

A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of small grey dots, with several larger red dots scattered throughout, primarily concentrated in the center and right side of the page.

# A Double-Edged Sword: Peace Support Operations and Conflict Management in Northern Mozambique

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## INTRODUCTION

Mozambique has been beleaguered by violent extremism since attacks began in 2017. It has become one of the top 15 countries in the world affected by terrorism, ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in 2022.<sup>i</sup> The causes of this conflict are complex and multi-varied, and their confluence gave rise to a 'perfect storm' that has continued to fuel violent extremism in the north of the country. Violent extremism in Mozambique denotes a growing challenge of this form of violence in the Southern Africa region, as it is also present in Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Mozambique first received assistance from private militaries such as Wagner (Russian) and Dyck (South African), who had departed by 2021 after incurring losses. Mozambique then requested support from Rwanda to assist it with containing the insurgency. Despite initial reservations by the Mozambican government around issues of sovereignty, it then also invited the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to deploy, as advised by a SADC technical mission that took place in April 2021. The Southern African Development

Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) and the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) deployed to Cabo Delgado in July 2021. The European Union also authorised a European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mozambique to assist with capacity building of the security sector in 2021.

This situational brief examines the peace support operations (PSOs) and conflict management strategies of Rwanda's forces, SAMIM and the EUTM in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. It is based on primary and secondary data, including interviews that were held with SAMIM, RDF, civil society members and academics in Maputo and Pemba between 23 and 31 October 2022.<sup>1</sup>

The brief outlines some of the respective challenges and successes of these PSOs. It contends that the conflict management strategies employed represent a double-edged sword for the country. The more progress that is made through military interventions in stabilising the

conflict, albeit in certain areas, and in allowing for the return of populations and implementation of quick impact projects, the less emphasis will be placed on the need to deal with the underlying drivers of this conflict since the objectives of 'neutralising the enemy' would seemingly be achieved. Peace acquired in this way is piecemeal, and the return of conflict is but a stone's throw away from the day of exit of the deployed peace-enforcers. Moreover, the new equipment, training and funds provided to the security sector, without an equitable emphasis on the legitimacy and accountability of the sector (despite the EUTM training, Security Sector Reform provided by Rwanda and training of police given by SAMIM under the support of the EU's peacebuilding activities), will enable a largely predatory security apparatus to strengthen and reinforce itself. The corruption of, and violence meted out by, the security sector was an underlying cause of the conflict. This paper furthermore asserts that this conflict requires a broader political solution that sees as its foundation the development of a new social contract between the state and all its citizens, and it requires much more engagement at community level to assess their peace and security needs and their inputs for reintegration and victim-centred justice and reconciliation.

## BACKGROUND

Notwithstanding the support that Mozambique has received from the peace missions, and from a broader international community, or the decline in attacks in the first half of 2023, Ahlu-Sunna Wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) (popularly known as *al-Shabaab*), the violent extremist group operating in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces, continues to pose a significant threat to peace and security in the region.<sup>ii</sup> In October 2022, the group attacked the Gemrock ruby mine in the western part of Ancuabe district, leading to evacuations from the site, as well as from the nearby Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM), a multinational company that runs the mine. In February 2023, there was an attack in the village of Nairoto, which is near the exploration site of Nairoto Resources Limitada (in which Gemfields owns a 75% stake), also forcing an evacuation of mining personnel.<sup>iii</sup> In April 2023, there were attacks destroying health facilities in Muidumbe District, an area housing a significant number of returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This suggests

that the ASWJ continues to be a significant threat to government, business and civilians in the north. Their retreat should not be assumed to be their defeat, especially if the conditions that gave rise to this insurgency remain largely intact. The presence of armed peace enforcers would mean that they have to change their strategies and tactics. Although some of their top leaders have been killed, there is doubt that this will put an end to the movement.

This insurgency by violent extremists in the north has led to thousands of security force personnel, civilians and insurgents being killed and scores of civilians, especially women and children, being forcibly displaced. More than 6500 people have been killed since October 2017, more than a million displaced, and only 420 200 had returned to their homes by June 2023.<sup>iv</sup> Efforts are being made to resettle IDPs in areas previously attacked, such as the towns of Mocímboa da Praia and Palma. There is, however, still a large degree of human insecurity in these areas with attacks on returnees, food scarcity, the lack of access to basic services and health care remaining a challenge.

