



## **CDD Annual** Report 2021

# **Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado**

- Understanding violent extremism in Cabo Delgado
- Lessons from multistakeholder dialogue
- Vital steps towards resolving conflict in 2022

Maputo, **December 2021**







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## Summary:

1. Extensive research and analysis, conducted by CDD with local and international partners in 2021, provided enhanced understanding of the political, socio-economic, intra-religious, ethnic, financial, and low opportunity cost drivers of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. Furthermore, it established a solid foundation for the development of a conflict resolution strategy and plan for 2022.
2. Multistakeholder dialogue, facilitated by CDD in 2021, obtained significant stakeholder buy-in and support from government (at national and provincial levels), military/security forces, multilateral organisations, local and international private sector, civil society, and community representatives from Cabo Delgado. Fourteen dialogue-related events, plus several rounds of stakeholder consultations and capacity building sessions (including the publication of seven “Conflict Resolution Series” technical briefings), resulted in further granular understanding of the drivers of conflict, and wide-ranging lessons to inform the design of future interventions.
3. The development of a Conflict Resolution Framework, underpinned by CDD’s multi-dimensional approach to resolution dialogue, provides the basis to resolve armed conflict in Cabo Delgado in 2022, as the root causes of conflicts will not be addressed or resolved using military force.
4. A vital component of the Conflict Resolution Framework is the urgent and compelling need for a Peace-making Advisory Group (PAG-CD) to advance conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado in 2022. This is a group, centred on the reputation, expertise and high-level access of regional and international actors that listens, engages, develops solutions, harmonises resources, and communicates with multiple stakeholders to resolve conflict in Cabo Delgado. Independent and impartial, the group will focus on reconciling the interests of all stakeholders involved in, and associated with, conflict in Cabo Delgado through dialogue. PAG-CD shall respect the sovereignty and national laws of Mozambique; promote international law, standards, and best practise; and maintain the acceptance of multiple stakeholders to improve governance and economic development.

## Recommendations:

The Government of Mozambique, UN, EU, SADC, and wider international community should:

- Ensure that dialogue-centric approaches to conflict resolution are the priority in 2022, particularly as military operations are likely to reach their culminating point at the end of 2021, and development initiatives are unlikely to be sufficiently effective to surpass the pace of evolution of the conflict resulting from transnational influences.
- Provide support to the PAG-CD initiative as a vital part of a coherent strategy to resolve conflict in Cabo Delgado.

# Introduction

CDD's annual report on conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado aims to provide selected donors, partners, and associates with answers the following questions:

- What is our understanding of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado?
- What did we do as an outcome of our analysis?
- What lessons did we learn from our interventions and initiatives in 2021?
- What do we plan to do in 2022 and why, resulting from what we know now?

The report responds to these questions in three sections:

- ***Section 1: Understanding Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado***
- ***Section 2: Lessons Learned from Multistakeholder Dialogue***
- ***Section 3: Conflict Resolution in 2022***

This report is a compilation of edited extracts from analysis, needs assessments, publications and reports produced by CDD's specialists in 2021. It also contains new material, particularly relating to the anticipated trajectory of violent extremism in 2022 and the vital steps needed to promote the resolution of armed conflict and peace. The report is updated as of 1 December 2021.

# Section 1: Understanding Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado

- **History and evolution**
- **Root causes and drivers**
- **Responses and future trajectory**

The province of Cabo Delgado (CD) in Northern Mozambique has been the theatre of a violent and destructive conflict since 2017. The population has been caught in an escalating conflict between a violent extremist organisation (VEO)<sup>1</sup> - who seek to secure channels for increased socio-economic benefits (through legal and illicit trade), religious participation, and inclusion in the governance of the territories they have influenced - and the government (with support from regional allies), that has sought to maintain its control in a province geographically, politically, and economically remote from the rest of the country. Both sides have engaged in atrocities, and the population has suffered greatly from the conflict, leading to over 800,000 internally displaced persons (IDP), mostly southward. The economy of the province has also suffered, thus undermining the already limited socio-economic opportunities available for the people of CD. Furthermore, the conflict has both regional and global dimensions. At the regional level, elements of the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) and Rwandan National Police (RNP) deployed to CD in July 2021, in support of the government.

