PRESS ADVISORY

Contact Person: Eileen Kawola
(518) 438-0309

Event: Press Conference
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Date: Friday, November 1, 1991
Place: SUNYA Performing Arts Center
Second Floor Recital Hall
SUNYA, Washington Ave.
Albany, N.Y.
(building across from library)

Event: Public Forum
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Date: Friday, November 1, 1991
Place: Union Missionary Baptist Church
1 Morton Avenue
Albany, New York
(2 blocks west of S. Pearl St.)

Ambassador to the United States from the Republic of Mozambique, Hipolito Patricio, and Senior Consultant to the Mozambique government, Prexy Nesbitt, will hold a press conference to discuss the effects of the war on the children of Mozambique. They will explain some of the measures being taken by the government to help rehabilitate children who have been terrorized and kidnapped by the rebel force, Renamo.

The officials will also discuss the ways in which the South African-backed Renamo has destabilized the country in order to impede social and economic progress.

Immediately following the press conference there will be a reception at the SUNYA Recital Hall sponsored by Sigma Phi Rho Fraternity, Inc. and co-sponsored by the Africana Studies Department at SUNYA, Campus Life, BABGO, ASUBA, African Students Association, Multi Cultural Awareness Program at SUNYA and the Capital District Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism.

The Ambassador and Mr. Nesbitt will also be available to speak to the press at the evening event: Mozambique: On the Front Line in the Struggle Against Apartheid.
Mozambique gained independence in 1975 after more than 400 years of Portuguese rule. Since then, Mozambique has been ravaged by the South African-backed terrorism of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), also known as Renamo. Renamo forces target civilians, schools, hospitals, ports, bridges, railroads, rural infrastructure, agriculture, and food convoys, with the objective of destabilizing economic and social development in Mozambique. South Africa engineers Renamo terrorism to prevent the countries in Southern Africa (the frontline states) from threatening the apartheid regime.
In Mozambique, the Atrocities Just Don’t Stop

By Matilda R. Cuomo

F or many Americans, Mozambique remains an abstraction. Children and families in that southern African country are suffering unimaginable violence and death, largely without international awareness.

This suffering reflects a dimension of apartheid that extends beyond South Africa’s borders. As reports of mass atrocities and fleeing refugees filter out of Mozambique, experts on the region are blaming a South Africa-backed guerrilla organization called Renamo for the tragedy.

Their attacks are part of a vicious campaign by South Africa to weaken its neighbors. The State Department conservatively estimates that 100,000 civilians have been murdered in the past two years, and that more than one million more have been driven out of Mozambique as a result of Renamo violence.

One boy was forced to choose between shooting his parents or being shot.

The tragedy recalls Khmer Rouge massacres in Cambodia, the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide.

Warfare and homelessness have become a way of life in Mozambique. There is no vaccine to protect the children against the bullets and machetes of the anti-Government Renamo forces.

As a result of the war, the infant and child mortality rates are among the world’s highest. One in three children dies before the age of five.

Our first stop was Lhangene Center, a former Roman Catholic school for priests, that had become a home for traumatized and orphaned children. One 12-year-old boy, in a near-catatonic state, described the terror he felt when his village was raided. The guerrillas handed him a machine gun and told him he would have to learn to use it. To test his will, they told him he would have to shoot his parents or face being shot. He obeyed the orders and killed them. Initiated, he became the guerrillas’ prisoner until escaping.

Another traumatized boy told how his father, a member of the village militia, was murdered during a pre-dawn raid. The guerrillas wanted information on other militia members that the boy could not provide. So they mutilated him, chopping off one finger at a time, pausing each time to extract information. When they ran out of fingers on one hand, they cut off an ear.

The United Nations Children’s Fund reports that 250,000 children have been physically maimed, psychologically scarred or orphaned by Renamo’s violence.

A tragedy that echoes Cambodia and Armenia.

Many do not know the whereabouts of their parents, and never will. Many saw them murdered. Many were saved by parents who sacrificed themselves as decoys during deadly raids so that their sons and daughters could flee. Many were trained to kill, forced to fire on friends and relatives and can never return to their villages.

The next morning, we visited Morumbala, a camp for 30,000 refugees. In sweltering heat, men and women gathered to tell about guerrilla plundering of their villages — raping women, mutilating and killing savagely, destroying schools and health clinics, stealing crops, tin off roofs and personal belongings.

Ten thousand children in the camp had no books, paper or pencils and only five teachers. Elsewhere in the country, rebel attacks have left 500,000 children without schools.

In a hospital in Quelimane, the air was hot and stagnant. The sheets were dirty. There was little medicine. Among the men and women, there were many wounded children. Children in wheelchairs, paralyzed by bullets. Children with missing limbs, the victims of machetes. Children bearing the weight of crude, wooden prostheses. Limping children, in their mothers’ arms, suffering from malnutrition.

The killing and maiming must be stopped. If we continue to turn our backs on innocent children and families, we will be silent witnesses to yet another instance of incomprehensible slaughter.

source: New York Times
July 30, 1988
Rebels Behead Many in Nampula

Maputo, Mozambique

In July, Mozambican armed bandits rampaged through a small northern town and outlying villages, beheading many, said survivors of the massacre. "The shelves of shops were emptied and the severed heads were put there on display," said one witness quoted by the Maputo daily "Noticias."

People who fled Lalaua in northern Nampula province after the June 29 takeover by Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) rebels described horrifying scenes after reaching safety in the town of Ribaua, 40 miles away.

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(Rebels Behead Many cont'd from page 1)

One survivor said the stench of death in Lalaua had become so overpowering that Renamo had abandoned the town center and set up camp on the outskirts of town.

The rebels had raided three nearby villages, burning down more than 2,000 peasant homes, "Noticias" said.

The figure of 1,000 dead was first reported. Officials in Mozambique say this resulted from the panic state of those fleeing, and reporting, the massacre. The 1,000 death figure included the casualties in these villages as well as residents of Lalaua town, the report said. There was no independent confirmation of the number of dead.

Government relief agency officials said 4,000 refugees had arrived at Ribaua by the weekend and were urgently in need of food, clothing, blankets and medicine. Renamo, fighting since 1975 to topple the government, has been accused of dozens of massacres in the past and was compared in a 1988 report by the US State Department to Cambodia's brutal Khmer Rouge.
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON: His Excellency Hipolito PATRICIO
Republic of Mozambique

PRESENT POSITION: Ambassador to the United States
(1991 - present)

PAST POSITIONS:
Deputy Minister of the Interior and Member of the Cabinet
(1986 - 1990)

Elected Member of the Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique
(1986)

Ambassador to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Mongolia
(1980 - 1986)

Ambassador and Director of Socialist Countries Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(1980)

Head of the Division of Socialist Countries and Asia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(1979)

Head of the Bureau of Studies, Information and Planning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(1978 - 1979)

Joins Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(1977)

In his capacity at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Patricio represented his country at several summits of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance and attended summits of the Organization of African Unity, Non-Aligned Movement, as well as several key sessions of the United Nations.
H.E. Hipolito PATRICIO
Biographical Data (continued)

PERSONAL DATA:

1. Born: 3 September 1954
2. Marital Status: Married with 1 son
3. Academic Training: B.A. in Law
   Eduardo Mondlane University
   Maputo, Mozambique
   (1975 - 1977)

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