.

The International Monetary Fund has made little headway with its prodding on economic reform and anti-corruption. Some foreign diplomats want to persuade the church-led peace movement to move away from demanding political dialogue towards exposing corruption. **Britain**, partly through its outgoing Ambassador **Caroline Elmes**, has dissented from Western scepticism about the Luanda-based peace

movement. UK officials see the UNITA-MPLA conflict as just part of a crisis between elites and the governed and suggest that devolution of political power might break the impasse. Elmes's successor, **John Thompson**, is due in Luanda next February.

Luanda's civil society groups, hostile to both the MPLA and UNITA, also want reform of presidential-dominated politics. Even some MPLA parliamentarians agree. A parliamentary Commission led by **Bornito de Souza**, head of the MPLA caucus, has been working since 1998 on a new constitution. A big argument is whether the governors of the 18 provinces should be elected; at present the party nominates them and Malange's **Flavio Fernandes** is probably the most venal.

There is a cross-party consensus on a semi-presidential regime however most MPLA politicians want the prime minister to be appointed; other parties want him or her elected. Under President Dos Santos, for two decades prime ministers have been appointed, and weak; an elected premier could join forces with the ruling party to balance the president's power.

The road to a national dialogue about the power structure lies through the 44-member Constitutional Commission, on which the MPLA has 25 seats. De Souza, its Chairman, said in October that it should be scrapped if the impasse on provincial and prime ministerial powers was not resolved by early next year.

Civil society activists, hoping to emerge as the third force in Angolan politics, are still weak and fragmented, though most believe that peace could be won through dialogue, with Savimbi if necessary. The MPLA and its diplomat friends have undermined that call for

## Bitter borders

Angolan troops have made raids into Zambia and nobody agrees about what is going on. After a bad patch, relations between the neighbours had seemed warmer lately and Presidents **José Eduardo dos Santos** and **Frederick Chiluba** had exchanged visits. Some guess that the raid was a warning shot by Angola, in case the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* rebels try to influence Zambia's presidential election, due on 27 December (AC Vol 42 No 21).

For 20 years, families from UNITA-supporting areas have sought refuge in Zambia's Western Province, settling down and having children there. For ten years, Chiluba's government has tolerated trade between **Jonas Savimbi**'s UNITA and Zambian business people, especially arms suppliers and fuel dealers. The border is long and unpoliced; informal bases on Zambia's side have strengthened UNITA's campaigns.

Four years ago, Angola accused Zambia of aiding the rebels. Zambia denied it, then several bombs were planted in Lusaka, one of which destroyed the Angolan Embassy. An Angolan student in Zambia was charged with terrorism. Chiluba was defiant, **South Africa**'s ex-President **Nelson Mandela** mediated and the two sides drew back. Yet Luanda went on accusing Zambia of aiding the rebels and allowing passage for their supplies; the report by United Nations experts into UNITA's sanctions-busting said that some Zambians were indeed supplying the rebels, naming **Xavier Chungu**, Director General of Zambia's Intelligence Secret Services, as being in regular contact with UNITA.

This February, diplomats set up the Tripartite Mechanism for Political and Security Cooperation between Angola, **Namibia** and Zambia. Border problems continued. It is said in Lusaka that Angolan soldiers crossed into Zambia last month and abducted over 100 villagers from Shang'ombo; after about two weeks, the soldiers killed seven of them. Zambia negotiated for the return of its nationals but Angola released only about 70.

Locals say the attacks, abductions and thefts of livestock continued and that the Angolan soldiers were demanding a slice of Zambian territory as ransom for the captives. A special Zambian army unit captured two Angolan officers, a lieutenant colonel and a major, who are still held

incommunicado. Zambian security sources say that angry Angolan soldiers then raped the captured Zambian women in front of their children and husbands. The Zambian army retaliated, killing ten Angolans, Chiluba said.

