

DIALOGUE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN CABO DELGADO

## Winning the hearts and minds of communities, prioritising dialogue over confrontation and not putting business before human rights is fundamental to resolving the conflict

- For two days, Wednesday and Thursday, academics and experts from various fields, representatives of the private sector, civil society, central and provincial governments, military forces and communities discussed in Pemba initiatives to resolve the conflict in Cabo Delgado - which has already caused the death of around three thousand people and the forced displacement of over 800 thousand.



Organised by CDD as part of the Platform for Dialogue for Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado, the workshop aimed to provide a multi-sectoral platform for an open and inclusive dialogue to resolve the conflict, and which encourages “local solutions to local problems” to promote stability and reduce the risk of violence in communities

On the first day, the focus of debate was on the need for negotiation as a means of conflict resolution and the exploration of positive alternatives to violent extremism, while on the second day discussions turned to the question of accountability of national and foreign military forces deployed to Cabo Delgado to fight against violent extremists.

Representing the Ministry of National Defence, the CDD’s partner in this initiative, the Deputy National Director for Defence Policy, Maria Isabel Francisco, argued that a conflict resolution should be based on the inclusion of all living forces in society. And this assumption reflects, according to her, the need to deepen the knowledge of the causes of the conflict that has been affecting the northern districts of Cabo Delgado since late 2017

Maria Isabel was keen to stress that the Ministry of National Defence is mindful of its responsibilities in the defence of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, through the implementation of the national defence policy. “It is true that everyone may have their perspective on peace and conflict, but it is certain and I believe that peace and security are an urgency. One cannot postpone life, postponing life is postponing development,” she said it”

CDD Director, Adriano Nuvunga, contextualised the event by explaining that “development, peace and security nexus imposes that after stabilisation, there follows a fundamental question: how to explore local initiatives and the potential participation of local actors in addressing violent extremism”. Nuvunga was keen to point that despite the undeniable importance of military interventions in stabilisation, they do not address the roots of the conflict, at certain moments of their action they end up exacerbating some of the causes of the unstable situation. This makes it fundamental not only to hold the military forces accountable, but also and above all to explore alternative ways of resolving the conflict.

In fact, the CDD adviser, Richard Rands, spoke along the same lines, arguing that military forces are fundamental in creating conditions of security, but there comes a time when their presence no longer makes sense. It is at that moment that it is necessary to activate the alternatives for resolving the conflict. “In Cabo Delgado we will reach a point where the presence of foreign military forces will no longer make sense, so it is important that we start exploring the alternatives for resolving the conflict now. Inclusive dialogue is an important tool. We can work on a coordination platform that responds to the various challenges in Cabo Delgado”.

For Richard Rands, it is important that all military and security forces win the trust of the people they are defending. “Winning the hearts and minds of the communities, being together for the same purpose, is a vital tool for resolving the conflict. If military forces and communities are together on a mission, it means they can work together in the fight against violent extremism”. The CDD adviser warned that if military forces are seen as part of the problem and if they are committing violations against human rights, not only will there be no trust, but it will increase violence.

## “Resolution of human rights violations should be through dialogue and not confrontation”, Richard Rands, CDD expert and advisor

In the context of the Platform of Dialogue for Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado, Richard Rands proposes the creation of a human rights monitoring mechanism in the province. Its first task would be to produce a baseline report by mapping the various actors involved. “It is important to know how these actors think. I am talking about the military forces, community leaders, State institutions, private sector and some of those arrested in relation to the conflict. It is important to know whether there is a local awareness about human rights, whether there is a judicial mechanism to follow up on allegations of human rights violations, whether the State is supervising the actions of the military forces, whether the media are free to report on human rights violations, how national and foreign military forces communicate with each other. This work of mapping out who is who must be transparent and accessible to all



actors.”

Secondly, Richard Rands spoke of mechanisms for monitoring human rights and international humanitarian law, pointing to the media and social media as tools that can be used for this purpose. “The military, the private sector and local leaders are also sources of human rights monitoring. We also have displaced people who can be important in providing information”. One of the important aspects is the need to protect sources of information and to conduct a full investigation in relation to reports on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. “The results should be documented and shared with international organisations and all entities that may have input in solving the problem identified.”

