



PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN CABO DELGADO

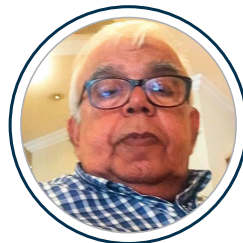
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AT THE DEBATE ORGANIZED BY CDD

Authorities, private sector and civil society recognize the importance of dialogue to solve the conflict in Cabo Delgado

Representatives of the central government and provincial government of Cabo Delgado, national and international private sector stakeholders and conflict resolution experts came together on Wednesday, June 30, to discuss strategies on how to solve the problem of violent extremism and terrorism and allow the safe return of displaced populations to their areas of origin. The online debate was organized by the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) as part of the initiative called "Platform for Dialogue for Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado."



One of the guests of honor was the Governor of Cabo Delgado Province, Valige Tauabo, who began his opening speech by highlighting the importance of the initiative of CDD: "This initiative encourages the authorities and the society of Cabo Delgado, because our perspectives and challenges will be discussed by experts who will propose informed solutions for the

re-establishment of security, return of displaced populations and resumption of investments. We want to assure you that we are open to participate in similar initiatives and openly discuss violent extremism in our province." In addition to causing dozens of deaths and thousands of displaced people, the March attacks on the town of Palma District led to a halt in construction work on the



OMAR SARANGA
(Infantry colonel
National Director of National Defense Policy)



VALIGE TAUABO
(Governor of Cabo Delgado)

LNG industrial complex in Afungi, led by the French oil company Total. Some 420 companies (national and foreign) contracted to provide services and supply goods were forced to withdraw from Palma and others closed their doors after Total declared “force majeure” on the Mozambique LNG project.

In Cabo Delgado, there were more than 40 companies forced to close due to the terrorist attacks, pushing more than two thousand people into unemployment. Therefore, the Governor of Cabo Delgado considers it urgent to mobilize public and private investment to create jobs for young people as a way to discourage the radicalization of youth and their consequent membership in terrorist groups. “Cabo Delgado continues to be a preferred investment destination.” On security in Cabo Delgado, Valige Tauabo said that the Defense and Security Forces (FDS) are permanently on the ground and committed to creating security conditions to allow the safe return of displaced populations.

Colonel Omar Saranga, National Director of Defense Policy, was the representative of the Ministry of National

Defense (MDN). In his speech, he stated that the Mozambican State encourages dialogue as an instrument of conflict resolution, but he pointed out that this dialogue will only be possible if there is a valid interlocutor for this purpose. “We advocate for dialogue guided by transparency and ethics, and we reaffirm its role in the defense of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and respect for human rights,” he said.

The National Director of Defense Policy pointed out that all social actors, such as civil society organizations, academics, the private sector, religious denominations and political actors have a role to play in restoring peace in Cabo Delgado and helping the victims of violent extremism and terrorism. “Repentant young terrorists can present themselves to the authorities and community leadership and they will be received and integrated into society,” said Colonel Omar Saranga, adding that the President of Mozambique has already instructed local structures and the FDS to receive, without retaliation, young people who repent and abandon terrorist groups.

“Prioritize humanitarian assistance to the displaced and promote dialogue,” Comfort Ero of ICG

Wednesday’s webinar featured Comfort Ero, an expert in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution and Vice President of the International Crisis Group (ICG) and Head of the Africa Program at the same organization. Citing data from research conducted by International Crisis Group, Comfort Ero said that the terrorist group operating in Cabo Delgado tends to grow and is operating by land and across the coast. “Right now we estimate about 15,000 men recruited, not only in Cabo Delgado, but also in other provinces. We look at the response of the government: without a doubt it has been very weak. The Armed Forces have been preferred targets of terrorist groups.

The research also found that there is strong international pressure to intervene in Cabo Delgado. And this pressure is justified by the risk of expansion of the conflict throughout the region: “the region can be a platform for the expansion of terrorist groups linked to ISIS. Despite recognizing the importance of the internal and external military response in combating violent extremism, the expert warned that military response alone will not be enough. “The military option may be right, but it is always crucial to consider the local aspects, the local dynamics. The government and international partners must address the causes of the conflict and regain the trust of communities and the legitimacy of the authorities,” he argued.

At a time when the World Bank is mobilizing more than a billion dollars to finance the Northern Integrated Development Agency (NIDA), Comfort Ero argued that the



COMFORT ERO

(Vice-President and Head of the Africa Programme, International Crisis Group - ICG)

money should be used for the promotion of local development, as a way to stimulate the confidence of communities. “Equally, we need to prioritize humanitarian assistance to displaced populations and promote dialogue between the Armed Forces and local leadership. Without an inclusive dialogue we will hardly have this conflict over,” he argued.

“Care must be taken to prevent military intervention from bringing negative consequences,” ISS’ Liesel Louw-Vaudran

For her part, Liesel Louw-Vaudran of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) recalled that as early as August 2020 his security research organization advocated that SADC should intervene to combat insurgency in Mozambique. “Radicalization had to be prevented, humanitarian assistance promoted, and the causes of insurgency addressed,” he stressed. At last week’s extraordinary SADC summit in Maputo, the region’s leaders approved the proposal for a military intervention in Mozambique and this week a \$12 million budget was released for the expenses of operations in Cabo Delgado.