The deployment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) followed shortly afterwards. Tanzania, which shares an extremely porous border with CD, has also been a strong area of influence for the VEO, with some of its members Tanzanian nationals, as well as a number having tangible links to local communities across the border. The conflict has also been internationalised due to the presence of major multinational companies in the province, most notably due to the colossal LNG project on the coast of Afungi, and the pledge of allegiance of the VEO to the Islamic State (IS). The alleged links between the VEO and IS have prompted Western governments, most notably the US and the EU, to look for ways to intervene in the conflict to contain the threat of violent extremism in CD, identifying it with the global Salafi-Jihadi nebula. Finally, the conflict has garnered mainstream international attention following high-profile attacks by the VEO, in which foreign nationals were killed. International news outlets have thus contributed to internationalising the conflict and spreading their own narrative as to the nature, causes and consequences of the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to locally as Al-Shabaab (AS), the CD based VEO should not be confused with the Somali terrorist group of the same name, although there is evidence of linkages to Somali AS factions (see 1.4 Transnational Links)

CDD centres its balanced but in-depth look at the VEO in CD on two approaches; one, scholarly, which is informed by a variety of academic sources on the conflict. The other, based on interviews, consultations, and dialogue with local actors; analysis conducted on the ground, local news reports, and local knowledge acquired in the field. Until 2021, there was relative disinterest from the academic community in the conflict in CD. Few researchers had written on the conflict and serious publications were scarce. Some noteworthy research has, nonetheless, been published - especially over the last year - as international and local scholars have turned their attention to CD.

## **1.1 Narratives pertaining to the conflict in CD**

Alongside scholarly publications, governments, journalists, and international commentators have sought to present their own narrative of the conflict. Reviewing the different narratives about the VEO is essential, as they can offer interesting perspectives, particularly the evolution of government narratives (from insurgency to bandits/criminals to terrorists, and the occasional use of violent extremists) and the resulting local, regional, and international responses. These can be roughly divided into two categories: the ISIS-Mozambique / foreign terrorist narrative, and the cartel influencers and inclusion narrative.

### **ISIS-Mozambique / foreign terrorist narrative**

The ISIS-Mozambique narrative presents the VEO as part of the global Salafi-Jihadi nebula, with the VEO being controlled by IS, recruiting internationally, supplied, and financed from abroad, and receiving sophisticated training from global terrorist organisations. The US government, through their recent Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SGDT) sanction for the alleged leader of the VEO, and their branding of the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO), is the main proponent of this narrative. A variety of independent commentators ('jihadologists') and neo-conservative think tanks readily embrace and actively propagate this narrative in media and academia. Most major international news outlets, including the BBC, CNN, Reuters, and the New York Times, have uncritically accepted this narrative.

The has provided justification for a foreign terrorist narrative to be propagated in Mozambique and the region, arguing that the VEO is primarily influenced by foreigners and overwhelmingly supported from abroad. These foreigners are terrorists and seek to undermine the prosperity and unity of the Mozambican nation and, from a SADC perspective, the wider Southern African region. The Mozambican government hope this approach will unite Mozambicans around their regime and ensure they get generous funds to 'combat terrorism' from international partners to build military capability, while preventing prolonged regional and international military intervention, which would be damaging to the interest of the country's elites.



## **Influencers and inclusion narrative**

This narrative presents the VEO as challengers to the established order. Their struggle is best understood as a challenge to authorities to secure increased socio-economic benefits, address political imbalances and - for some - religious recognition in parts of CD. The VEO is not a Salafi-Jihadi movement, as they do not share their ideological and theological understanding of the world. The VEO has been mostly financed and influenced by major actors in the illicit and licit economy in CD. Though the originators may have their own aims and platform, likely related to increased political participation and religious inclusion, they are highly susceptible to pressures from their 'influencers' with enticements that satisfy short-term personal and collective gains. These influencers are an eclectic mix of local elites, traditional community leaders, and established businessmen. These influencers use, to an extent, the VEO to counterbalance the power of the government in the province. This narrative is supported by a variety of academics, most notably Hanlon, Morier-Genoud, Heyen and Rands, and Bonate, alongside several Mozambican researchers such as Adam, Forquilha, and Dembele. There is evidence too, that some G7 countries share this understanding (if not publicly). As of mid-May 2021, the Mozambican government started to acquiesce to some elements contained within this narrative. The government on occasions, adopted the term 'violent extremists' and the President hinted at the influencers dynamic. However, the arrival of regional forces subsequently reinforced the foreign terrorist narrative, which is increasingly likely to come true in the absence of a coherent conflict resolution strategy.