The third moment is the resolution of the identified problems. Richard Rands warns that resolution must be through dialogue and not confrontation to avoid blaming.

“The idea is not to discuss who is more to blame. That is not what is intended. The idea is to solve problems through open dialogue and not through confrontation”. The expert suggests an evaluation committee based in Pemba, where the Ministry of National Defence, the Mozambican Defence and Security Forces, the government of Cabo Delgado, the Attorney General’s Office, the National Human Rights Commission, local communities, foreign

military forces and religious denominations would be represented.

This committee would have as observer the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is the body with the mandate to monitor the application of International Humanitarian Law. “The main purpose of the committee is to find a resolution or assume that situations of violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law have been recorded and that

measures will be taken. The committee must deliberate on the basis of each violation. While we are improving and verifying compliance with human rights and International Humanitarian Law, we are increasing the relationship between communities, military forces and government representatives, and society becomes cohesive. This social pact is one of the essential ways of preventing the spread of conflict”.

## “Business can never be more important than people, the State can never forget human rights for the sake of business”, Anton Bonnici, CDD expert and advisor

Anton Bonnici began by warning that the investment in Cabo Delgado valued at around USD 50 billion will only happen if it benefits people. “There is nothing in business that justifies the State not protecting citizens. Business can never be more important than people, the State can never forget human rights in favour of business”. For CDD expert and advisor, there is no justification for a private investment to be considered more important than protecting human rights and socio-economic investment in people. “Private investment has an obligation to respect the rights of people. Business has an obligation to work with the State to improve the quality of life of citizens”. Anton Bonnici argues that companies should not do business if they do not have the capacity to remedy and compensate for the disruptions created by their investments. “The principle of reparation is fundamental. Civil society has an obligation to demand remediation. We have already said that justice is imperfect, but working with civil society helps the State and business to find less imperfect forms of justice. The State has a responsibility to protect human rights, bu-



business has an obligation to respect human rights, to support human rights enforcement mechanisms and provide redress”.

The CDD expert and advisor also argues that international companies should do risk assessment, and if there is a risk of human rights violations they should take action so that this does not happen. “What happens is that things are always chan-

ging. For example, Cabo Delgado was not like this five years ago, so risk assessment should be permanent. And companies should work with civil society on risk assessment. As it invests in its military capacity, the Mozambican State must at the same time invest in training its forces in human rights and international humanitarian law. Friendly nations that have deployed military forces to help in the fight against violent extremism in Cabo Delgado must respect Mozambique, reminding their men and women of the importance of respecting human rights and international humanitarian law, especially in areas where there are large investments.” While recognising that investors have every right to protect their properties by using private security companies, Anton Bonnici argues that under no circumstances should they violate human rights. “Civil society must work with private security companies by raising awareness about the importance of respecting human rights. The more workers in private security companies are trained on human rights, the greater awareness they will have to avoid actions that result in their violation”.

## “There needs to be dialogue and a genuine willingness by international companies to promote local content”, Assif Osman, Cabo Delgado private sector

Assif Osman spoke in representation of Cabo Delgado private sector. Before addressing the topic on “local content”, Assif Osman began by saying that the precarious conditions in which the population of Cabo Delgado live also contributed to the outbreak and expansion of the conflict. For this reason, he argued that any military victory that may be achieved in the near future must necessarily be accompanied by a more structural intervention of an economic nature with a view to improving the living conditions of the population.