After seven more Zambians were killed, Dos Santos sent his deputy Foreign Minister, **George Chikoti**, to see Chiluba on 22 November. Chikoti claimed that the Zambian villagers had been caught in cross-fire and said his country was not detaining any Zambians. Since then, more than 400 villagers have been driven from their homes and, according to Zambian Foreign Minister **Keli Walubita**, more than 50 people are missing.

Possibly Angola's soldiers were pursuing the UNITA rebels who control much of the border and do cross-border business. Zambian security, though, insists the attacks were premeditated; the Angolan soldiers – survivors say there were many – were brought in by military helicopter.

The Nangweshi refugee camp at Shang'ombo is sensitive. It was established in January last year, about 150 kilometres from the frontier, to shelter civilians fleeing from territory under government attack. Angola claims that UNITA fighters hide among the refugees, emerging to attack government forces. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Zambian government have been trying to relocate the camp, which has grown above its maximum capacity of 15,000. New arrivals in a reception centre are said to include rebel fighters regrouping in Zambia for a counter-attack. Zambian Foreign Minister Walubita says refugees at the camp now number over 21,000.

Zambia refuses to allow attacks on UNITA from its territory. Namibia, the other signatory to the tripartite agreement, allows such attacks and takes part in joint operations. Last week, Zambian and Angolan officials met in Lusaka to discuss the latest clashes.

Some Zambian officials claim that Luanda is backing the opposition Forum for Democracy and Development against President Chiluba's Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD). An FDD official, **Joseph Mkandawire**, was reported to have visited Luanda to ask for campaign support. However, several of the MMD's leading business supporters have worked with UNITA and Jonas Savimbi in the past.

dialogue with Savimbi by ensuring that any engagement with UNITA is routed through the UN.

The leader of the church-based civil society movement is the 67-year old Dom **Zacarias Kamuenho**, Archbishop of Lubango, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and winner in 2001 of the prestigious Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought. He is President of the Inter-church Committee for Peace in Angola (COIEPA), whose Executive Secretary is the influential Johannesburg-based Baptist, Rev. **Daniel Ntoni Nzinga**, head of the Protestant Council of Angolan Christian Churches.

The church-led peace effort is backed by 15 small political parties in the *Rede da Paz* (peace network). Helping to organise the network and articulating closely with the churches is **Filomeno Vieira Lopes**, an opposition politician seen as an honest and active intellectual, though not a leader. Also influential is **Rafael Marques**, the Luanda representative of **George Soros's** Open Society foundation. He is detested by the MPLA and distrusted by the pro-MPLA embassies but is one of the few genuinely independent and outspoken voices in town.

Respected MPLA politicians such as **Lopo do Nascimento** and **Marcolino Moco**, and the UNITA parliamentarian **Abel Chivukuvuku**, quietly sympathise with the broad 'peace movement' but keep their lines open to the MPLA establishment. They don't talk about their political plans for now. Until the MPLA fixes an election date, there doesn't seem to be much point.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Hard pressed

## The media are failing to adapt to changing times – and they're losing money

All South Africa's main newspapers lose money. Journalists fear that their publishers, by sharp cutbacks in editorial staff, will make the papers even blander and limit investigation of powerful political and corporate interests in a political landscape dominated by the African National Congress.

During four decades of censorship and intimidation under apartheid, journalists dreamed of a new era of unfettered reporting. Instead, informal political pressures constrain investigation and comment, and the new press barons are little braver about annoying government than the old ones. The vigorous anti-apartheid alternative newspapers of the 1980s failed to find a new agenda, or enough cash, to keep going. With a few honourable exceptions, white journalists steer clear of controversy. Nowadays, the term 'slipping standards' can be a quietly racist way of complaining when black South Africans replace white ones – although many of the most outspoken critics of the ANC government are black.

