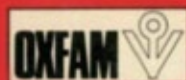
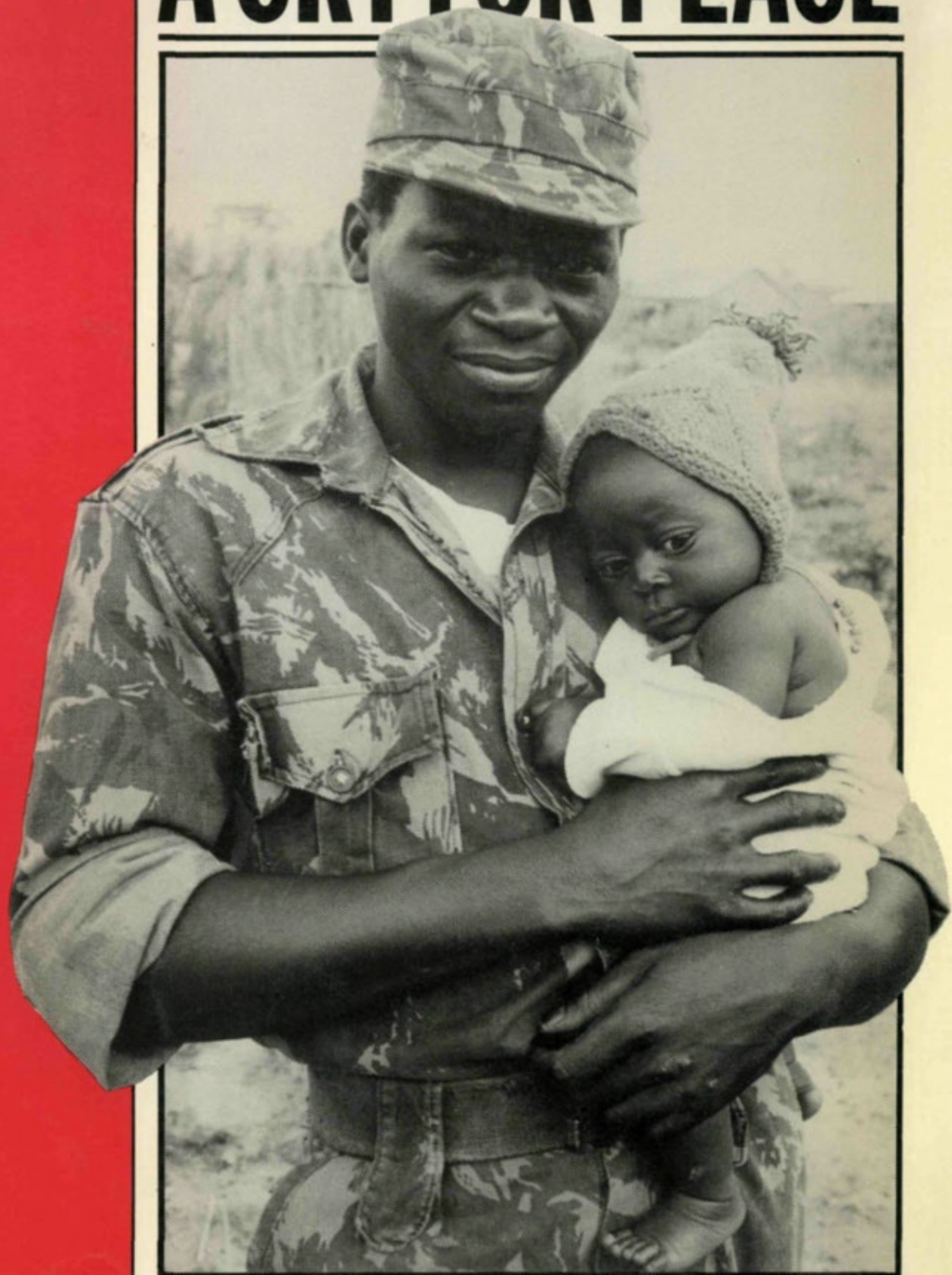