## **1.2 Who are the Violent Extremists in Cabo Delgado and what do they want?**

The VEO is a complicated, multifaceted organisation with opaque origins, an obscure ideology, and lack a coherent and steadfast strategic vision. Before we can comprehend the conflict and the role the VEO might play on a local, national, or global stage, it is crucial to explore in depth the origins, ideology, and strategy of the movement.

### **From Salafi sect to violent extremism**

To understand the nature of the VEO over recent years, it is essential to first study the origins of the non-violent movement to understand its founding principles and development. This is complicated by the relative lack of credible sources on the early days of this non-violent movement. Short of the study by Morier-Genoud, based on preliminary fieldwork, there remains extensive gaps in our understanding of the genesis of the movement, resulting in conflicting theses about its birth.<sup>2</sup> We can, however, reliably confirm a few key events in the development of the VEO in CD.

The movement started as a non-violent Islamist sect, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (ASWJ), which had gained traction in Mocimboa da Praia (MDP) and Macomia by 2014. In October 2017, under severe pressures from the government, they militarised and became a VEO. ASWJ was anchored in the radicalisation of Muslim intellectuals in Islamic universities in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> Financed by generous scholarships provided partially by CISLAMO<sup>4</sup> and partially by Islamic NGOs operating in the country, young Muslim intellectuals were sent to study Islamic theology abroad, most notably in Sudan and Saudi Arabia.<sup>5</sup> On their return, many were forced to endure spells of unemployment, while living in precarious conditions due to the poor socio-economic situation in CD.<sup>6</sup> This led a number of them to create groups which clamoured for stricter forms of Islam, to assuage some of the socio-economic problems in CD, most notably in Nangande in the early 1990s and in Balama in 2007.<sup>7</sup> This view of Salafism as a force for change and a tool of social empowerment was consistent with the global development of Salafism in the Third World after the Soviet-Afghan war.<sup>8</sup> By instrumentalising Salafism as mean of liberation, it is likely that these groups contributed to creating a broader dynamic milieu of sects that wished to apply stricter Islam, and from this ASWJ emerged.<sup>9</sup>

In 2014, ASWJ first appeared in MDP where it started to denounce the 'corrupt' and 'degenerate' forms of Islam practised in CD - legitimised and protected by CISLAMO - and clamoured for a purification of religious life by preaching for a return to the Islamic practices of the first three generations of Muslims.<sup>10</sup> By attempting to mirror the spiritual life of this idealised 'golden age' of Islam, the newly emerging sect aimed to revitalise the faith through authenticity and purity. Initially, violence was not part of their *modus operandi*.

From 2014 to 2017, ASWJ was seemingly content with living in isolation from mainstream society, focusing on building parallel institutions and insulating their community from the 'poison' of secular governance and 'degenerate' Sufi Islam.<sup>11</sup> The group had a formalised presence in MDP and Macomia, with permanent mosques and madrassas, as early as 2014, expanding informally to other districts, most nota-

<sup>2</sup> See Morier-Genoud and Habibe, Forquilha, Pereira for excellent background information on ASWJ: Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning."; Habibe, Forquilha, and Pereira, *Islamic Radicalisation in Northern Mozambique: The Case of Mocimboa da Praia*.

<sup>3</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 401.

<sup>4</sup> The Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO), a national body established through support from Frelimo.

<sup>5</sup> Villallon, "Between Democracy and Militancy: Islam in Africa." 188.

<sup>6</sup> Dembele, *Mozambique: Islamic insurgency: In-depth analysis of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (ASWJ)*, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 401.

<sup>8</sup> Maher, *Salafi-Jihadism The History Of An Idea*, 125.

<sup>9</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 401.

<sup>10</sup> Bonate, "Why the Mozambican government's alliance with the Islamic Council of Mozambique might not end the insurgency in Cabo Delgado."