Researcher Liesel Louw-Vaudran looks at the decision of the region’s leaders as timely, arguing that the terrorist threat is serious and the conflict may cross Mozambique’s borders. Nevertheless, the researcher at the Institute for Security Studies says that SADC is a “weak organization” and lacks the power to impose itself when necessary. And highlighted the existence of military options for Mozambique, as is the case of Rwanda, a Cen-



LIESEL LOUW-VAUDRAN
(Institute for Security Studies)

tral African country that is preparing to send special forces to Cabo Delgado. But he warned that Mozambique needs a military intervention that does not bring negative consequences. “Tanzania can play a key role in the conflict in Mozambique, even if it has made it clear that it will not contribute military personnel to the SADC intervention.”

Oil companies and humanitarian agencies urged to promote local content

Speaking on behalf of the private sector in Cabo Delgado, Yacoob Oscman lamented the fact that oil companies and humanitarian organizations operating in that province are not working with the local private sector. “If the oil companies want to operate in an environment of security and peace they must work with local business people. They must adapt to the reality of the business community in Cabo Delgado, relaxing their demands and requirements for the supply of goods and provision of services. We are seeing the effort of Mozambican companies to comply with the requirements demanded by the oil companies, but we don’t notice the same effort on the other side. We would like to have a Total that is more dialogue-oriented, more participative, and more Mozambican.

As for the humanitarian agencies, Yacoob Oscman argues that they should set an example in supporting local content in the province. “The agencies should buy locally the products they use to assist the displaced. It is important that we start promoting social inclusion



OSMAN YACOB
Private Sector, Cabo Delgado

policies. The Cabo Delgado private sector representative even proposed a webinar organized by CDD with the humanitarian agencies working in Cabo Delgado to discuss local content issues. “The military solution is important, but we have to invest more in social inclusion. Creating employment opportunities for young people is one way we can eliminate recruitment into the ranks of terrorist groups and curb extreme violence.”

Yacoob Oscman recalled that Cabo Delgado has world-class natural gas reserves, and then questioned, “I don’t know if the partner we choose to invest in Cabo Delgado is the best. Where France comes in to extract resources there is always violence. We see this in many African countries and we are experiencing it now in Mozambique. These are issues that we have to discuss. Friendliness doesn’t exist only in Mozambique. It comes from very far away and ends up here with no gains for the country.

Moderated by Prof. Adriano Nuvunga, Director of CDD, the debate was attended by the representative of Total, Delphine Fauque. “We will resume activities as soon as the security conditions are restored. We need to have a security environment to allow the development of the LNG project. We have a human rights policy and we are committed to working and dialoguing with the government and the communities of Afungi,” he explained.

On the social side, Delphine Fauque said Total will con-



DELPHINE FAUQUE
(TOTAL)

tinue to support humanitarian initiatives and closely monitor the situation of Afungi’s population through dialogue with local leaders. “We plan to continue working with provincial clusters in the area of human rights training. Thank you CDD for the invitation and I want to say that Total is interested in continuing with the dialogue.”

Improving security, promoting dialogue, and investing in psychosocial support for victims

CDD expert Richard Rands warned that there are many conflicts in Africa that have evolved to alarming levels because they have not been adequately addressed, i.e., there has been no investment in dialogue. “We have a military response that tries to contain the violence and some development initiatives, like ADIN. But we need to have a coordinated, coherent response that includes dialogue as a mechanism for resolving the conflict.”

Richard Rands argued that, despite having external influences, the conflict in Cabo Delgado has local roots and called attention to the need to prevent external intervention from worsening the situation. “We have to improve security without forgetting humanitarian, social and economic issues. But a coherent response to the conflict in Cabo Delgado passes through an inclusive dialogue and that is what CDD is promoting.”

Julie Wachave, from the Association for the Protection of Women and Girls in Cabo Delgado, started by saying that 75% of the displaced are women and children who need psychosocial support, food and shelter. “We work in the accommodation centers for displaced people where we provide legal, psychosocial and humanitarian aid. I would



RICHARD RANDS
(CDD Expert)

like to emphasize the need for psychosocial support for the IDPs. We need to have an integrated care center to assist and rehabilitate the victims of violence. We notice that there is a lack of articulation among various actors involved in humanitarian assistance in Cabo Delgado.”

In addition to lack of institutional coordination, Julie Wachave spoke of the difficulties in accessing information about the humanitarian and security situation in Cabo Delgado. “There is lack of essential information both for the organizations working on assisting the displaced and for the victims themselves. We also noticed that there is lack of legislation on violent extremism in Mozambique. It is a new phenomenon in Mozambique and we don’t have much experience on how to deal with certain cases that come to us.”



JÚLIA WACHAVE
(Directora da Asso. para a Protecção da Mulher e da Rapariga)



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