In the bad old days, over 90 per cent of the English-language press was controlled by the giant Anglo American Corporation mining house. Its grandee, **Harry Oppenheimer**, saw well before the 1994 elections that times were changing and got rid of the newspapers. The morning titles went to an alliance between Johnnic, a black empowerment consortium, and **British** media group Pearson PLC. The afternoon papers were sold to a rugby-playing tycoon, **Tony** (now Sir Anthony) **O'Reilly**, whose Dublin base is the **Irish** Independent Newspapers group. In his other job, as Chief Executive of the **American** food giant H.J. Heinz Company, his (failed) attempts to invest in **Zimbabwean** farming involved many dealings with President **Robert Mugabe**. O'Reilly saw similar opportunities in South Africa

and elsewhere, including Britain, where he later bought the London daily *The Independent*.

O'Reilly was broadly sympathetic to the ANC and **Nelson Mandela**, and has always understood that keeping governments friendly may help win lucrative concessions on, for example, broadcasting licences. Some journalists on his South African papers say he's damaged editorial standards, partly because of political spinelessness, also because of staff cuts and inadequate training. Some O'Reilly newspapers, such as *The Star*, offer an odd mix of sunshine journalism, political self-censorship and tabloid sleaze.

The Afrikaans-language press, with fewer readers, remains in Afrikaner hands. It is flourishing now that it is free of direct government control. President **Thabo Mbeki** is regarded as being more accessible to white Afrikaner journalists than to their English-speaking counterparts.

## Unsure of post-apartheid role

Economic recession has brought retrenchment. Last week, *Business Day* and the *Financial Mail*, the two leading financial publications, said they would be cutting jobs. Both belong to BDFM, which belongs partly to Pearson (*Financial Times*, *The Economist*, etc.) and partly to Johnnic, chaired by former ANC Secretary General **Cyril Ramaphosa**. Johnnic also owns *The Sunday Times*, the country's biggest-selling Sunday paper, and has been talking to Caxton, a printing and publishing company that dominates the market in free local newspapers and owns *The Citizen*, a mediocre, loss-making tabloid daily, originally set up by apartheid propagandists.

The Guardian Media Group is winding down its stake in the *Mail & Guardian*, SA's leading independent paper. Britain's *The Guardian* (once of Manchester) has 87 per cent of the SA newspaper, which started as *The Weekly Mail* in 1985 with a strong liberal tradition. The *M&G's* relations with the ANC started to go sour in 1994 and worsened sharply when Mbeki became President in 1999, especially after it criticised his refusal to make expensive anti-HIV drugs available through the public health service.

The *M&G* has hired many black journalists but the political elite regards it as a relic of white liberalism; it was a target of last year's 'racism in the media' report by the Human Rights Commission, which was ridiculed by black and white journalists as a ham-fisted attempt to silence criticism of the ANC. The *M&G* stood up for itself, cheering up journalists generally.

The Guardian, which funded the *M&G's* losses and gave it editorial support, now wants a local partner, preferably a black empowerment organisation, to share the burden. We hear that the *M&G* has approached the black-led (but white-financed) New Africa Investment Limited (NAIL), whose leadership includes such ANC stalwarts as **Zwelakhe Sisulu** (son of ANC veteran **Walter Sisulu**), **Saki Macozoma** and **Moloetse Mbeki**, the President's brother. Senior journalists think these investors could have more respect for the party than for editorial independence and want the Guardian Group and the Scott Trust, guarantor of its editorial independence, to set up a similar trust in South Africa.

*M&G* has conducted a lively battle with Etv, an independent, loss-making private television channel which is the state-controlled SA Broadcasting Corporation's only competitor. When the *M&G* highlighted Etv's financial and management problems, the TV station retaliated by discussing the *M&G's* own difficulties, claiming also that the journalists' plea to the Guardian showed bias against black business. Etv's Chief Executive is **Marcel Golding**, formerly a leading trades unionist, now an entrepreneur. Journalists at Etv complain that the attack on the *M&G* was dictated by management, not

by editors; the TV station had mounted a similar counter-attack when *Business Day* criticised its management and finances.

Etv has lost some of its best professionals to its state-owned rival the SABC which, after some chaos and bitterness, has freed itself from its 'ministry of truth' mindset, sharpened its radio and TV news and kept its distance from the government overlords. SABC's news services are now headed by the respected **Barney Mthombothi** and **Mathata Tsedu**, formerly Deputy Editor of *The Star*. They replace **Snuki Zikalala**, who was close to government and blamed for propaganda. Of the many new radio stations licensed since 1994, few make money yet – partly because of SABC's high-quality competition in current affairs radio, where AM-Live and PM-Live have the spirit to take on the government.