<sup>11</sup> Mangena and Pherudi, "Disentangling Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado Province, Northern Mozambique: Challenges and Prospects," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 351.

bly Ancuabe, Montepuez, and Quissanga from 2016 onwards.<sup>12</sup> However, their highly atypical religious practices quickly put them in conflict with local religious authorities in CD.<sup>13</sup> This conflict was further exacerbated by the virulent denunciations by ASWJ followers of the alleged self-serving, corrupt and *bid'a* (heretical) practices of Islam in CD. The youthful leadership of the group was, in effect, accusing established religious elites of propagating a heretical form of Islam - mixed with cultural traditions - for their own financial benefit, and taking particular offence at the common practice of charging the faithful to conduct religious rites.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, they accused Sufi clerics of pandering to Frelimo elites at the expense of their religious duty to preserve the purity of the faith and work for the common good of the *umma*.<sup>15</sup> They also launched aggressive recruitment campaigns in several mosques across the province, focusing on Macomia, Quissanga, Palma, and MDP.<sup>16</sup> After the eviction fiasco in Montepuez in 2017, where artisanal miners and illicit traders were forcibly removed from the area by the military and security forces (FDS) in order to facilitate legitimate ruby mining, the group also sought to recruit those evicted by tapping into local grievances, as well as accessing firearms which were available through illicit trade.<sup>17</sup> This recruitment campaign further compounded the friction between the established religious authorities and ASWJ. Followers were banned from mainstream mosques and religious authorities started to appeal to the central government to crack down on the dissident group.

Concurrently, ASWJ also sought to undermine the legitimacy of the government by highlighting their disregard for Islamic law and local customs. In November 2015, ASWJ followers attempted to ban the sale of alcohol in Pangane, arguing that it was against *sharia*. They intimidated and attacked several local businessmen, who called on the authorities to restore order. A riot ensued in which a policeman was killed, and two militants injured.<sup>18</sup> In November 2016, sect members provoked clashes between ASWJ members and mainstream Muslims in Ancuabe which prompted the authorities to arrest 21 followers.<sup>19</sup> The ASWJ mosque in the area was also destroyed. In response to the crack down, militants besieged the police station and demanded the release of their comrades.

In November 2016, at their conference in Nampula, CISLAMO denounced ASWJ, criticising their unorthodox religious practices and accusing them of challenging the

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>13</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 399.

<sup>14</sup> Bonate, "Transformations de l'islam à Pemba au Mozambique." 71.

<sup>15</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 402.

<sup>16</sup> Habibe, Forquilha, and Pereira, *Islamic Radicalisation in Northern Mozambique: The Case of Mocimboa da Praia*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Mapfumo, "The Nexus Between Violent Extremism and the Illicit Economy in Northern Mozambique: Is Mozambique Under Siege from International Organised Crime?," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 105.

<sup>18</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 404.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 402.

primacy of the state in matters of education and governance. CISLAMO was particularly appalled by the refusal of ASWJ followers to have their children educated in state institutions and their rejection of secular law when it came to matrimonial concerns.<sup>20</sup> This led authorities to repress the sect, sometimes violently. In Montepuez, Balama, Ancuabe and Chiure, the group was expelled by authorities in 2016 and their mosques and madrassas were demolished.<sup>21</sup> In Macomia and MDP, authorities proved reluctant to act so decisively. In Macomia, though arrests were made, the culprits were released after sympathetic business elites from the Islamic community lobbied the provincial government in Pemba. In MDP, the authorities did not crack down on the group as several local government officials and traders had personal ties to its leadership and were reliant on its activities to survive, living partly on food handouts from ASWJ followers to supplement their meagre salaries.<sup>22</sup> Regardless of the reason for this perceived leniency, the sect continued to flourish until their attack on 5 October 2017.

The reason for a switch of strategy, from a counter-society approach to armed conflict, remains unclear. A variety of factors appear to have motivated this change:

Firstly, ASWJ seemingly adopted violent extremism as a response to government repression and mismanagement. Following their expulsion from several districts, and the arrest of dozens of followers, it had become obvious that the authorities - be they religious or governmental - would not let the sect exclude itself and live in a counter-society based on their radical Salafi ideology. Though the MDP branch had been spared the fate of other branches, ASWJ's leadership must have been wary of imminent suppression. As such, militarisation was not only an ideological choice, but a matter of organisational survival based on sound strategic thinking.

Secondly, the sect was likely buoyed by an influx of new members coming from Montepuez, primarily recruited from the expropriated artisanal miners and illicit traders. These men, with little to no opportunities and seriously aggrieved by their expropriation were ideal recruits for the group since their opportunity cost for engaging in violent extremism was very low. They also had extensive connections to illicit trade networks, as many of them had worked as low-level facilitators in the shadow economy. These links proved useful to finance militarisation, and the escalation to a VEO.

