



Policy Brief

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Zoom Online Platform

## Policy Brief on Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue: Mozambique



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### Introduction

It has been six years since extreme violence erupted in northern Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province in October 2017, forcing nearly 1 million people to flee the region. The conflict also spread to other areas, including attacks on Palma in March and April 2021 – referred to as the Battle of Palma, fought between insurgents and the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces and private military contractors. The insurgents managed to hold the town for a few days before the Mozambican army managed to regain control; however, the town was left destroyed, and a major oil and gas company

decided to suspend all operations in the area as a result. The significant attack signalled a need from the region and the global community to respond and led to numerous calls for international support.

On 23 June 2021, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Mozambique is a member, decided to deploy a standby force mission (SAMIM) in Cabo Delgado.<sup>1</sup> In separate engagements with the Mozambican government, Rwanda deployed a contingent of 1 000 troops; this move turned the tide of the conflict, driving the insurgents out of their last stronghold, Mocímboa da Praia.<sup>2</sup>

To engage on the aforementioned, the Southern Africa Liaison Office (SALO) held a multi-stakeholder dialogue, which took place at a time when these intervention initiatives marked a year since they were implemented. While the deployment of SAMIM and Rwandan forces played a role in driving the insurgents away from strategic areas, the situation on the ground remains dire. Violence is now moving south, leading to further displacement, there is not enough humanitarian aid to address the growing humanitarian crisis, and the effects of the conflict are taking their toll on people's livelihoods, mental health and human security.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the military approach, SADC also implemented its peacebuilding support program in July 2022, which is aimed at enhancing social protection mechanisms, law and order, humanitarian assistance and capacity-building initiatives in Cabo Delgado province.<sup>4</sup> This policy brief reflects the key points that emerged from the speakers based on their analysis of the political security, humanitarian assistance and capacity-building initiatives to the crisis in Mozambique. This analysis also sought to focus on what the 42<sup>nd</sup> SADC Summit Heads of State and Governments could do to enhance regional efforts to address the ongoing crisis in Mozambique. The key inputs were given by Jasmine Opperman (Security Analyst), Zenaida Machado (Human Rights Watch) and Hermenegildo Mulhovo (Institute for Multi-party Democracy, Mozambique).

## Contextual Analysis

It is important to highlight the progress the SAMIM and Rwandan military interventions have made in the last year. The focal point of the interventions was a military approach in order to limit the spread of the insurgency but organisations working on human rights issues in Mozambique like Human Rights Watch have emphasised the need for the

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<sup>1</sup> Ionel Zamfir. 2022. "Security situation in Mozambique", *European Parliamentary Research Service*, Accessed on 25 October 2022 from

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2021/689376/EPRS\\_ATAG\(2021\)689376\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2021/689376/EPRS_ATAG(2021)689376_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Shai'ista Kaze. "SALO Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Mozambique", *SALO Webinar*, 4 August 2022.

<sup>4</sup> *Relief Web*. 2022. "SADC begins peace building support programme in northern Mozambique", Accessed on 25 October 2022 from <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/sadc-begins-peace-building-support-programme-northern-mozambique#:~:text=The%20SADC%20Peacebuilding%20Support%20to,Internally%20Displaced%20Persons%20coordination%20mechanisms.>

solution to be much broader than military. In this regard, SADC attempted to broaden that intervention in July 2022 through its peace-building support programme.<sup>5</sup>

The then upcoming SADC Summit of Heads of State and Governments in the DRC needed to give a clear message on the road map moving forward in the Mozambique crisis. The role of civil society in Mozambique and the region must be clarified by SADC. This should speak to the importance of a coordinated approach between SADC and other regional structures, especially civil society.

### **The State of Security in Northern Mozambique: One Year after Intervention**

There were more claims in the recent past by ISIS, indicating the growing confidence of the insurgents to fight against SAMIM and the Rwandan forces. Jasmine Opperman (*Security Analyst*) highlighted that there has been an improvement in the security situation. *“One cannot doubt that some improvement is taking place in MDP, (Mocimboa de Praia) although there are still some cells active in the outlying areas”*.<sup>6</sup>

There is one vital lesson that requires an important focus, that the military will not solve the problems in Cabo Delgado.

