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## IN CABO DELGADO BULLETIN

RESOLUTION DIALOGUE

GUARDIÃO DA DEMOCRACIA | [www.cddmoz.org](http://www.cddmoz.org)

Thursday, April <sup>th</sup>29, 2021 | Year 1, Number 13 | Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga | English

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERIES: NUMBER 2

## Resolving Conflict in Cabo Delgado: Terminology, Tools and Processes

The second brief in the Conflict Resolution Series explores terminology, tools and processes. As an extension of the first brief, which addressed the key role of resolution dialogue, we firstly analyse conflict resolution with so-called 'faceless' perpetrators of violence, while introducing specific peace-making terminology. The brief then examines the role of amnesty and alternative livelihoods in conflict resolution processes.

### Resolution dialogue and faceless violent extremism

The primary aim of conflict resolution is to overcome violence. This is based on the understanding that non-violent conflict and competition may subsequently continue, as an inherent part of the social, political and economic landscape, but in a peaceful and manageable way. Therefore, if the perpetrators of violence are 'faceless' and largely unknown, how can resolution dialogue be effective in overcoming violent conflict? Very often, faceless violent extremist groups have no coherent ideology, no articulated objectives or demands, and no overriding leadership structure or recognisable anatomy. This is most likely due to the limited outlook of many faceless groups, and

a short-term focus on personal financial gain, while routinely seeking grievance-based retribution against their perceived enemies. However, the demand for financial gain - and occasionally an alignment of interests against common adversaries - means that local influencers<sup>1</sup> are able to induce and incentivise violent extremists to conduct activities that support other objectives. For example: in a positive sense, to release abductees. Or, negatively, rewards for securing illicit trade routes. It is therefore the influencers, and an often-complex network of interlocutors who operate between influencers and violent extremists, who are potential stakeholders in a resolution dialogue process.

<sup>1</sup> An influencer, in this context, is someone who has the power to affect the decisions and actions of 'faceless' violent extremists because of their authority, position, financial means or relationship.

As outlined in the previous brief, clarifying the purpose of the dialogue with all stakeholders and building a 'dialogue space' in a safe and private environment are vital first steps. Within these conditions, it is possible to engage influencers and interlocutors, and explore entry points to address the interests of

'faceless' violent extremist groups. While the results of resolution dialogue in this context may initially prompt a 'frozen' conflict,<sup>2</sup> which may be fragile and prone to compromise, it might also provide opportunities to broaden the dialogue to enable the tools and processes explained below to be introduced.

## Amnesty and Alternative Livelihoods

'Amnesty' and the prospect of 'alternative livelihoods' are ways of reintegrating former combatants into civilian life and initiating reconciliation processes between parties to end violent conflict. Though amnesty and reintegration raise a variety of issues, be they legal, ethical,

political or social, they are potentially powerful tools in the conflict resolution process. Therefore, the contextual application of an amnesty policy, along with the resulting advantages and disadvantages, need to be understood as part of a coherent resolution strategy.

## What is Amnesty?

Amnesty is a transitional tool from conflict to peace. It involves offering pardons and forgiveness to those individuals who crossed legal and ethical lines during conflict. In other words, amnesty is an official declaration that those accused or convicted of crimes - whether as individuals or in groups - will not be prosecuted and/or will be pardoned.

Amnesty is integral to transitional justice. That is, the legal processes employed by the authorities and international institutions to deal with a legacy of human rights abuses and to effect social reconstruction in the wake of widespread violence. Transitional justice is now widely understood by academics and policymakers as a necessary step in conflict resolution, allowing divided and traumatised societies to heal and move forward past episodes of violence.

Though amnesties are the most common tool of transitional justice, they are inherently controversial for ethical and political reasons.

For opponents, they represent a blank cheque to commit atrocities and human rights abuses, as perpetrators can expect to be exonerated. Some scholars have argued that amnesties are an inherent failure of the international system as they undermine the deterrence aspect of humanitarian law and remove accountability in divided societies. Some societies that experience traumatic episodes of violence, and then see perpetrators reintegrated and forgiven, can be more susceptible to further violence if other forms of deterrence (such as the application of the rule of law) are not strengthened.

Amnesties, however, have been proven tools for peacemakers to entice conflict parties to commit to peace processes and thus considerably shorten episodes of violence. Without amnesties - and inducements such as alternative livelihoods described below - combatants are unlikely to abandon violence as they have little to gain from a return to peace.

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<sup>2</sup>In this context, a frozen conflict is a situation where active armed conflict has been brought to a temporary end, but no long-lasting solutions have been agreed to the satisfaction of the stakeholders.

# What are Alternative Livelihoods?

Alternative livelihoods, in a resolution context, are processes that allow those involved in violent extremism to transition from a reliance on a 'conflict economy' to integration into an economic future defined by peace and stability. It is inherently rooted in the 'personal financial gain' aspect of violent extremism, as it offers a way for combatants to benefit from a return to peace as an alternative to violent ways. Since the end of the Cold War in Africa, several conflicts have festered and continued unabated because they are inherently profitable for elites and the perpetrators of violence. Alternative livelihoods seek to break this mould by making peace more beneficial than conflict.

Alternative livelihoods are a crucial tool in conflict resolution, as it allows former combatants to reintegrate and devote their energies to rebuilding society. New opportunities can

take many forms, but they have to represent an improvement on a combatant's situation if they are to be effective. Former combatants can be offered education, or vocational training in a trade or a profession, and therefore contribute to society in a peaceful and productive manner. Former combatants can also be offered employment, be it in the public or private sectors, or supported in the establishment of self-employment opportunities. Former combatants can also be offered land, or money to buy land or equipment, in order to become self-reliant farmers or fishermen. The aim of alternative livelihoods is to provide a dignified means of existence for former combatants, to ensure they do not return to violent extremism. However, this is often a long process of trust building and readjustment, as psychological trauma and force of habit has a strong influence over recovery and change.



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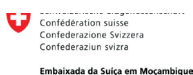
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