Thirdly, militarisation became an obvious choice because the group's finances were strong and their support among certain sections of the population of MDP was high. In late 2017, the group had secured steady sources of income, most likely through or-

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 400.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 403.

<sup>22</sup> Habibe, Forquilha, and Pereira, *Islamic Radicalisation in Northern Mozambique: The Case of Mocimboa da Praia*, 12.

ganised crime via interaction with informal traders who had extensive links to business cabals in CD (which also have extensive links to political elites). These business/political elites were likely interested in using the capabilities of the armed group to facilitate their own economic aims. After three years of recruitment, radicalisation, and expansion, coupled with the government's ham-fisted repression campaign, the leadership must have felt that the moment was ripe to escalate their challenge to the established order into violent extremism.

The picture that emerges from the origins of ASWJ, from small Salafi-quietist group to a movement with local support ready to engage in violent extremism, is one of rational decision-making influenced by a loosely defined Salafi ideology, which serves as a basis for the group's local socio-political aims.

## **Internationalisation of the conflict**

After the attack on MDP, the VEO concentrated on acquiring supplies and undermining government authorities through small-scale attacks on remote villages.<sup>23</sup> In early 2018, the VEO established a zone of influence on the coast of MDP AP, though they faced strong repression from the FDS. Locals were often caught in the crossfire of FDS operations, turning them against the government.<sup>24</sup> By late 2018, the VEO had a high degree of influence on the coastal districts of CD (MDP, Palma, Macomia, Metuge) and were slowly moving inland with increased incursions in Nangade and Muidumbe.<sup>25</sup>

In early 2019, the group, bolstered by its plundering campaign in the coastal districts and armed with stolen weapons from the FDS, started to take the initiative and sought engagement with the security forces, raiding barracks and military encampments in the vicinity of MDP. These high-profile attacks against the FDS started to be mentioned in IS propaganda outlets, claiming that the militants were 'soldiers of the caliphate'. These early successes convinced the government to seek outside help to tackle the threat of the VEO in CD, hiring the Wagner Group (Kremlin-linked mercenaries) to spearhead their counter-insurgency campaign in July 2019. Though armed with modern rotary wing aircraft, the Wagner contractors were incapable of stemming the flow of the insurgency, though they did inflict heavy casualties on the VEO. However, after incurring heavy losses themselves, the Wagner Group pulled out of the province in October 2019.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> International Crisis Group, *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado*, 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>26</sup> A precise casualty figure is not known. Our estimates based puts the casualty figure at ten.



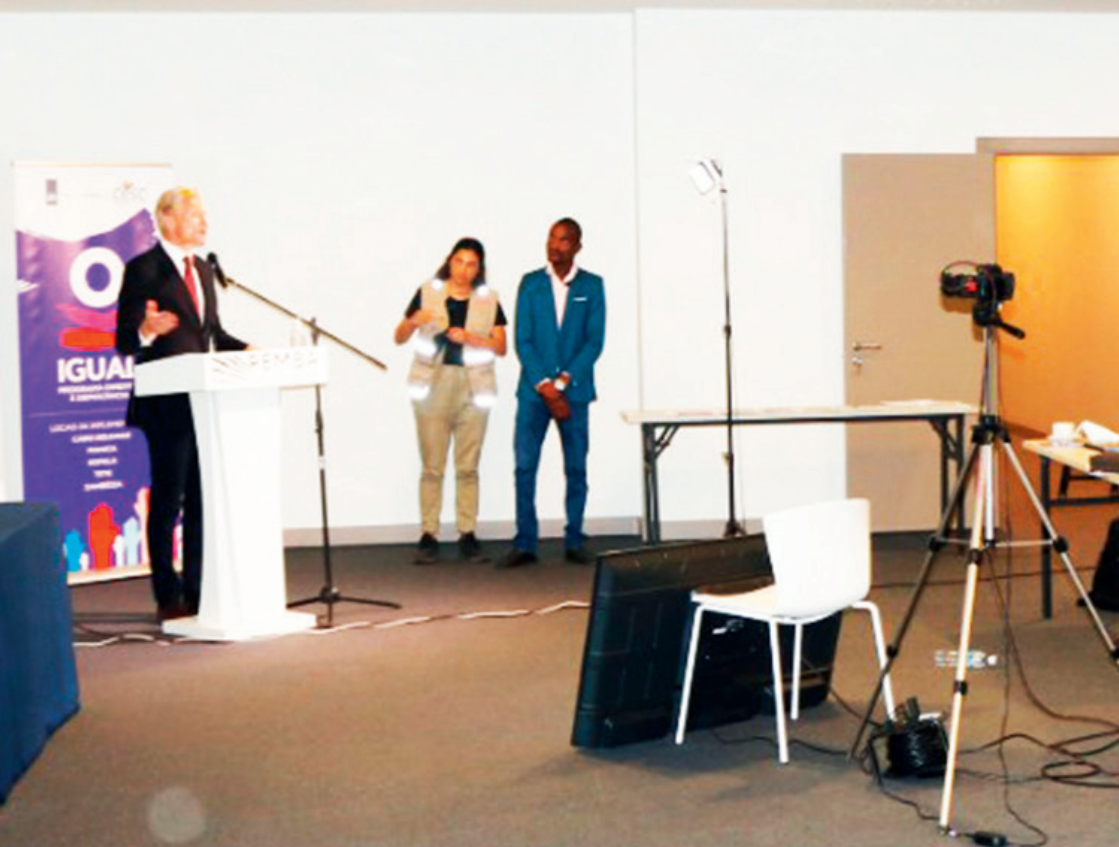
From then on, cells of the VEO became bolder in their attacks, conducting 'spectaculars' against MDP and even mounting a coordinated campaign against Pemba, the provincial capital. This was successfully repelled through extensive operations by the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), a South African PMC contracted by the National Police (PRM) to provide armed air support to the FDS. Though both operations failed, the VEO showcased increased sophistication and clearly highlighted the deficiencies of the FDS.