*“Today we are seeing Rwanda primarily focused on the Afungi area - when there's a problem in Macomia or when there's a problem in Cabo Delgado they clear the area, and then they simply step back and allow these cells to resurface. We are seeing it more specifically in Macomia, which raises a red flag.”*<sup>7</sup>

The concentration of foreign forces in the northern districts of Cabo Delgado prompted the insurgents to split into smaller, dispersed cells, with some units relocating to safer, southern districts which had not previously witnessed significant combat.<sup>8</sup> According to Sierra Ballard (*Center for Strategic and International Studies*), the insurgents in Mozambique have adopted new approaches in order to challenge the advancements by SAMIM and Rwandan forces. The group have continued small-scale hit-and-run attacks in the northern part of Mozambique. This stretched government forces thin and undermined government claims that it had restored order to the area. During this dialogue, this approach that insurgent groups have adopted was emphasised by Jasmine Opperman. She noted the fact that the modus operandi of these insurgents is changing on a day-to-day basis - they are changing tactics and are trying to survive the SADC and Rwandan intervention.<sup>9</sup>

Reports indicate that fighters operating in the southern districts of Cabo Delgado have maintained the same tactical approach used in their former geographic base. They

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Jasmine Opperman. “SALO Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Mozambique”, SALO Webinar, 4 August 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Sierra Ballard. 2022. “Enhancing Humanitarian Aid and Security in Northern Mozambique”, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Accessed on 28 October 2022 from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/enhancing-humanitarian-aid-and-security-northern-mozambique>

<sup>9</sup> Jasmine Opperman. “SALO Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Mozambique”, SALO Webinar, 4 August 2022.

attack civilians and loot villages for supplies. Civilians are now the group's primary target, despite recent engagements with military forces. In this regard the existing narrative to justify intensifying a military solution without any regard for those that are being impacted on a day-to-day basis by this conflict is a challenge.

### **Deteriorating Humanitarian Situation and Human Security**

While the current security approach does offer a glimmer of hope, more work needs to be done to get to a point where the region can start to think about rebuilding people's lives in Cabo Delgado. The major focus on security and military solutions from the national leadership in Mozambique and from SADC has not offered insight into the critical issue of humanitarian assistance and human security challenges. There are already plans in place for rebuilding, yet there are no signals that the insurgents have really been weakened.<sup>10</sup>

In her presentation, Zenaida Machado (*Human Rights Watch*) highlighted the fact that people have fled the conflict, moving from Macomia to Pemba, but in Pemba they failed to get the right assistance from the government. The challenges in providing humanitarian assistance are hindered by the small-scale attacks that the insurgents have conducted in these areas. These attacks make it difficult for humanitarian aid to reach the targeted population, especially women and children.

Furthermore, one of the key issues that have influenced the movement of people to different areas in northern Mozambique is the lack of funding. According to Machado, *"humanitarian groups have said over and over and just last week, they again made a call for funding"*.<sup>11</sup> She argued that the Mozambican conflict is competing with other global conflicts for funding like the Ukrainian and the Ethiopian conflict.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that there have been difficulties for humanitarian organisations to fundraise and give the displaced people the basic conditions that are required.

Humanitarian groups operating in northern Mozambique are not yet able to get to people in regions affected on their own - they rely on the security forces. The situation on the ground poses major challenges in terms of creating a pathway to allow affected civilians to access humanitarian aid. In cases where people need aid, they have to go to areas where it is easy to access these resources. These areas are far from Cabo Delgado, according to Zenaida Machado they include, Chuire, Pemba, and Montepuez. But these areas are further down and difficult to get to for ordinary Mozambicans affected by the conflict. Relatedly, Machado pointed out that:

*"If they are farther down somewhere, maybe in Palma outside the main town, it becomes difficult for them to have access to humanitarian aid, unless, of course, the protected convoys get to them"*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Zenaida Machado. "SALO Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Mozambique", *SALO Webinar*, 4 August 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

It is also important to take notice of food insecurity in the region. According to Machado there are about 900,000 displaced people. A large part of them have returned to their regions of origin. The key question regarding their return is:

*“Whether they have been able to go back to their fields and produce food. A large part of the Mozambican population is reliant on agriculture, they produce their own food, and the numbers we are talking about are people who depend on humanitarian aid.”<sup>14</sup>*

