

MAPUTO HOSTS THE 40TH SADC SUMMIT

Will Mozambique use its Chairmanship of SADC to mobilize regional support for the fight against terrorism?



Credits: Lusa

Mozambique will host tomorrow, August 17, the 40th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which will take place virtually due to the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the event with the motto "SADC: 40 Years Building Peace and Security, Promoting Development and Resilience in the Face of Global Challenges", Mozambique will assume the rotating presidency of the organization, whose mandate is for one year.

The SADC Summit is taking place at a time

when Mozambique is facing terrorist attacks in the northern districts of Cabo Delgado. In fact, terrorists have intensified their attacks in recent days, having assaulted, for the third time in five months, the Municipal Village of Mocímboa da Praia. On Thursday, the government said that the Defense and Security Forces (FDS) were doing their utmost to control the Village of Mocímboa da Praia but acknowledged that the situation remained "tense"¹. The Minister of National Defense, Jaime Neto, said that despite the "enormous losses of men and materials by the so-called

Islamic State, the enemy remained in the area, meaning having received additional reinforcement in equipment and men from bases outside the national territory"².

"Outside the national territory", there is a reference to Tanzania, a country that borders northern Mozambique through the Rovuma River. Both countries do not have effective control of the border and, therefore, terrorist groups take advantage of this porosity to pass material and human reinforcements, including young people of Tanzanian nationality and others from the Great Lakes region.

¹ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Governo-admite-que-situacao-continua-tensa-na-martirizada-vila-da-Mocimboa-da-Praia.pdf>

² <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Governo-admite-que-situacao-continua-tensa-na-martirizada-vila-da-Mocimboa-da-Praia.pdf>

Despite bilateral border control and defense and security cooperation agreements signed in January 2018 between the Governments of the two countries, Tanzania is been accused of not actively collaborating in operations against violent extremism and border surveillance, allowing the entry of terrorist groups and armaments into Mozambique³.

For this reason, the Minister of National Defense said on Thursday that the only support that Mozambique asked “is the surveillance of the borders so as not to allow bandits to enter our territory”. It is a “request” made to the Government of Tanzania, the home country of some terrorist leaders operating in Cabo Delgado, such as the two who were killed in combat by the FDS, namely Ndjoroje and Ambasse⁴. In the first quarter of this year, Tanzania sent an Armed Forces contingent to the border with Mozambique, a measure aimed at containing the advance of terrorists operating in Cabo Delgado. “In March of this year, the Tanzanian Government sent troops to the Msimbati and Sindano areas in Mtwara, as well as Chiwindi, in the Nyasa district, Ruvuma region”, said the Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office, Jenista Mhagama, quoted by the press⁵.

On Wednesday, August 12, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Verónica Macamo, said that Mozambique and Tanzania will “join efforts” to halt the incursion of terrorist groups in both states. “The idea is to know how to coordinate efforts to ensure that that problem gets to an end”, said Verónica Macamo, who was speaking after the credential letter ceremony of the new Tanzanian High Commissioner in Mozambique, Phaustine Martin Kasike⁶.

The situation of armed violence in the north of Cabo Delgado will be discussed at the SADC Summit, as guaranteed by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Pedro Comissário. “Security has always been on the SADC Agenda, as the development will only be possible with peace and stability. Attacking Mozambique means attacking the region. That is why some countries argue that the region must make every effort to defend stability and peace”⁷. Despite Jaime Neto defending that “the Mozambican state is still strong to fight terrorism in Mozambique”⁸, the reality on the ground shows that the FDS are failing to contain the advance of terrorist groups, even with the support of the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), the mercenary



Credits: zambeze.info

company hired by the government last April.

As Major-General Dagvin Anderson, Commander of the US Special Operations Command in Africa recently argued, Mozambique must lead the fight but other countries in the region should engage themselves. “Tanzania, Malawi, and others must help because terrorists don’t know borders. They will cross borders in search of refuge to continue to disturb the region”⁹.

Nevertheless, the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) also defends the involvement of countries in the region to fight against violent extremism in Mozambique. Without the engagement of the region, Mozambique will hardly be able to stop the advance of the terrorist groups that operate in Cabo Delgado. In fact, the involvement of the countries in the region was decisive for the liberation of some states that are currently SADC members and for the end of Apartheid, the racial segregation regime that prevailed in South Africa until 1994.

However, the great questions are: How will Mozambique capitalize on its SADC presidency to mobilize support from member countries in the fight against armed violence in Cabo Delgado? What strategies does the Government of Mozambique have to take advantage of the SADC presidency as a unique opportunity to put greater pressure on peers to look at violent extremism in Cabo Delgado as a

threat to the entire region? What will be the added value of the Mozambican presidency in the regional organization in the context of the fight against terrorism?

Another issue has to do with SADC’s own ability to tackle terrorism. What can countries in the region offer to support Mozambique in the fight against violent extremism? In addition to strengthening border control, how can states in the region become involved in the fight against terrorism in Mozambique?

These are the questions that CDD would like to have them answered starting tomorrow, the day when Mozambique assumes the rotating presidency of SADC. CDD’s desire is supported by the SADC Treaty, which places the promotion and defense of peace and security as one of the main objectives of the regional organization. The SADC Common Agenda also advocates “promoting, consolidating and maintaining democracy, peace, and security”. SADC Policies also argue that the organization should “consolidate, defend and maintain democracy, peace, security and stability”¹⁰.

It is by valuing stability in the region as a condition for integration and inclusive development that SADC created the Policy, Defense, and Security Troika, a cooperation body responsible for guiding member states and providing them with direction on issues that threaten peace, security, and stability in the region¹¹.

³ <https://www.africamonitor.net/pt/politica/cabdel-grey-2406/>

⁴ <https://www.africamonitor.net/pt/politica/cabdel-grey-2406/>

⁵ <https://noticias.sapo.mz/actualidade/artigos/tanzania-envia-militares-para-regiao-fronteira-afetada-pela-violencia-em-cabo-delgado>

⁶ <https://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/index.php/politica/97015-tanzania-reforca-seguranca-na-fronteira-com-mocambique>

⁷ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Governo-admite-que-situacao-continua-tensa-na-martirizada-vila-da-Mocimboa-da-Praia.pdf>

⁸ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Governo-admite-que-situacao-continua-tensa-na-martirizada-vila-da-Mocimboa-da-Praia.pdf>

⁹ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ATAQUES-EM-CABO-DELGADO-Estados-Unidos-dizem-que-ha-problemas-locais-que-estao-a-ser-explorados-pelos-terroristas.pdf>

¹⁰ https://www.sadc.int/files/3715/5611/3066/MANUAL_DE_IDENTIDADE_INSTITUCIONAL.pdf


¹¹ https://www.sadc.int/files/3715/5611/3066/MANUAL_DE_IDENTIDADE_INSTITUCIONAL.pdf



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