The causes of the conflict are predominantly national and have been attributed to a complex mix of governance, security, political and economic challenges, which together create an opportunity structure for violent extremism, increasingly linked to transnational forces, to take root. João Feijó and others highlight elite greed, socio-economic disparities along ethnic lines, and low levels of development in the context of a corrupt and illicit economy of arms, drugs, wildlife and gems<sup>v</sup> as underlying factors to the conflict. Unemployment, ethnicity, natural resource exploitation, land grabbing, political and economic marginalisation, organised crime and the influence of external actors are highlighted by Chingotwana, Siduma, Hendricks and Van Nieuwkerk.<sup>vi</sup> The decades of marginalisation by central government can also be attributed to the political contestation as these areas were RENAMO strongholds. The discovery of rubies in Montepuez and liquified natural gas (LNG) off the coast of the Rovuma Basin, and the lack of opportunities for the local population to benefit from these discoveries, further exacerbated feelings of marginalisation and exclu-

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, we were unable to secure responses from EUTM and FADM.

sion. In 2016, the province saw the entry of multinational companies, such as the French TotalEnergies and Italian Eni, which heightened the skewed development already characteristic of this area, where only a few, predominantly from the south, are the main beneficiaries of the exploitation of natural resources. Resentment surfaced among the local population who, because of decades of deprivation, including the lack of formal education, were unable to take advantage of the new economic opportunities. The scramble to acquire land on which these resources are located also displaced many of the inhabitants of the north.<sup>vii</sup>

The conflict trigger for the surge in violent extremism seems to be related to the mass expulsion of illegal artisanal ruby miners in the district of Montepuez, Cabo Delgado. The ruby deposits were discovered in 2009 by a local farmer and are hailed as the “most important ruby discovery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.<sup>viii</sup> This farmer’s land was allegedly appropriated by a former general and veteran of the liberation struggle, and a deal was struck with the British company Gemfields for a joint venture, forming the Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM) company, which was granted a 25-year lease by government.<sup>ix</sup> There appears to have been a close association between government and Gemfields. For example, Samora Machel Jr, the son of Mozambique’s first president, chairs MRM’s board, and other ruling party leaders, security chiefs, and even the mayor of Maputo are alleged to be shareholders and directors in the company.<sup>x</sup> Many young men, including from the DRC, Tanzania, Somalia, Senegal and from Cabo Delgado saw the potential for economic opportunity and sought to benefit from ‘illegal’ mining.<sup>xi</sup> MRM’s security and the state security, in their attempts to control the area, perpetrated human rights abuses, including shootings, beatings and rape, and there were incidents of burning peoples’ houses and of land grabs.<sup>xii</sup> According to Estacio Valoi, there was also a group called ‘*nacatanas*’ (because of the machetes they were wielding, ‘*catana*’ being a machete, and the ‘*nacatanas*’ being the ‘men with machetes’) driving fear into those in the mining concession areas. Their command structure was unclear, but locals associated them with the informal security apparatus of the mining company, although this was denied by MRM.<sup>xiii</sup> Thousands of young men were brutally expelled from these mines, depriving them of a livelihood and increasing their economic vulnerability and their levels of frustration and disillusionment. Clearly,

Montepuez, and the Cabo Delgado province more broadly, were environments in which violence and displacement became an everyday experience and in which both formal and informal security provisioning exacted a heavy toll on an already over-exploited and marginalised population. This was also a province with a lack of effective state presence, high levels of human rights abuses by state security, porous borders through which traders, transnational crime syndicates and violent extremists alike could move relatively easily. The drivers of violent extremism could, therefore, be found in this combustible mix.

The first attack by the ASWJ was on 27 August 2017 at the Mogovolas District police station in Nametil village, Nampula Province where they are said to have stolen ammunition and weapons<sup>xiv</sup> and were trying to free detained friends.<sup>xv</sup> Nampula borders Cabo Delgado to the south and is believed to have been a site of recruitment, particularly from artisanal mining and conservative Islamic communities in the province, prior to the conflict breaking out.<sup>xvi</sup> In October, they stormed a police station in the town of Mocimboa da Praia and then engaged in more and more brutal attacks. The ASWJ grew quite rapidly in number, estimated at 1000 in 2020<sup>xvii</sup> and increased their attacks and casualties in 2019 and 2020, often outmanoeuvring the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (FADM). According to SAMIM, the number is now loosely estimated to be at around 600 insurgents.<sup>xviii</sup> Others estimated it as having been at 2500 at the height of the insurgency.<sup>xix</sup> It is, however, difficult to put an exact figure on the number of *al-Shabaab* as they have infiltrated communities.