### Patchy quality in print

In newspapers, the quality is patchier. The most highly regarded, *Business Day*, has been accused of soft-pedaling since a former *Financial Times* and *Financial Mail* journalist, **Peter Bruce**, took over this year from **Jim Jones**. Last week, Bruce was arguing in support of entrepreneurial families such as the **Shaiks**, two of whose members came out unfavourably from the official investigation into a US\$6 billion arms deal: 'I hope [the Shaiks] all soon make creative and profitable lives away from weapons and government'. However, local journalistic coverage of the arms deal paved the way for a government inquiry which uncovered many irregularities even if it didn't find compelling evidence of official corruption.

O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers, the biggest newspaper organisation, has suffered from cost-cutting. The once prestigious Johannesburg *Star* has lost many senior journalists, becoming erratic and sensational. The *Sunday Independent* is run on a shoe-string budget, surviving on a skeleton staff and much copy from foreign newspapers while stridently criticising Mbeki for his policies on AIDS and Zimbabwe.

Nasionale Pers (Naspers) owns two successful Afrikaans-language papers, *Beeld*, a quality daily, and *Rapport*, a racier Sunday, as well as *City Press*, a Sunday paper mainly for black readers. *Beeld* astutely junked its support for the old National Party and established liberal credentials under the political editorship of **Tim du Plessis** (who now edits *Rapport*). It is South Africa's nearest approach to a newspaper of record. Naspers invested heavily in Internet activities, and held onto its stake while the dot.coms crashed. It owns 67 per cent of MIH Holdings, which in turn controls various subsidiaries.

The battle for the Sunday tabloid market is fierce. NAIL's Sowetan *Sunday World* expects to break even in three or four years and sells 130,000 copies a week, fighting a new, tawdrier paper from Naspers, the *Sunday Sun*, which already sells more than 100,000 copies.

The company with big ambitions for the media is NAIL, the conglomerate with links to the ANC. Its senior managers close to Mbeki include Macozoma, former head of the troubled government-owned Transnet, who runs NAIL's media assets; his present task is to reverse the falling circulation of the group's flagship, *The Sowetan*, the country's biggest black daily.

The government's media development agency is supposed to develop media organisations in poor, rural, communities. It was originally meant to be financed by a levy on the advertising industry (which is accused of failing to reflect the country's racial diversity) but will now get its funds from industry and government.

Senior journalists are still struggling to understand the new black elite, whose members are themselves wary of the press. Many of the best white journalists left or were chased out under apartheid; the big news organisations are trying to recruit and train black talent but

journalism does not offer high status or high pay to the best of the new black graduates. The big gap in the country's press is the lack of a feisty national tabloid with fearless political coverage and plenty of sport. That formula could also make money.

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## HORN OF AFRICA

# The focus shifts

## After dislodging the Taliban in Afghanistan, the USA has north-east Africa in its sights

This week, policymakers in Washington are debating what to do about Islamist terrorists in the Horn of Africa. There is much excited talk about joint anti-terror operations involving **United States**, **Ethiopian** and even **British** forces. For now, almost nothing is ruled out. The most energetic Islamist group in the Horn itself is *Al Itahaad al Islamiya*, an early candidate for Washington's frozen assets list in September. Ethiopia has been fighting *Al Itahaad* for years and blames it for bombings in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa and trying in July 1995 to assassinate Transport Minister **Abdul Majeed Hussein** (AC Vol 37 No 15), now Ambassador to the United Nations.

The dominant Islamist power in the region remains **Sudan's** National Islamic Front (aka National Congress) government, which has supported armed Islamist opposition movements worldwide and, in the Horn of Africa, in **Eritrea**, Ethiopia and **Somalia**. Washington is trying to kick-start peace talks to end Sudan's internal conflicts and Secretary of State **Colin Powell** says Khartoum is cooperating with Washington's security requests. Yet Khartoum remains under close US watch.