On local content, Assif Osman said that since the major investments in the hydrocarbons area in Cabo Delgado were announced there had been an exaggerated focus on the legal issue related to local content. “We had a private sector that advocated that we should have a local content law that obliges foreign companies to obey some criteria when contracting goods and services from Mozambican companies. But this is not just a legal issue. More than a law, we need to have a local content policy. This policy should create conditions for the national private sector and international companies to be able to dialogue and for there to be a genuine willingness by international



companies to promote local content. As business people based in Cabo Delgado, what we see is a game of cat and mouse in which the most important thing is to win the sympathy of the media rather than fighting for local content. The big argument that has been used by international companies for not contracting local content at the level that we wanted is the lack of preparation of the local business

community. But this is a huge paradox, because it is precisely because we are not prepared that we need to be promoted. We would not need a policy to promote local content if the Mozambican business community were already prepared and competitive, we would let it compete in the market without any promotion. The impression we get, I may be being unfair, is that issues such as quality and safety standards have been used as an excuse for the exclusion of local companies. But when international companies have no alternatives they end up using the services of local companies and at that point they forget their demands. International companies should sit down with local companies and choose five or seven areas where it is forbidden, not by law but by gentlemen’s agreement, to hire foreign companies. I will name just a few areas, such as accommodation, catering and construction material. I cannot admit that Mozambicans are not prepared to serve food to international companies. What we are saying is also in of international companies’ interest, because it is important that in the country where they are investing they are well considered by local communities, which at the moment is not happening in Cabo Delgado”.

## “Extreme violence cannot be treated as a disease, rather as a consequence of lack of alternatives and economic opportunities”, Brian Kagolo, Open Society Foundation

“When we are in a peace building process we must see local violence manifestations as manifestations of the State fragility to solve the problem of lack of opportunities. There will be no peace, development or stability if there are no alternatives for people’s way of life. Extreme violence cannot be treated as a disease, but rather as a consequence of lack of alternatives and economic opportunities. Money flows and socio-economic investments are more important than military approaches and solutions. No country has been able to solve the problem of extreme violence without addressing the problems of economic instability and it is impossible to address issues of extreme



violence without questioning the legitimacy of policymakers. In many countries, extreme violence happens in places where extractive industry is based. The extractive sector reshapes the existing socio-economic organisation in the place of resource exploitation and new dynamics are created. That is, it changes the way people used to live. For example, in the case of fisheries, when there is an extractive activity in the maritime area, the fishing activity is directly affected, damaging the source of livelihood of the communities. The most successful solutions have been those that do not attack the extractive industry, but discuss how it can contribute to local development. An approach to pro-

blems that give rise to extreme violence must be holistic. Social cohesion cannot be addressed only at local level, because

the solution goes far beyond local. It has to be regional, national, international and at the level of multilateral organizations.

But no strategy will succeed if it does not include people who are suffering from the problems of extreme violence.”

## “Only locally thought out solutions can help solve the problems of violent extremism”, Lilla Schumicky - Logan, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)

“GCERF is an independent organization based in Switzerland that works with national and local organizations in preventing violence and strengthening community resilience against violent extremism. We are in many African countries and we are working with national and local actors. GCERF believes that only locally designed solutions can help solve violent extremism problems. Cabo Delgado communities want to be heard by the authorities, they want access to economic development opportunities, because they feel excluded. In areas where the conflict is still active, it is practically impossible to carry out such opportunities, but it is important to start working in the peripheral areas where the problem may spread, such as Nampula and Niassa. Civil engagement does not work without economic opportunities and this is where private sector is called upon to intervene. We have to mobilize and work with young



people who are most vulnerable to recruitment. Vulnerability criteria are defined by local leaders themselves, because they know the factors of vulnerability to

recruitment. It is therefore important to work with institutions and agencies that are established locally. It is important to regain trust through forums where people can speak openly and freely and discuss local problems. Working with individuals and existing structures, creating and engaging platforms at various levels - national, provincial and local - where all actors are involved is the best way to tackle the problems. This meeting is a turning point not only in relation to Cabo Delgado, but also for Nampula, Niassa and southern Tanzania. This is because regional aspects cannot be ignored in the fight against and prevention of violent extremism. GCERF is ready to support, both on the Mozambican and the Tanzanian side. Change does not happen in two or six months, what is needed is a change of behaviour in communities and at the top level, and that takes three to four years to happen.”