The Government of Mozambique at first denied that they were dealing with a problem of violent extremism and then sought to pin this phenomenon on ‘foreign’ invaders. Despite asserted links to the Islamic State (IS), claimed intermittently by both the Mozambican government and the insurgents, the group consists predominantly of local men and women from the north of Mozambique, and they seem to have segments of the population that appear to tacitly support them.<sup>xx</sup> Interviews in Maputo and Cabo Delgado also hinted at possible connections to the FADM and to the internal factions of FRELIMO, demonstrating an intricate web of various players standing to benefit from the instability.<sup>xxi</sup> The leaders behind the group were for a long time widely considered as ‘faceless’ and their

objectives not entirely clear.<sup>xxiii</sup> This is itself telling after so many years of conflict. President Nyusi acknowledged and named the leader as a Mozambican called Abu Sorraca/Bin Omar only in February 2023<sup>xxiii</sup>; these are the names used by Bonomade Machude Omar, designated by the United States of America as a senior leader of IS in Mozambique.<sup>xxiv</sup> Nyusi's government does not seem open to the prospects for dialogue<sup>xxv</sup> and seems to prefer the kinetic option, which may halt the violence but not eliminate the ideas and conditions that fuel it. Mozambique has had to reach out for military support to assist with combatting violent extremism, and it is in this milieu that SAMIM, RDF and the EUTM have entered, at first seeking to 'neutralise the terrorists' and to 'restore the authority of the state' and then recognising the need for more human-centred approaches to preventing violent extremism.

The rest of the brief examines the current PSOs in Mozambique, namely, those of RDF, SAMIM and the EUTM, and identifies their successes and challenges. It also looks at how current security strategies, such as those relating to amnesties, demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) and resettlement and return illustrate the need for more comprehensive and community-based efforts that address the opportunity structure for the insurgency. The situational brief concludes by providing a few key areas in which conflict management can be strengthened in Cabo Delgado in particular and in Mozambique in general.

## CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF PSOS IN MOZAMBIQUE

PSOs provide wide-ranging, or multidimensional, support to a conflict-affected country. Given changed conflict contexts, these operations have veered towards peace enforcement in countries where no ceasefire peace agreement has been signed. PSOs therefore include the protection of civilians, facilitation of political processes, security sector reform, DDR, promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law and the maintenance of public order. The PSOs in Mozambique are largely those of peace enforcement as this remains an active conflict. The RDF, SAMIM and EUTM missions are assessed below in terms of their mandates and their general ability is restoring peace and security to Northern Mozambique.

## Rwanda Defence Force

Rwandan troops arrived in Cabo Delgado in July 2021 after a bilateral agreement was entered into between the two countries. It is not that often that one African country invites another to assist it with conflict management (we recall this perhaps with South Africa and Burundi prior to its re-hatting to the African Union mission). However, Rwanda is beginning to engage in these bilateral assistance agreements, as can be seen with its entry into the Central African Republic (CAR), and it more recently signed an agreement to assist Benin. It is becoming one of Africa's noteworthy countries for deploying PSOs.

The Rwandan troops were deployed with a broad mandate to "restore Mozambican authority by conducting combat and security operations as well as stabilisation and security sector reform".<sup>xxvi</sup> They are stationed around the Palma and Mocimboa districts, the areas in which LNG is located. Rwanda first deployed 700 troops and 300 police<sup>xxvii</sup> and then significantly increased this number in 2022 to more than 2500.<sup>xxviii</sup> The Rwandese peace mission is partly funded by the EU (under the European Peace Facility) who provided them with 20 million euro, largely for the transportation of troops and the purchase of equipment.<sup>xxix</sup>

Rwanda worked quickly to push the insurgents out of their assigned areas, and now sees itself in the stabilisation phase of its mission.<sup>xxx</sup> In general, interviewees in Pemba, in October 2022, welcomed Rwanda's interventions and displayed more trust in, and appreciation of, their security operations, seeing them as the providers of peace and security. Rwanda has conducted a very good public relations exercise, seeking to win not only the hearts and minds of the local population, but also engaging with journalists and researchers about its mission and its success stories and thus "controlling the narrative" of an "insurgency on its last legs".<sup>xxxi</sup> It has also positioned itself as one of the "most competent and best organised armies in Africa" and is "increasing its regional and military power in eastern and Southern Africa".<sup>xxxii</sup>

Rwanda is also engaged with escorting refugees back to their areas as it sees reintegration and restarting economic activity as a necessary step towards normalisation of society. It also offers medical support: its base