Relations in the Horn are fluid. Six years ago, Ethiopia accused Sudan of sponsoring Islamist terror in the region; now, it has an alliance of convenience with Khartoum against Eritrea. Ethiopia's immediate focus is Somalia: it claims that Somalia's Transitional National Government (TNG) is closely linked to *Al Itahaad*, yet Ethiopia's Somali allies include **Musa Sudi Yalalow**, a warlord who founded an Islamic court in south Mogadishu and likes to style himself 'Leader of the Faithful'. And Ethiopia also backs the Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC), one of whose leaders, **Hussein Mohamed Farah 'Aydeed'**, was only three years ago an ally of *Al Itahaad*.

Ethiopian-Sudanese relations plummeted in 1995, after the attempted assassination of **Egyptian** President **Hosni Mubarak** in Addis Ababa. However, in 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea began their war and Ethiopia started to work with Sudan, organising Eritrean opposition movements into the Alliance of Ethiopian National Forces. The AENF includes the Islamic Salvation Movement, formerly part of Islamic Jihad Eritrea, and the People's Congress, the political front of a rival faction that is still known as Islamic Jihad Eritrea which, in theory, is outside the AENF.

Ethiopia hasn't forgotten that in the early 1990s, the Sudanese Embassy had 100 staff, supposedly supporting the building of schools and mosques by Islamist non-governmental organisations in Oromo and Somali areas. After the attack on Mubarak, Addis Ababa expelled all Sudanese-linked NGOs.

Ethiopia-Sudan relations have improved formally since the 1998 war between Addis and Asmara. Ethiopia talks of buying Sudanese oil and using Port Sudan as an export route, especially for the Tigrayan and Amharic areas of north-west Ethiopia. Privately, Ethiopian officials say they have no doubts about the NIF's intentions: it's just that Eritrea is a more immediate threat.

Eritrea claims Ethiopia is trying to threaten and blackmail the Border Commission, due to report in February. Both sides are to talk to the Commission in the next few weeks, both say decisions will go their way. Yet Ethiopia fears that Eritrea's President **Issayas Aferworki** will manufacture a crisis to distract attention from his regime's internal problems.

Ethiopia claims Eritrea has 30,000 troops in the Temporary Security Zone, pretending to be police and militia. Officials of the UN Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea confirm, off the record, that some of these people are indeed military but say that there are fewer than 10,000, military or otherwise, for the whole border. UNMEE also rejects claims that Eritrea has been refurbishing trenches and mobilising large forces just outside the TSZ. UNMEE's Special Representative, **Joseph Legwaila**, last week described the peace as 'tenuous', noting that 'there is no warmth at all between the two countries'.

Accusations in Ethiopia's opposition press of Eritrean incursions across the TSZ are being invented to embarrass Ethiopian Premier **Meles Zenawi** and revive controversy about the handling of the war. Foreign Minister **Seyoum Mesfin** says the TSZ does not actually divide the two armies any more and that the distance between them in some places is not 25 kilometres, as stipulated, but only 100 metres.

### Washington's favourite ex-Marxists

Ethiopia, bidding to become the USA's key ally in north-east Africa, is helping to write the agenda for regional action against international terrorism. It emphasises the role of *Itahaad* and has been giving the USA detailed accounts of Somalia's TNG, involving alleged meetings with *Al Qaida* representatives. It identifies some members of the National Assembly in Mogadishu as officials of *Al Itahaad*, *Al Islaah* and *Al Tabliah*, claiming these organisations have divided up functions so that *Itahaad* has the leading political role, *Islaah* looks after foreign affairs and *Tabliah* covers intelligence.