MOZAMBIQUE

A CRY FOR PEACE



A Report for Oxfam by Julian Quan

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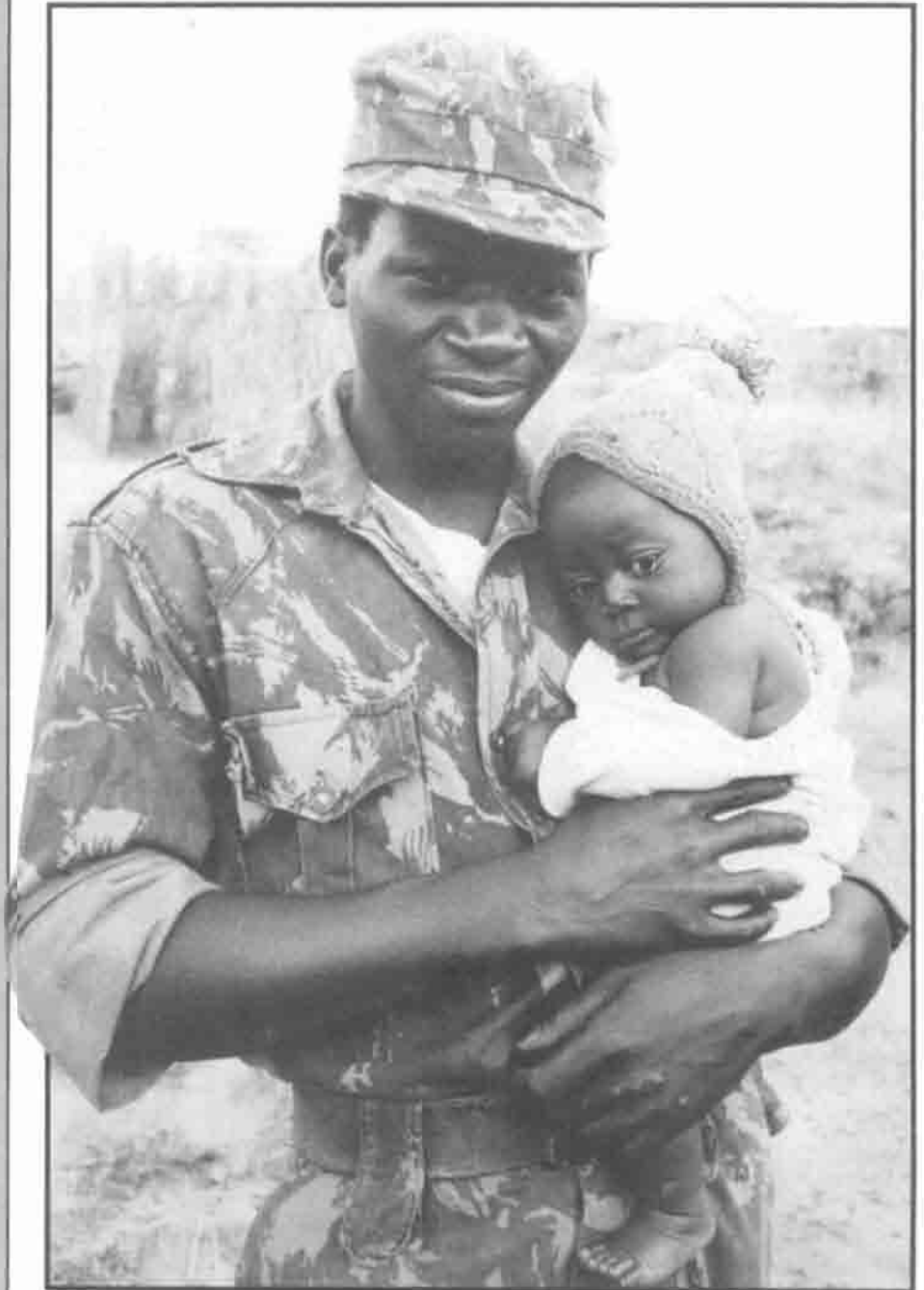
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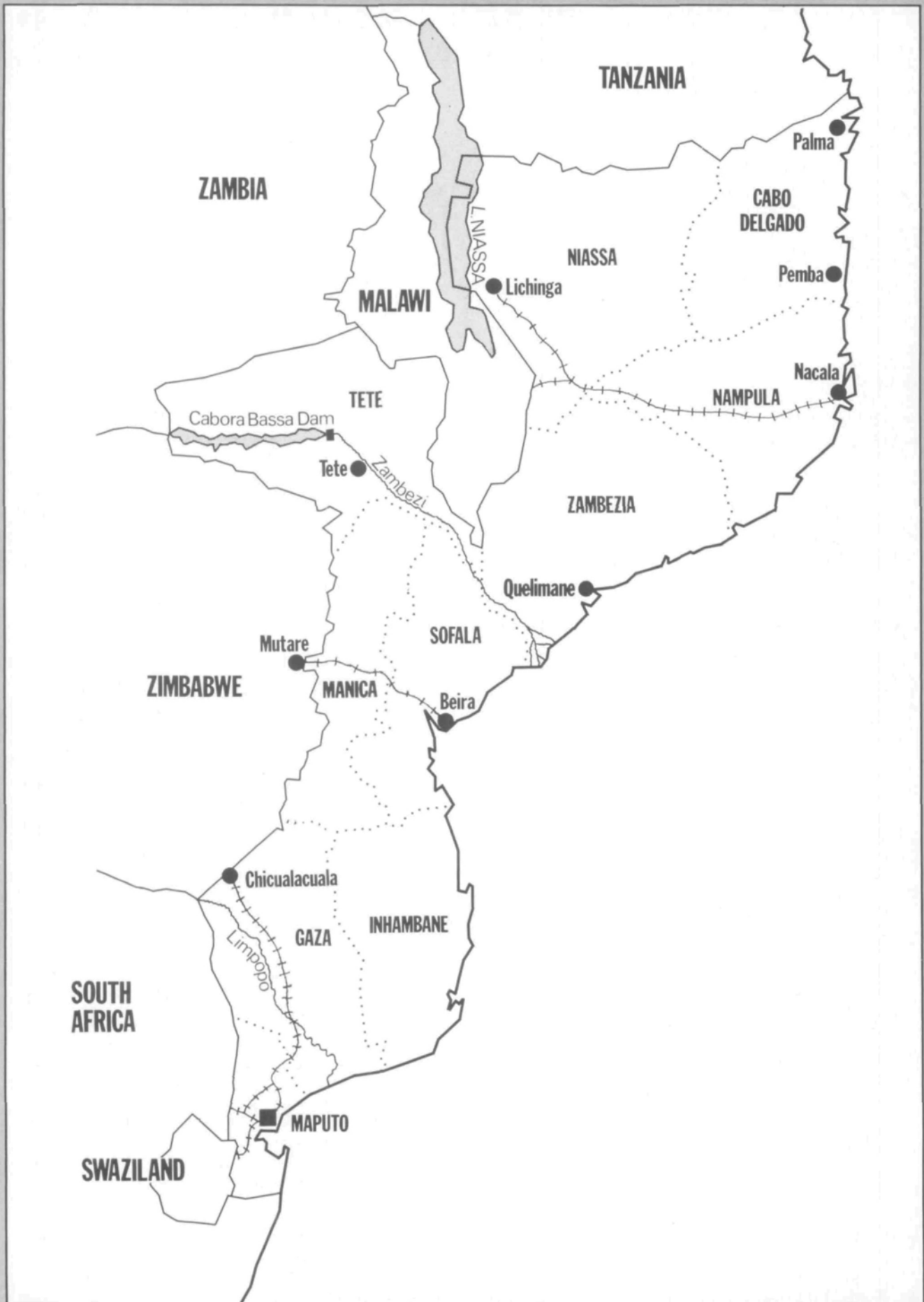