camp in Afungi, Palma, for example, contains a level 2 referral hospital, but Rwanda has also forayed into remote villages, such as Olumbi to provide health care, suggesting that it views the provision of basic services as an essential means of restoring peace through development.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Arguably, it forms part of Rwanda's ethos of *umuganda* (community work) that was also seen in the CAR and involved working with residents to create a liveable environment, which in turn helped to stabilise the security situation.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Rwanda, therefore, appears to have the necessary peacekeeping experience (it is the fourth largest troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping missions<sup>xxxv</sup>), has a well-trained and disciplined force, seemingly has sufficient independent resources, its peacekeepers can speak *Kiswahili*, making communication and connectedness in Northern Mozambique easier and, more importantly, it has the mandate, legitimacy (in terms of both approval from the central government and the local population, as well as in the eyes of the international community) and operational manoeuvrability to successfully carry out its mission. As previously indicated, its mandate allows for combat and security operations, stabilisation and SSR. It is, therefore, able to secure a territory once it has driven out the insurgents. It is operating bilaterally and with the full support of the Mozambique government. It operates with none of the constraints of being in a regional or multinational PSO, such as friction between member states, bureaucratic structures that lead to long delays in deployment, different approaches (and capabilities) of troop-contributing countries and varying levels of accountability. It can, therefore, act swiftly and decisively to dislodge, hold and secure a territory. This has brought some stability to the areas where Rwanda has deployed, largely where the gas fields are, and hence President Nyusi's assertion that the gas companies can resume operations.<sup>xxxvi</sup> There is no doubt that Rwanda has been able to bring a modicum of security to the areas it was responsible for and that it has been a win-win situation for it and for Mozambique. It will most likely be called on by other African countries to sign bilateral security arrangements, as can be seen with Benin. But is the model that it provides creating sustainable peace or is it dependent on its military presence in the area?

There is a recognition by Rwanda that governance, human security and SSR challenges have to be addressed by the Mozambican government.<sup>xxxvii</sup> However, if the government of Mozambique is no longer under threat, if 'state authority has been restored', will it have the same imperative to want to address these issues? Changing governance and reforming security sector institutions (beyond mere training) is a longer-term project – will Rwanda be in Mozambique for the long haul? Even though its stay seems open-ended for now, it will be planning an exit strategy. These PSOs are costly, host governments invariably grow tired of the interventions by outside troops, as seen in places like Burundi, the DRC, Mali, Burkina Faso and South Sudan, and Rwanda is being called on to engage in other African countries as well.

Rwanda has conducted joint operations with SAMIM, most notably in the Macomia District, to assist with rooting out extremists. During our field research in 2022, we sensed an uneasy relationship between these two missions, because of a then-perceived lack of joint planning and co-ordination, despite the initiation of a joint operation committee (comprised of FADM, the RDF and SAMIM). In one sense, these are two different missions with the same objectives and thus placed somewhat in competition with each other to prove effectiveness. They, however, need to work jointly in order to achieve peace and security through the north as opposed to only in some parts. Joint co-operation in PSOs would be given a clear political signal if the heads of state of SADC and Rwanda were meeting. This, to our knowledge, has not transpired to date. South Africa's relations with Rwanda have been strained for a while over accusations that Rwandan President Kagame murdered dissidents in South Africa.<sup>xxxviii</sup> As Rwanda increasingly assumes a peacekeeping role on the continent, it will be prudent for African countries to put their differences aside and work co-operatively towards long-lasting solutions against a growing violent extremism on the continent.

Although Rwanda has done well in terms of restoring security (rather than state authority) to the areas in which it operates, and has been working with UNHCR to return IDPs to their homes, they may not have done sufficient work in assisting with SSR. Rwanda takes two approaches to SSR – on-the-job operational training,

working alongside the FADM, and formal training. Rwandan and Mozambican security and defence chiefs have now agreed to establish joint security teams to design strategies for stabilisation and SSR, although it is unclear what this would involve.<sup>xxxix</sup> SSR requires that a security sector is effective, efficient, legitimate and accountable. It is the latter two aspects that also need to receive attention, one that 'working alongside FADM' will not be able to achieve, since this requires the Mozambican government, rather than Rwanda, to hold FADM to account. It is unclear how much training on SSR has been undertaken by Rwanda in Mozambique or what the content of this training has been. The end result can only be determined by the change in conduct of the security sector in relation to bribery and corruption, human rights abuse, and the ability to protect all those who live in Mozambique.

### The Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique

When attacks by *al-Shabaab* began in 2017, the Mozambican government downplayed the insurgency threat. SADC, therefore, only began to raise the issue in 2020 when it was becoming clear that the Mozambican government could not contain the insurgency by itself (or with the help of private security). SADC required an invitation from the host government (a pre-requisite for this deployment) before it could deploy to Cabo Delgado. This approval to deploy was only granted to SADC on 15 July 2021, following a SADC Heads of State meeting on the 23 June 2021 at an Extraordinary Summit held in Maputo. SAMIM started its operations soon thereafter in July 2021. It initially intended to stay for only 6 months but has had to extend the mission several times, the most recent being in August 2023 for another 12 months. Clearly, SADC had underestimated the time frame it would need to execute its mandate and was sensitive to the fact that it should ideally be a short-term operation. SAMIM started on somewhat of a backfoot: it had only heard of Rwanda's deployment on 9 July, and not through formal channels, and Mozambique's political elite were divided on the respective peace support missions with some supporting Rwanda and others supporting a SADC intervention.<sup>xi</sup> SADC, therefore, immediately had to compete for a place in the hearts and minds of both the political elite and the general population.