Ethiopia claims that Sheikh **Omar Faruk** is *Itahaad's* acting Chairman, Sheikh **Ali Wajis** is its foreign affairs chief, **Ibrahim Dasuqi** is *Islaah* Secretary General, Sheikh **Hassan Mohamed Abdi** is Chairman of the Mogadishu-wide Islamic Courts and Sheikh **Hassan Ainte** is Chairman of the Harar-yale Islamic Court. One report tells of a meeting of all these, together with Colonel Sheikh **Hassan Dahir Aweys** (head of a south Mogadishu court and commander of *Itahaad's* militia forces), Sheikh **Ali Dhere** (former head of north Mogadishu Islamic courts) and dozens of others, including senior members of the TNG up to President **Abdi Kassim Salad Hassan** himself. This event, three days after the atrocities in America, on 14 September in Mogadishu, is said to have been addressed by Sheikh **Abdurahman Hamad** from **Afghanistan** and to have set up a ten-member committee to investigate options should the USA attack Afghanistan, including consideration of Somalia as a possible future base for operations (AC Vol 42 No 23).

Sources for this include Ethiopia's allies in the SRRC, whose members are warlords left out when last year's Arteh conference set up the TNG such as Hussein Aydeed, Musa Sidi Yalalow and **Osman Ali 'Ato'** from Mogadishu; General **Mohamed Siad Hirsi 'Morgan'** from Kismayo; Col. **Mohamed Nur 'Shatigadud'** in Baidoa; and Puntland's Col. **Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed**.

Abdullahi Yusuf is in trouble after trying to prolong his presidency. On 14 November, after three months' debate, a General Congress of Elders of Puntland elected his replacement, Col. **Jama Ali Jama**, who is supported by the TNG. Its new Prime Minister, **Hassan Abshir Farah**, is from Garowe, Puntland's capital, and was Abdullahi's Interior Minister before joining the Arteh conference. Abdullahi belongs to the Omar Mahmoud sub-clan of the Majerteen from around

Galkayo, Jama to the Osman Mahmoud/Majerteen from Puntland's Bari region, where the port of Bosasso was controlled by *Itahaad* for a year until 1992, when Abdullahi drove it out of the north-east. That explains why he blames *Itahaad* and the TNG for his current difficulties.

Within a week of Jama's election, Abdullahi attacked Garowe with 300 militiamen and 17 'technical' armed vehicles from Galkayo. They seized the town on 21 November; eleven people were reported killed and dozens injured. Claims that Ethiopian troops were involved in the fighting seem to be untrue and were even denied by the TNG Premier in Addis Ababa last week. Ethiopia had sent a dozen lorry-loads of supplies, whose army escort went home within 24 hours.

Ethiopia believes Abdullahi is strong enough to take Bosasso and reestablish his position throughout Puntland. Just in case, its troops are poised along the border ready to help him. Ethiopia has been ready to fight for its allies at any time in the past few years and has done so on a small scale when it feels its interests are threatened. The largest such adventure was after 1996 in Gedo region, to destroy *Itahaad's* five-year-old administration of Luq. After that, *Itahaad* stopped trying to rule territory and worked more subtly through education, judicial processes and business, making alliances of convenience with secular groups or the TNG.

The TNG, backed by the UN, and the SRRC, backed by Ethiopia, responded fast to the post-11 September 'war on terrorism'. Each wants US support, direct or indirect, to help discredit or eliminate the other. Ethiopia wants to see the TNG emasculated and is upset that the UN Political Office for Somalia's mandate has been extended. UNPOS – like the rest of the world – doesn't recognise the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland (which split from the rest of Somalia in 1991 and is well disposed to Ethiopia).

Ethiopia would intervene in Somalia but large-scale, long-term, military activity would require help with supplies which, along with morale, have been hit by the political crisis following the war with Eritrea. With or without military backing, Ethiopia supports the convening of a National Reconciliation Conference for Somalia, under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, which includes all the north-east African states.

The National Reconciliation Conference would bring the TNG, the SRRC and all other Somali forces together without preconditions, implying that a TNG delegation would attend as a faction, not a government. The TNG's new Prime Minister Abshir is said to have endorsed this on a visit to Addis Ababa last week. IGAD is due to start consultations as soon as possible, to avert more dramatic action. But it will need to move fast. In Washington this week, the policy makers were consulting experts and debating the value of US or Ethiopian military intervention.