In June 2020, the VEO briefly seized control of MDP town after repeated engagements with the FDS. They only occupied the town for a day, destroying symbols linked to the government and passing out food to locals, then retreated rapidly to the hinterland. In the following months, the VEO continued to harass the FDS in MDP AP and increased the pace of their operation in Macomia. In early August 2020, after coordinated attacks on FDS position in and around MDP town, they seized control of the town and largely emptied it of its population. This was a major blow to the government who was forced to acknowledge that the problem of VEO was more than 'banditry'. In the months following the fall of MDP town, members of the VEO laid low and consolidated their gains, increasing their influence in the MDP and Macomia APs.

In October 2020, a large group of extremists, reportedly numbering over 300, crossed the Rovuma and attacked a military installation of the Tanzanian Defence Forces just south of Mtwara. The raid was a success and militants seized large stores of weapons and supplies. In the following months, the VEO focused their operations on Palma AP, steadily increasing their influence around Palma town and effectively cutting off the town from the rest of the province. In March 2021, after months of careful preparation, the VEO launched a three-pronged assault of the town, forcing the FDS into a humiliating rout. During the assault, several foreigners were killed while attempting to flee from the Amarula Lodge which had been surrounded by VEO.<sup>27</sup> Extremists occupied the town for a few days, looting extensively and seizing large amounts of cash from financial institutions before retreating to their base areas inland. This attack on Palma shocked the international community, who had paid little attention to the conflict so far. The death of foreign nationals further incensed the international community with calls for increased support from international partners to support the Mozambican authorities in their struggle against violent extremism. In response to the incursion, operations at the Afungi LNG site were also put on hold indefinitely, Total, the operator of the site, declaring force majeure.

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<sup>27</sup> There is more on the issue of foreign targeting later in this report. However, the VEO had little to no interest in targeting foreigners at the time of the incident.









Pemba workshop, Cabo Delgado, 13-14 October 2021

Following the attack on Palma, the VEO became relatively inactive, with significantly less incidents reported in April, May, and June 2021 compared to the annual average. From a military perspective, this makes no sense, as - post Palma - the VEO could have gone on to defeat FDS and ransack several other major towns given their ascendancy. This provides an insight to the local influences at play.

## VEO ideology

VEO ideology is driven by an intricate mix of intra-religious, socio-economic, and ethnic grievances. Mixing religious discourse and marginalisation, they have created a powerful narrative of dissent which resonates with many in CD. Their ideology, however, is neither sophisticated nor communicated in a systematic way. Unlike Salafi extremists, who have gone to great lengths to rationalise and publicise their views, the VEO have remained remarkably discrete about its ideological foundations. They have also struggled to spread their message consistently, with their highly limited propaganda being subpar compared to IS, Al-Shabaab, or Boko Haram.