SAMIM's mandate includes:

*Supporting the Republic of Mozambique to combat terrorism and acts of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado, by neutralising the terrorist threat and restoring security in order to create a secure environment; strengthening and maintaining peace and security; restoring law and order in affected areas of Cabo Delgado Province; and supporting the Republic of Mozambique, in collaboration with humanitarian agencies, to continue providing humanitarian relief to populations affected by terrorist activities, including internally displaced persons.<sup>xii</sup>*

SAMIM was initially given a scenario six mandate that provided for full military offensive capabilities as it was tasked to 'neutralise the terrorist threat' and to restore security and law and order. In April 2022, it transitioned to a scenario five mandate, which is "multi-dimensional combining military, civilian, police and corrections".<sup>xiii</sup> The mission will now also concentrate on politics and diplomacy, economic and social assistance, protection of civilians, law and order, gender, and humanitarian support, whose tasks have been divided up among officials at the SAMIM secretariat.<sup>xiii</sup> SAMIM planned to develop a broader mission strategy, which would include assistance with the reconstruction of infrastructure in some of its areas of operation. SAMIM understands that a more holistic approach is needed for sustainable peacebuilding.<sup>xiv</sup>

SAMIM has a contingent of 1929 peacekeepers of which 1500 are from South Africa and the rest are from the seven other SADC countries, namely, Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia. These peacekeepers are stationed in Macomia, Mueda and Nagande covering an area of 52,000km<sup>2</sup> compared to Rwanda, with more troops covering 30,000km<sup>2</sup>. The SADC area of responsibility is characterised by dense forest terrain requiring air equipment such as helicopters, drones and jungle-warfare training.<sup>xv</sup> SADC is limited in its ability to provide these capabilities. It was supposed to deploy 3000 troops and was intended to have attack and transport helicopters and air and naval support.<sup>xvi</sup> Darryn Olivier has noted that SAMIM is "ridiculously under-resourced for the task it has been given".<sup>xvii</sup> The African Union (AU) has donated some equipment from its Continental Logistics Base in Douala, but this is unlikely to cover the shortfall of necessary equipment.





While SAMIM has been successful in dislodging insurgents, for example, in the Chai area of northern Macomia,<sup>xix</sup> some areas have been reoccupied, and new areas are now under threat, such as Namuno.<sup>l</sup> Ideally, the FADM should hold ground, but their troops are also overstretched and ill-equipped. The ASWJ has also changed its strategy after the deployment of troops. It now operates in smaller groups, making it harder for them to be detected, and they are often in hard-to-access areas such as the forest, or they disappear within communities.<sup>li</sup> It would, therefore, be disingenuous to compare the effectiveness of the SADC and Rwandese PSOs as if they were equivalents. They do not have the same size or force deployment. Both are rapid deployment contingents that are meant to dislodge and hand authority back to national forces, yet SAMIM does not have the capacity to dislodge, hold and secure for long periods in one area.<sup>lii</sup> They are not operative in the same areas, nor do they have the same resources (equipment, funding, political and social capital – speak Kiswahili). SAMIM also asserts that it is self-funded.<sup>liii</sup> This is, however, an impediment for their mission as it will not have adequate financial and human capacity and equipment and technology (such as drones). Southern African troops are also not that well trained in counterinsurgency. SAMIM was given 15 million euro from the EU for military support and requested additional support from the AU. The EU support is given under the European Union's Peace Facility (EPF) that provides support to the AU, and complements EU support for SAMIM's peacebuilding activities, including the rule of law, women and youth empowerment and dialogue with civic leaders, totalling 1.9 billion euro.<sup>liv</sup> At the AU, Mozambique scheduled a high-level debate for March 2023 on 'Countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism by strengthening co-operation between the United Nations (UN) and regional organisations and mechanisms', and this could be an indication that it and the peace support missions in the country are seeking more support from the UN. During the discussions, the UN Secretary-General emphasised the importance of a human-rights based approach to addressing extremism more broadly.<sup>lv</sup>

While the mission is received largely favourably by communities, the lack of resources and language deficits have meant that they needed to work harder at winning the hearts and minds and trust of the local population. The

video in which a South African soldier is captured at a scene where violent extremists bodies were allegedly being set alight also does not sit well for the respect of human rights by these peacekeepers.

SAMIM has contributed to arresting the advance of the *al-Shabaab* in northern Mozambique. They have confiscated ammunition, equipment and vehicles, and killed quite a few members of the ASWJ, as well as freed many women and children who were abducted by the violent extremists.<sup>lvi</sup> The ASJW have been dislodged from their bases and they have created safe passages for humanitarian relief.