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Julian Quan,
Oxford, June 1987.



MOZAMBIQUE: DATES & EVENTS

Country Profile

MOZAMBIQUE'S peculiar shape results from a long history of foreign rule and the 19th century partition of Africa. The capital, Maputo (once Lourenço Marques) is in the extreme south, close to the South African border, the remainder of the country stretching over 2,000km to the north.

Most of the population is thinly dispersed throughout the rural interior, while the main cities are on the coast. There is a wide mix of African peoples and the population also includes Asians, Portuguese and a variety of mixed-race people. Portuguese is the national language although more than 30 different African languages are spoken.

Arab traders were the first significant foreign influence on Mozambique, trading with the ancient civilisation of the south and raiding the north for slaves and ivory. The West 'discovered' Mozambique when the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama reached its coast in 1498. By the 17th century, the Portuguese dominated the coastal regions and began occupation of the interior.

Mozambique achieved independence from Portugal only in 1975 after FRELIMO (the Mozambique Liberation Front) had fought ten years of bitter guerilla war. FRELIMO, which still governs Mozambique, established a one party socialist state. Mozambique today is an active member of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), the Non-aligned States Movement, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and along with Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana and Angola, is one of the Frontline States opposed to the apartheid system in South Africa.

Over 80% of Mozambique's people live by subsistence farming in the countryside, growing maize and other grains, beans and cassava. The climate is tropical with a hot rainy season from October to March and a slightly cooler dry season in the remaining months. The northern and central uplands are particularly fertile with rich soils, while parts of the south are prone to drought. The principal rivers rise to the west in the southern African interior and are subject to serious flooding.

The main communications routes run from east to west, linking the neighbouring states to the coast but failing to serve much of Mozambique itself. The country's strategic coastal position offers important rail and port facilities to other southern African states; these facilities are its main source of foreign exchange. Mozambique's principal exports have been: labour, to South Africa, cotton, cashew nuts, prawns, sugar and copra. All have declined in recent years. Industry and mining have not been significantly developed.

Today Mozambique is an extremely poor country seriously short of food, its economy devastated by war, and suffering heavily from its proximity to South Africa.

- 6th Century AD** Arab and Asian merchants start trading with Mozambique.
- 1498** Vasco de Gama, Portuguese explorer, becomes the first European to reach the coast of Mozambique.
- 1572** First major military expedition by the Portuguese into the interior of Mozambique.
- 1885** Berlin Conference establishes Mozambique's frontiers.
- 1891** Establishment of the three foreign chartered companies which controlled over half Mozambique's land until 1941.
- 1926** Antonio Salazar Installed as dictator in Portugal.
- 1962** Foundation of the Mozambique Liberation Front — FRELIMO.
- 1964** Portuguese troops massacre Mozambican nationalists at Mueda, FRELIMO abandons peaceful protest against Portuguese rule — the liberation war begins.
- 1970** Election of Samora Machel as new President of FRELIMO.
- 1975** Independence. Nationalisation of all health, education and legal services. 90% of Portuguese settlers leave, representing the majority of the skilled labour force.
- 1976** Imposition of UN sanctions against Rhodesia. Mozambique foregoes major foreign exchange earnings from its transport routes to Rhodesia.
- 1977-1980** Zimbabwean liberation movement, ZANU, allowed to operate out of Mozambique. Rhodesia retaliates by attacks on Mozambique & support for anti-FRELIMO dissidents. Major flooding of Limpopo & Incomati rivers.
- 1980** Independence for Zimbabwe.
- 1981-82** Anti-government forces of the Mozambique National Resistance, MNR, step up attacks on major transport routes. Increasing insecurity coincides with widespread drought in several provinces; food and consumer goods become scarce.
- 1983** 4th FRELIMO Congress introduces revised policies in favour of the peasant farming sector. Government appeals for international aid for drought relief. Mozambican economy in chaos.
- 1984** Mozambique signs the Nkomati Accord with South Africa. Despite this non-aggression pact, MNR activity continues. Zimbabwean troops help guard the main Tete and Beira transport routes.
- 1985** Seizure by joint Mozambique/Zimbabwean forces of MNR base in central Mozambique reveals evidence of continuing South African backing for the MNR.
- 1986** Fighting intensifies in the densely populated northern provinces. Government figures indicate one-quarter of the population displaced or affected by the war.
- 1986** Death of President Samora Machel in unexplained air crash. President Chissano appointed as successor. All national efforts now focus on the fight to secure the country against MNR attacks, with help from Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Malawi.
- 1987** Economic reform introduced. Devaluation of Metacal. Major UN Geneva conference of emergency aid donors. Fighting intensifies in south; major massacre by MNR at Homoine, Gaza Province.