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# Pointers

## CONGO-KINSHASA

### Santa's leopards

President **Joseph Kabila** and rebel leaders **Jean-Pierre Bemba** and **Adolphe Onosumba** are due to meet in Abuja, **Nigeria** on 13 December to speed up negotiations to end the war and set up a transitional regime. Presiding host President **Olusegun Obasanjo** is being encouraged by **Belgian** Foreign Minister **Louis Michel** to push hard for a working arrangement between Congo-Kinshasa's big three.

Success would boost prospects for the donors' meeting in Brussels on 20 December. Its hosts are the World Bank and European Union, chaired by Belgium, which wants to set up a Congo trust fund worth US\$400 million. In July donors agreed up to \$240 mn. for reconstruction and the Bank offered \$150 mn.

Yet many think the Brussels meeting premature. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which brings armed and non-armed politicians into the talks, will not get going till late January in **South Africa**'s Sun City. The Dialogue facilitator, **Botswana** ex-President **Ketumile Masire**, needs an extra \$4 mn. for the meeting. **Azarias Ruberwa**, Secretary General of the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma* (RCD), sees little point in talking to Kabila, who controls just 40 per cent of national territory and reckons aid pledges would encourage Kabila to be obstructive.

**Olivier Kamitatu** of the *Mouvement de Libération du Congo* also thinks the donors' meeting premature. Oppositionists, armed and unarmed, suspect Michel of exploiting promises of cash to strengthen Kabila. Some EU officials see it as a **Franco**-Belgian ploy; Belgium would get finance for its exports, France would frustrate its opponent **Rwanda**; **Zimbabwe** would see its ally reinforced (AC Vol 42 No 23).

Michel and EU colleagues have been touring Africa to talk about disarmament, repatriation and reintegration of the 'negative forces', meaning the **Burundian** and **Ugandan** rebels and Rwanda's Hutu former army. He was also selling the idea of a triumvirate (Kabila, Bemba and Onosumba) to alternate as head of state during a three-year transition before the Abuja meeting.

Another scheme would make Kabila President, with Bemba and Onosumba as vice-presidents, **Mobutu Sese Seko**'s Finance Minister **Pay Pay wa Siaghasighe** as prime minister, and Archbishop **Laurent Monsengwo** as speaker. Yet another proposes a transitional president who would not stand for election; EU special envoy **Aldo Ajello**, who has advised Bemba and Onosumba to 'strengthen Kabila', backs this.

Veteran Kasai politician **Etienne Tshisekedi** accuses Michel of trying to hijack the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. In response, Belgium proposed a round table of the unarmed opposition and civil society after Abuja to prepare proposals

for the Dialogue.

The big three distrust each other: Kabila has upset Bemba and Onosumba by appointing governors for their provinces and paying civil servants there. (Bemba's people confiscated the cash.) Three rival militias sharing power in Kinshasa looks implausible. 'Two leopards don't share the same branch', remarked one journalist.

## SUDAN

### Offal and waffle

Many unusual cargoes have been delivered to Sudan in recent years, as former resident **Usama bin Laden** knows. Yet one of the strangest (though not necessarily most dangerous) must surely be the 300 haggis airlifted to Khartoum last month. Haggis is the heart, lungs and liver (sometimes the intestines) of sheep or calf, cooked with oatmeal and suet in the animal's stomach.

Ordered by Khartoum's Caledonian Society from English firm Expat Suppliers Limited, the Scottish national dish was destined for the celebration of Scotland's patron saint, St. Andrew, whose day is 30 November. Also airfreighted to Khartoum, *Africa Confidential* can reveal, were 16 kilogrammes of turnips (or 'neeps', a stolid root vegetable). Since there are few Britons left in Khartoum and therefore even fewer Scots, observers are wondering whether the sudden demand for haggis (made in Edinburgh) has anything to do with Weir Pumps of Glasgow's considerable success in winning oil and electricity-related contracts (AC passim).