In the end, it will take the collective efforts of SAMIM, FADM and the RDF, supported by the EUTM, UN and AU to create sufficient security in northern Mozambique. It will, however, take political processes to create sustained peace. This is the aspect that needs to receive more attention. A multidimensional force, such as that deployed by SAMIM, is a beginning, but they have to bring the different stakeholders together to fashion out viable political solutions.

### Peace support in numbers: The RDF and SAMIM missions

#### Rwanda

Area of deployment: 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>

Number of troops: 2800

Rwanda troop number target: 2500

Number of women: Approximately 500

#### SAMIM

Area of deployment: 52,000 km<sup>2</sup>

Number of troops: 1929

SAMIM troop number target: 2916

Number of women: 177

## The European Union Training Mission

The EU has been supporting the Mozambican military in the creation of 11 Quick Reaction Forces (QRFs), announcing in September 2022 that 600 troops had completed their training.<sup>lvii</sup> There are ten contributing nations and 161 personnel deployed to Mozambique. The EU has provided assistance to the value of 89 million euro. The Mozambican government has appealed for lethal weapons to enhance its robust abilities, but this extends beyond the EU's normal support.<sup>lviii</sup> The EU conducts training on human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as on women, peace and security (WPS). It further provides humanitarian support with a focus on education, access to water and sanitation, energy, nutrition and climate change.<sup>lix</sup>

The training of the Mozambican armed forces is a positive step in ensuring a greater respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, as past research by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has shown that abuses by state authorities often serve as the tipping point for extremism.<sup>lx</sup> However, training may not be reaching the breadth of the security forces, particularly those deployed in Cabo Delgado.<sup>lxi</sup> In addition, changing culture and behaviour we know is a long-term assignment that the two-year time frame (after full operational capacity) of the EUTM may not necessarily accommodate. They will in all probability need to extend their mandate. Addressing thorny issues of corruption and accountability within the security forces would be important. It would also be important to follow up on the effectiveness of this training when applied in the field.<sup>lxii</sup> The EUTM would benefit from reviewing its mandate to include strategic advice, operation mentoring, training support outside of the QRFs and most importantly, extending its mission area outside of Katembe and Chimoio to the site of the conflict, Cabo Delgado.<sup>lxiii</sup>

## OVERARCHING GAPS IN THE EXISTING RESPONSES OF PSOS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Insurgents have shown that they are adaptable and that they make their strategic retreats when necessary. They break into smaller and more dispersed groups, regroup in weakly policed areas and often become invisible as they merge into communities. The ASJW have also adopted these tactics and began operating in new areas such as Ancuabe, Chiure, Namuno and Balama districts.<sup>lxiv</sup> After a number of attacks, President Nyusi approached Rwanda to deploy in Ancuabe district, along the southern parts of Cabo Delgado where no foreign troops were stationed, suggesting gaps in support. It took two months for this request to be fulfilled in December 2022 – after large numbers of civilians were already internally displaced.<sup>lxv</sup>

In the end, PSOs are reactive: they respond to violence, or the threat thereof, rather than prevent it. They are by their very nature limited in terms of providing long-lasting solutions. They are band-aid solutions that simply provide the space for governments to begin to address the drivers of conflict: those combustible elements mentioned above that were associated with the violence in Montepeuz and which are characteristic of much of the living conditions in the north of Mozambique. Montepeuz may have been a site where marginalisation, alienation and violence were felt and expressed acutely, but it is a phenomenon that has been present from the time of independence and is also felt in central Mozambique as these two regions are the poorest in the country.

Moreover, violent extremism carries with it an ideology – a set of ideas that cannot be countered with bullets, only with alternative ideas.<sup>2</sup> Building sustainable peace, therefore, requires broader thought leadership that begins to think through creating political systems that allow for greater inclusion and meaningful participation, governance that is responsive to peoples' needs of security and belonging and the delivery of the good life. The aim of peacebuilding in Mozambique, or elsewhere in conflict-affected states, cannot be to restore/rebuild the same states and governance systems that people have rebelled against. If there is not sufficient attention paid to the development of new social contracts, the

<sup>2</sup> This was a comment made by João Feijó in the interview we had with him on 25 October 2022.





issues will soon resurface and a return to conflict will be almost inevitable. Conflict management interventions must also provide more lasting solutions that surface and address the trauma, justice and reconciliation needs at community level and the broader governance and socio-economic issues at the macro level. Key questions to be asked, therefore, are: how can stability be obtained in the short term and transformation be ushered in in the medium to long term? The former will need to focus on post-conflict reconstruction, and the recently revised AU's Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development provides a good guide. It includes a focus on DDR, transitional justice, security sector reform and humanitarian interventions. The more transformative aspects require the necessary inclusive and multi-level dialogues, state restructuring and ethical leadership to steer Mozambique once again on a path to peacebuilding. Mozambique was a poster child for peacebuilding in the past and it can be a leading example once again for dealing with violent extremism – beyond 'neutralising the enemy'.