People who have been displaced from their homes have not produced food for the past few years since the crisis started. Some groups that deal directly with food security have already raised the alert that Mozambique may soon - apart from a conflict - be talking about anger in some regions of Cabo Delgado. In July 2022, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) warned that northern Mozambique’s displacement crisis risked becoming a hunger emergency as more families continued to flee violence.<sup>15</sup> The WFP suspended food distribution to the Palma district in March 2021 due to security risks.<sup>16</sup> The provisions of assistance will only resume when access to the affected region has improved, meaning that an increase in small-scale attacks hinders providing such provisions in Cabo Delgado.

### Protection of Women and Children

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Mozambique's Resident Representative, Berangere Boell, *"one in four people displaced by the conflict are women of reproductive age. Their needs cannot be ignored, and as the conflict continues, their vulnerability and exposure to gender-based violence and health-related complications increase dramatically"*.<sup>17</sup>

The UNFPA stated that the conflict in northern Mozambique has caused health facilities in eight districts to close, which has affected over half a million people, which includes *"displaced women who face a greater risk of complications during childbirth without access to obstetric care, as well as female survivors of violence who may experience greater vulnerabilities without immediate access to protection services or post-rape care"*.<sup>18</sup>

During the SALO dialogue, Zenaida Machado stated that almost 70% of the people affected by this conflict are women and children. This means that moving forward in building society post this conflict, a lot of responsibility will be on the women. Machado

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> *World Food Programme*. 2021. "Displacement crisis driving up hunger rates in northern Mozambique as families flee violence", 6 July 2022. Accessed on 28 October 2022 from <https://www.wfp.org/news/displacement-crisis-driving-hunger-rates-northern-mozambique-families-flee-violence>

<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2022. "Mozambique Events of 2021", *World Report 2022*. Accessed on 30 October 2022 from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/mozambique#:~:text=The%20human%20rights%20situation%20in,displacement%20of%20over%20800%2C000%20people>.

<sup>17</sup> *AllAfrica*. 2022. "Norway Donates U.S.\$3.1 Million to Protect Women and Children", 16 June 2022. Accessed on 30 October 2022 from <https://allafrica.com/stories/202206170179.html>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

shared how in the past two to three years she has interviewed a lot of women in this conflict, and a common thing among them is that they have received none or very little mental health assistance.<sup>19</sup>

There is no effort to understand women's concerns in an attempt to address the ongoing conflict in Cabo Delgado. Key concerns regarding the future of Cabo Delgado must include dialogue with women and children affected by the conflict. There is a need for the Mozambican government to have a strategy on how to include women in the dialogue during the crisis and after the crisis on how to rebuild Cabo Delgado.

### **Accountability and Justice in Northern Mozambique**

Zenaida Machado raised an issue regarding the lack of information from Cabo Delgado in terms of what is happening on the ground and the way forward for the region. The ongoing crisis requires all stakeholders to share information regarding the strategies to be adopted and the expected outcomes. In an inclusive manner, this would have to tackle the challenge of justice and accountability for the human rights abuses and crimes that have been committed.

Machado pointed out that people on the ground do not have information on the number of people arrested and what has happened to them post-arrest or their current location and whether they will stand trial.

There is nothing coming from the judiciary, which is tasked to take up those cases and follow them appropriately according to international standards. The judiciary is responsible to play its role in providing the justice that people deserve. The right to justice is a human right, regardless of who the detainees are. So far, such a conversation about justice and accountability has not started. The conflict has been ongoing for nearly five years but there has been no clear discussion about justice and accountability. *"Do they want to give them amnesty? Do they want to forgive them? What do communities gain from giving them amnesty?"* Zenaida Machado asked. This is critical when it comes to post-conflict reconstruction and attaining lasting peace in Cabo Delgado.

### **The Role of the Military and Affected Communities**

One crucial aspect is the issue of trust and fear. The fact that communities are living in fear, and the fact that there are over 900,000 Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) tells us something about the environment in Cabo Delgado. The communities indicate a lack of trust because the communities are extremely critical towards SAMIM. The Rwandan Armed Forces have managed to win over the trust of local communities, while SAMIM has not managed to do so.