A spokesperson was at pains to note that his firm was not sending Scotch whisky to wash down the neeps and haggis. In the 1970s, *Africa Confidential* can reveal, Sudan was Africa's largest importer of Scotch after **South Africa**. Today, the National Islamic Front sentences displaced people who scratch a living by brewing traditional sorghum beer to be whipped and gaoled.

Any notion that all the haggis are destined to be consumed by Scots might be exploded. Hundreds of haggis were last month dispatched to **Ghana** (especially Ashanti Goldfields), **Nigeria** and **Tanzania**. Most bizarrely of all, 250 were flown to gastronomes on the **French** island of Réunion. There has been no feedback yet.

## MADAGASCAR

### Rising Ravalomanana

Madagascans expect a close race in the 16 December presidential election when the main challenger to long entrenched President **Didier Ratsiraka** is the rank outsider, media magnate and supermarket tycoon **Marc Ravalomanana**. The betting in Antananarivo is that the contest will go to a second round in January.

Ravalomanana has enlivened the island's tired politics with some **American**-style razzamatazz. He ignored fusty convention by turning up with his family to register his candidacy – and also by avoiding personal attacks on fellow candidates.

He also owns a TV company. He's a dull orator and a fervent Christian – staff in his companies (around 10,000 of them) must attend a daily service. This could cut both ways.

Running for the little known party *Tiako Madagasikara*, Ravalomanana has also made visits to the regions in his capacity of Vice-Chairman of the *Fiangonan i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara* (FJKM, Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar) which people have indeed heard of. However, he used more material means to facilitate his political breakthrough in 1999, when a lavish campaign, with milk and other goods distributed to the poor, helped him to a surprise victory as Mayor of Antananarivo.

His target is the once-Red Admiral, seeking re-election again at 65. In the 1980s, Ratsiraka was Africa's only ruling admiral (**French** Naval Academy, Brest) amid a host of ruling generals. Reborn as a democrat, he has spent a year preparing a conventional campaign against the usual veteran political retreats, heading parties with wordy titles. His main enemy may well be economic hardship. Notwithstanding an official growth rate of an astonishing 6.5 per cent, 2000 was unbearable for many Madagascans, with three cyclones, tropical storms which caused widespread damage, persistent locusts and a cholera epidemic that killed hundreds of people. Hospitals are crumbling, the school system has shrunk, agriculture is hit by weak marketing and depressed export prices.

Other candidates include the respected but unexciting **Norbert Ratsirahonana** of the *Ny Asa Vita no Ifampisarana* (NVI) and the populist **Albert Zafy**. Politicians have been busy reshuffling alliances and failing to connect with people's concerns. The most realistic, Ratsirahonana, says he won't run and endorses Ravalomanana. So do veterans from smaller parties: **Manandafy Rakotonirina**, **Marson Evariste** and **Alain Ramaroson**. Zafy, though, is sticking to his guns. In 1997, he nearly beat Ratsiraka, though his presidency in 1993-96 was marked by spectacular incompetence, ending in his impeachment by his own allies.

The towns can deliver block votes that deny Ratsiraka a parliamentary majority but they can't swing a nationwide poll. Ravalomanana, too, may turn out to be an urban phenomenon in a rural country. One opinion poll put him 35 per cent ahead of Ratsiraka in Tana and level with him in Fianarantsoa and even Toamasina, where the President has strong connections. Yet nobody can measure the rural and small-town electorate, where the President has been growing roots for decades.

Opposition candidates have agreed to pool their second-round votes (in the French-style, two-round, system) behind the strongest challenger. If there is a second round, that would produce an implausible alliance, stretching from Zafy's old-left nationalism through the centre to Ravalomanana and the other pro-business candidate, **Patrick Rajaonary**, a former head of the *Syndicat des Industries de Madagascar*. Another candidate is **Daniel Rajakola**, also an FJKM pastor and theologian and a popular and progressive Minister of the Civil Service, Labour and Social Affairs in the 1970s.