The next section outlines some of the strategies being deployed in Cabo Delgado: amnesties, DDR and resettlement and return. These are traditionally seen as security-focused solutions, but increasingly it is also recognised that they can play a vital role in laying the foundation for peacebuilding. These interventions also illustrate the need to develop more comprehensive and community-focused responses in conflict management efforts.

## AMNESTIES, DEMOBILISATION, DISARMAMENT AND REINTEGRATION

On 19 October 2022, it was reported that President Nyusi had offered blanket amnesties to former insurgents, meaning that they were pardoned without any conditions attached and would not face prosecution after surrendering their arms.<sup>lxvi</sup> The 23 men and one woman are not considered to be fighters, but rather those that had surrendered to the ASWJ. Even so, the woman is believed to have family ties to the Mozambican IS leader, Bonomado Machude Omar, and is said to have provided food and supplies to the group.<sup>lxvii</sup> This political gesture raises many questions, particularly as communities remain fearful of further attacks. What should be the conditions under which amnesties are granted? Is there a

need for deradicalisation programmes? Should there be tailored strategies according to different levels of responsibility in perpetrating acts, particularly for women and children? And most importantly, what do communities see as the prerequisites for reintegration?

DDR often focuses on disarmament and demobilisation with far less emphasis on reintegration – often leading to the failure of these programmes. Disarmament refers to the collection of arms, ammunition and light weapons through arms-management programmes, while demobilisation is a formal process of discharging combatants through the processing of individuals in temporary centres and by them providing support packages that allow fighters to meet their immediate needs.<sup>lxviii</sup> Reintegration is the social, economic and political process that returns a combatant to civilian status, with sustainable employment. This, therefore, happens at a community level. However, as seen elsewhere, such as through DDR efforts in Nigeria and the DRC, the failure to sufficiently engage communities can give way to feelings of injustice and resentment, especially among those who have lost everything.<sup>lxix</sup>

The current amnesty offerings certainly offer incentives for those no longer wishing to be part of the ASWJ as they offer a way out for insurgents without repercussions but cannot offer a replacement for a comprehensive DDR process that also requires some level of accountability for those having committed serious human rights violations and a human-rights-based approach to reintegrating those deemed suitable. The Mozambican government can draw on lessons learnt from Nigeria's Borno State Mass Exit Model, which has enabled large-scale defections; however, reintegration into the communities remains a challenge there, too.<sup>lxx</sup>

Dzinesa argues for a whole-of-society consultative approach to DDR in the context of violent extremism that addresses the structural drivers of violent extremism, and which builds community resilience.<sup>lxxi</sup> As a starting point, Mozambique's proposed Reintegration Framework in the context of armed conflict is instructive in emphasising the role of community, in addition to the individual and family, as the three key pillars of DDR.<sup>lxxii</sup> At the community level, the framework describes giving communities tools, capacity and conditions to support reintegration. This includes vocational training, building social cohesion through peace clubs, co-ordinating stakeholders to im-

plement reconciliation efforts and giving feedback on reintegration activities in the community. On paper, this seems progressive but needs to include community voices from the onset of designing the programmes rather than being at the receiving end.

Mozambique has experience with DDR from the 2019 Maputo Accord and the end of the Mozambican civil war in 1992, from which it can learn lessons. However, the context of violent extremism is different from this in several ways. Firstly, fighting is ongoing, and there is no peace agreement in place. Although the underlying objectives of the insurgency are unclear, the failure to understand what the insurgents are seeking means that the incentives for giving up fighting are limited. The notion of dialogue with the ASWJ may be unpalatable for national-level politicians, but it may be necessary to understand their interests. This can be undertaken at lower levels, through communities who have a better understanding of the demands of the ASWJ. Secondly, while parallel policies aimed at reconstruction and development may show the benefits of peace, the reintegration of those associated with the ASWJ means reinsertion into the communities, which will throw up its own challenges. It is necessary for dialogue to happen at this level. There are already processes to put this in place underway, such as joint efforts by Mozambique's Islamic Council and the Catholic Church to hold dialogues with susceptible youths. All of these factors highlight the need for a longer-term strategy, one that requires greater co-ordination between the PSOs, government and civil society organisations, including women's groups. Establishing structures that allow for multi-stakeholder consultation and dialogue is one means of doing so.

## RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN

Another key area that raises questions over the need for a longer-term strategy pertains to resettlement and return. IDPs are unlikely to return to their homes if they believe that security is only a temporary phenomenon while peacekeeping operations are present. Currently, the Mozambican government is under pressure to provide assurances of safety, since TotalEnergies has stated that the project will only restart when the humanitarian situation is alleviated and state services and populations recoup.<sup>lxxiii</sup> However, a lot of basic infrastructure has been

destroyed, including public buildings, schools and health centres. There are also ongoing challenges in agricultural production. As Feijó points out:

*The return of populations takes place without clear structural reforms... The economic disintegration of populations, difficulties in accessing public services and justice, and the absence of spaces for participation, in a scenario of return of foreign investment and increased social inequalities, could aggravate social tensions, and increase collaboration with violent groups.*<sup>lxxiv</sup>

Furthermore, as noted earlier, while the causes of the conflict are complex, the ASWJ has capitalised on feelings of injustice among parts of the population, who feel left behind in terms of economic and political development. These inequalities need to be addressed. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is also greatly needed as a response for many that have been witness to violent acts. To what extent can PSOs deal with these issues? They can only do so by bringing in other government, civil society and international actors to provide a more holistic response to the drivers of conflict.

## TOWARDS NEW FORMS OF GOVERNANCE

The limitations of security-oriented responses have been highlighted above, as well as the need for greater dialogue with communities, that can inform both peacekeeping and reconciliation strategies, as well as deepen channels of participation more broadly. The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism recently cautioned that international actors often prefer military responses, which only address the symptoms of conflict. By directing the focus towards short-term security, which is accompanied by heavy resource needs, the nature of these responses in fact diverts attention from bringing about a sustainable peace.<sup>lxxv</sup> In Mozambique, the same critique could be levelled at the existing peace missions. Although there is an effort to broaden SAMIM's mandate and to promote economic development as well as reconstruction, these missions represent a double-edged sword, providing much-needed attempts at security but shifting



focus from addressing the drivers of conflict including critically needed reforms on governance.

In this regard, the UN Special Rapporteur further warns that stabilisation missions can limit the opportunities for social change and institutionalise corruption, meaning that, unless grievances are addressed, the 'peace' offered by such operations may not be a just one.<sup>lxvii</sup> Thus, in addressing the conflict in Mozambique, attention must be paid to developing a shared vision for the country, developing a new social contract, being victim-centred, and continuously addressing the drivers of conflict by listening more to those affected.

A failure to understand both community and larger political perspectives can threaten the legitimacy of peace operations. In their fight against terrorism, states often encroach on human rights. Counterterrorism approaches intended to 'neutralise' the enemy take clear sides, as opposed to peacekeeping operations that are meant to be impartial. When legitimate governance grievances are neglected, the population may begin to question the peacekeeping operations themselves.

It has often been stated that the solutions for the security challenges in Cabo Delgado are located in Maputo. This is a referral to the need to deal with the politics that drives marginalisation, factionalism, division and insecurity in this country. This speaks to the need for a national dialogue that can again craft a new collective vision for the society and for redefining state-society relations so that all feel they belong and that their human security needs will be met. The national dialogue has to be informed by discussions that transpire at the local level dialogues so that it is not an elite-driven exercise. It is time for Mozambicans to talk to each other, beyond finger-pointing, and time for new pathways to peace to be forged.

## CONCLUSION

This situational brief has outlined the efforts of PSOs in Mozambique to counter the threat posed by the ASWJ. These conflict management efforts have had some success, with the ASWJ temporarily retreating and some communities returning to areas such as Palma and Mocimboa da Praia. RDF, SAMIM, EUTM and FADM complement each other's efforts as they all have strengths and weaknesses. SAMIM's mandate has been renewed for another year. It is unclear what the exit strategy is for both RDF and SAMIM. An early exit will certainly mean a return of the jihadists. However, dealing with the conditions that gave impetus for the insurgency is a medium- to longer-term endeavour. The peace support missions will have to think of the few things that they can do that will provide the necessary levers for transformative change within Mozambique or else be prepared to be there for the long haul. A start could be the need to share information, best practices and lessons learnt (or not learnt), not only between the peace missions, but between the security sector, practitioners and researchers of the respective countries that are all dealing with these insurgencies – here Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Nigeria and countries in the Sahel come readily to mind. Mozambicans are well aware of their multi-varied challenges and also have many of the solutions required to deal with them. Tapping into the local voices to find these more longer-lasting solutions is key to creating an exit that will leave tangible results for peacebuilding in Mozambique. What must be cautioned is simply rebuilding the capacity of an untransformed security sector and governance structure: peace missions endeavouring to do this will find it a doubled-edged sword.

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