Since the VEO have struggled to articulate a coherent ideology or systematically spread their views, we have based our analysis of their movement on what we can observe as fact. As such, our analysis of violent extremist ideology is based on the structural factors that pushed them to embrace violent extremism and an analysis of their use of violence within the context of the conflict. The structural causes of the



Maputo Round Table, November 17, 2021

conflict in CD are to be found in the marginalisation of Muslims, primarily from the Mwani ethnic group, who felt that they had no means of increasing their participation in local decision-making processes, particularly those relating to the benefits of significant natural resources.

The propaganda produced by the VEO is also extremely crude. The bulk of their communication has been in the form of poorly filmed videos, often without any audio and shot on mobile phones. The group has also released pictures of their loot and victims after successful operations. Dissemination, however, has been limited to encrypted social media channels with minimal followers. In a few rare cases, pictures and announcements by the group have made their way onto IS-affiliated news outlets. As we explore later, this is not evidence of significant links between the two movements but appears to be the work of a few individuals with links to the global Salafi-Jihadi sphere.

## Religious inclusion and governance

From the onset of the group as a radical scripturalist sect, the VEO leadership have indicated their desire for the return to a 'purer' and idealised version of Islam. They were prevented from doing so by the authorities who decided to repress the group. Prevented from living their faith as they saw fit, ASWJ militants turned to violent extremism to contest their powerlessness and increase their ability to participate in governance. Although the desire to live in a society based on stringent interpretation



of Islam has been somewhat side-lined within VEO ideology, partly due to strategic concerns and partly due to the success of the conflict,<sup>28</sup> it remains a constant feature of VEO propaganda.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that there is nothing fundamentally violent or exceptional about this desire.<sup>30</sup> Although the conflict is framed in religious discourse, it is not a religious conflict per se. The VEO has been fighting against the authorities, both religious and political, to secure channels for political participation which would enable them to live in accordance with their religious principles while benefitting from economic opportunities in the territories they influence.

## **Ethnic Grievances and Governance**

The VEO has also sought to present itself as the defenders of Mwani people in CD. Once more, this highlights the struggle for political inclusion within the framework of governance in CD. This desire for political inclusion has been a long-standing grievance and is deeply intertwined with both the history of CD and the history of the Mwani people in the region.

Before the full implementation of Portuguese colonisation in Mozambique, which commenced following the Berlin Conference of 1885, the Mwani were the dominant ethnic group of the northern coast of Mozambique.<sup>31</sup> They were prosperous traders and controlled the political landscape of the region. With the Portuguese occupation, the Mwani elites lost their position of influence which prompted a severe political and social crisis as their well-established patronage networks were dismantled.<sup>32</sup> Authority passed to Portuguese colonial authorities who viewed Islam as a dangerous anti-colonial force capable of challenging their rule by uniting the masses through faith.<sup>33</sup> Until the start of the independence war in 1964, the Portuguese continued to fear the Mwani people and their faith. During the war, however, Portuguese colonial intelligence started working with Swahili Muslims to counterbalance the influence of Frelimo in CD.<sup>34</sup> They played on their fears of communism, arguing that Frelimo would impose an atheist dictatorship. As a result, a majority of Mwanis supported the Portuguese in their colonial war. Once Frelimo took power in 1975, they were quick to brand them 'collaborators' and side-lined the community.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> There has been a precipitous decrease in Salafi rhetoric among violent extremists in recent years. This is partly due to strategic concerns. As we explore later, the first followers of ASWJ were idealists; the current VEO recruits are primarily driven by financial gain. Hard Salafi ideology provides insufficient sway – promises of quick cash and opportunities are far more potent. Throughout most of 2021, the VEO was able to make significant profit through illicit trade. It has become difficult to reconcile the wealth and power of the movement with the lofty aspirations of worldly poverty and devotion to God. See following for information on financing and its impact on group stability: Kan, "Defeating the Islamic State: A Financial-Military Strategy." 73-74.

<sup>29</sup> Violent Extremists, Propaganda video: 29/05/2020 (2020).

<sup>30</sup> Villallon, "Between Democracy and Militancy: Islam in Africa" 190.

<sup>31</sup> Bonate, "The Advent and Schisms of Sufi Orders in Mozambique, 1896–1964." 486.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Von Sicard, "Islam in Mozambique: Some Historical and Cultural Perspectives." 478-80.

<sup>34</sup> Barnett, "The 'Central African' Jihad: Islamism and Nation-Building in Mozambique and Uganda."