## “We work on strengthening social cohesion to build community resilience to violent extremism,” Aga Khan Foundation

“The Aga Khan Foundation is a social society actor working on development and strengthening community. We started our activities in Cabo Delgado in 2001, so we are an actor with a lot of experience in the province. We create a model that starts in the communities, because they know their problems and the solutions to them. Sometimes what is missing, is a strategy or resources, so we are there to support them. Our model is called the Village Development Committee, where we include the issue of community leadership, women’s empowerment, youth involvement, and local governance. It’s a model we’ve been developing since 2007 and we work



on strengthening social cohesion to create community resilience to violent extremism. In seven districts we have been able to help in the creation of 212 community-based organizations, but some districts have been affected by violent extremism. In Metuge District, for example, of the 33 Village Development Committees, 13 are not active because of the conflict. However, the 20 that are active have organized themselves to receive and welcome displaced families. That’s a total of 23,203 people who have been hosted in 20 villages. We work with the Provincial Government of Cabo Delgado and with the Integrated Development Agency of the North (ADIN).”

## “It is important to have a humanitarian assistance strategy for each district affected by violent extremism,” Joana Martins, Voluntários Anónimos de Moçambique (VAMOZ)

“At the end of last April people had nothing to eat, they were living on cassava. We had children and mothers dying of anemia and malnutrition. Every day we are distributing porridge to more than 800 vulnerable people and by now we have distributed more than 31,000 meals. Since we started with the program we haven’t registered any deaths from malnutrition. We are supporting fishermen to start up in business. It is essential that the markets function again in Palma to avoid the perpetuation of food aid, we need to assist the formal and informal sectors to create job opportunities. It is important



to have a humanitarian assistance strategy for each district affected by violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. In addition, this strategy must be known by all actors in the humanitarian assistance chain. It is important that all actors recognize the role of Mozambican organizations in the humanitarian response. Many times the Mozambican organizations appear as subcontractors of the large international organizations. All the military forces that are in Cabo Delgado, all the humanitarian agencies and organizations must have mastery of and respect for human rights.”

## “Humanitarian aid must include psychosocial assistance,” Julia Wachave, Association for the Protection of Women and Girls (PROMURA)

“We work with women and girls before and during the conflict. Their vulnerability in Cabo Delgado is a problem that existed long before the conflict started, but now it has increased because of the forced displacement of communities. Moreover, in this process women and girls are the most vulnerable group. From the work that we have been doing we have seen that displaced women are discriminated against in the host communities. For example, they are the last to draw water from the public water fountains, usually after 2pm. In some host communities we have come across cases of fami-



lies that have had to give up a baby girl to get a space to set up residence, and we have also noticed many limitations in access to basic health services. The improvised houses for displaced families do not offer privacy conditions especially for women. We have created a civil society group that monitors the donations that arrive in the province, but it is not easy to have a database. Humanitarian aid must include psychosocial assistance. In the visits we made to the centers for displaced people we identified more than 100 people who had traumas.

**”Lack of information creates opportunism and bias narratives about the Muslim community,”**  
**Erick Kabendera,**  
**Tanzanian researcher**



“The Tanzanian Armed Forces accuse the communities living in the areas near the border with Mozambique of collaborating with the insurgents, of being informants. Nevertheless, the communities say that the Armed Forces only show up one or two weeks after the attacks, they don’t feel protected, and they deny being informants for the violent extremists. Another issue of concern is that the military operations against the insurgents show that there is a focus against young Muslim suspects. This has contributed to the communities’ increased distrust of the armed forces and creates dissatisfaction. There has also been a discourse from the authorities that youth and children are radicalized in Muslim schools, the madrasahs. The madrasahs are looked upon as vehicles for instructing and recruiting young people to join extremist groups. This perception by the authorities is seen as an attack by the Muslim community. The lack of information creates opportunism and biased narratives about the Muslim community.”

**“Relationship between the joint force and communities has improved, as well as respect for human rights,”**  
**Delphine Fauque,**  
**Total oil representative**



“We are working on engaging the joint force highlights in Afungi to observe and respect rights principles in their operations, as well as their relationship with communities. Total continues to engage the communities and the joint force in creating a good relationship and an environment of mutual trust. In addition, we have been seeing improvements in the relationship between the joint force and communities and in respect for human rights. Our commitment is to continue working with and support all actors involved in restoring security and stability in these areas. We also continue to support local communities in a variety of ways.”



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