Hermenegildo Mulhovo (*Institute for Multi-party Democracy, Mozambique*) pointed out that the effects of the conflict on communities are not prioritised, and the issue of looking at human rights abuses in the conflict in Mozambique seems to indicate a historic trend.

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<sup>19</sup> Zenaida Machado. "SALO Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Mozambique", *SALO Webinar*, 4 August 2022

*“If you look back at the conflict between RENAMO and the government, what happens is towards the end, they signed the peace deal. They sign the blank amnesty. They are now sharing the package of social integration and the finances around it, but there's no conversation about what happened to those who lost their houses, that lost their relatives, that have not heard from their husbands that were taken away.”<sup>20</sup>*

The fear on the ground is that the Mozambican conflicts end with solutions for those that started the conflict, never for those that were victims of the conflict. This points to a lack of justice and accountability from the leadership. In all that is taking place in northern Mozambique, the role of the communities seems limited in scope. Information sharing should be at the centre of the approach adopted by the Mozambique government and SADC. This will enable a coherent approach to effectively address the problem honestly and truthfully to be able to build a sustainable solution in terms of building peace and ensuring human security.

### Key Recommendations

- **SADC must build capacity in its initiatives to deal with the issues in Cabo Delgado accordingly:** The proposed initiative to send a delegation of experts from member states should have had clear strategies and capacity to deal with the issues on the ground as indicated by the mandate given to them by SADC. This capacity should also speak to issues of funding and having enough resources for such activities to take place in Mozambique.
- **In any initiative, SADC must look at employing its existing strategies on bottom-up approaches in Cabo Delgado:** This must include the role of women in peace and security, the recommendations of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and the SADC Strategy on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>21</sup> The document recognises that, *“there is a wide-spread acknowledgement that war and peace are gendered. Conflict and post-conflict situations have a differential impact on women, men, girls and boys”*. It then states that SADC’s Gender Unit is given a responsibility to *“play a supporting and monitoring role to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into the work of the SADC Peace and Security Architecture”*.<sup>22</sup>
- **SADC must provide a shared framework for the activities it envisions in Mozambique in its effort to end the conflict:** This should reflect a clear roadmap, measurable milestones, and political will. The other targeted approach should be on issues of mutual understanding within the region. This should address the question of buy-in from Mozambicans and other member states.
- **SAMIM must start engaging communities and seek to form alliances with different structures of the Mozambican society in Cabo Delgado to**

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<sup>20</sup> Hermenegildo Mulhovo. “SALO Public Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Mozambique”, *SALO Webinar*, 4 August 2022

<sup>21</sup> *Regional Strategy on Women, Peace and Security 2018 - 2022*. Southern African Development Community. 2018. Accessed on 19 November 2022 from <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/RAP-2018-2022-SADC.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

**address the issue of fear and mistrust:** This is only possible if SAMIM adopts a strategy that is not entirely informed by military approaches, but by cooperation between it and the communities. Information sharing is critical in this strategy.

- **SADC should look for more support for Civil Society Organisations:** This SADC support should seek to make sure that different CSOs network with each other in the region in order to strengthen their capacity to contribute towards resilient communities.
- **Regional civil society groups should fight for their space within SADC engagements and strategies:** This is an opportunity since SADC has indicated that it wants to engage civic leaders in Mozambique. This provides an opportunity for CSOs in terms of an entry point. This also speaks to the utilisation of people summits or parallel summits around the SADC Summits.

## Conclusion

While the international community has committed itself to providing investment and support to the government of Mozambique and regional efforts to deal with the insurgency, the crisis in Cabo Delgado has continued to intensify, and conflict is far from over. Increasing violence in many areas in the province has generated new risks for civilians and the security of neighbouring regions. The SALO dialogue emphasised the fact that the current interventions should be strengthened to help deal with humanitarian challenges, justice and accountability and strategies that might help to end the spread of violence in northern Mozambique.

*The analysis and recommendations included in this report do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.*

### About the Southern African Liaison Office:



The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) is a South African-based not-for-profit civil society organisation which, through advocacy, dialogue, policy consensus and in-depth research and analysis, influences the current thinking and debates on foreign policy especially regarding African crises and conflicts.

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