Since then, the Mwanis have effectively been excluded from governance and have been marginalised by the authorities. This is further compounded by the government's partiality for the Makonde, a predominantly Christian ethnic group which inhabits the Mueda plateau, as well as the eponymous Makonde plateau of Tanzania. The Makondes were the key instigators of the War of Independence and have, since then, occupied some of the key posts in Frelimo. They control most of the licit and illicit trading networks in CD, dominate the political life of the province, and enjoy the protection and patronage of Frelimo.<sup>36</sup> Little has changed under President Nyusi, another Makonde, who has overseen the deeply unpopular expropriation campaigns – disproportionately affecting the Mwani – which followed from the arrival of energy and mining multinationals in the province.<sup>37</sup> This socio-economic dominance of the Makonde has frustrated a majority of Mwani-speaking Cabo Delgadans.<sup>38</sup> Abandoned and marginalised by the government, they are ripe for joining the VEO.

The VEO has sought to portray themselves as the defenders of the marginalised, particularly the Mwani in CD, presenting their struggle as the antidote to political exclusion and economic marginalisation.<sup>39</sup> As Southerners continue to see Northerners as backward irredentists, coupled with the geographical, political and social isolation of CD vis-à-vis the rest of the country, demands for political inclusion and socio-economic integration are widespread.<sup>40</sup> The VEO believes that increased channels for political participation within the framework of national governance can be obtained through popular violent uprising. Such a project has become central to VEO ideology and is even reflected in their self-perception, with the movement often referring to itself as 'Swahili Sunna', loosely translated as 'Swahili Way'.<sup>41</sup> This desire to control their own destiny has not, however, morphed into a rabid form of ethno-nationalism. The VEO has been careful not to alienate the Makua people and have sought to merge their grievances with those of the Mwani.<sup>42</sup> As such, they created a narrative that promotes violent extremism as a tool of liberation for both ethnicities, using the dominance of the Makonde as a crucible in which to form an alliance of convenience between disenfranchised groups.<sup>43</sup> This desire for increased political inclusion is reflected in the propaganda of the movement, with repeated calls to expel the 'Maputo invaders' and to fight the government that 'humiliates the poor'.<sup>44</sup> The push

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Mapfumo, "The Nexus Between Violent Extremism and the Illicit Economy in Northern Mozambique: Is Mozambique Under Siege from International Organised Crime?," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 104.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 104-05.

<sup>38</sup> Forster, "Jihadism in Mozambique: The Enablers of Extremist Sustainability." 1.

<sup>39</sup> Barnett, "The "Central African" Jihad: Islamism and Nation-Building in Mozambique and Uganda."

<sup>40</sup> Mangena and Pherudi, "Disentangling Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado Province, Northern Mozambique: Challenges and Prospects," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 350.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Barnett, "The "Central African" Jihad: Islamism and Nation-Building in Mozambique and Uganda."

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

to liberate the people of CD from the perceived tyranny of the regime in Maputo is, therefore, as central to VEO ideology as is their desire for the implementation of a more stringent form of Islam in CD.

## **Low opportunity cost**

The VEO has also benefitted generally from the low opportunity cost of engaging in violence and anti-social behaviour. As most members are unemployed, uneducated, and single, they have little to lose, and potentially a lot to gain, by engaging in conflict. The prestige that also comes with carrying a firearm is not to be underestimated. For young men with nothing, a firearm is a symbol of power and respect, which serves to assuage their misgivings about their social standing and gives them 'control' over their environment. Acts of extreme violence are therefore a way to increase self-worth and pride while imposing dominance on individuals who are perceived to be benefactors of the system.<sup>45</sup>

The low opportunity cost of engaging in extreme violence is a primordial factor in radicalisation and recruitment for the VEO. Those who join are primarily disenfranchised young men with little to no assets and opportunities, and the VEO is perceived as a quick way out of poverty, with financial incentives a key motivation to join the organisation.

## **1.3 VEO Strategy and Modus Operandi**

Since the attack on MDP town in October 2017, the group has adopted violent extremism to achieve their aims of increased political participation and socio-economic benefit for Muslims and marginalised groups in CD. In this conflict, the VEO have proven remarkably resilient and capable of evolution. To build a comprehensive picture of their strategic outlook, we explore the VEO's targets, their sources of financing, and their relationship to the Salafi-Jihadi global nebula.

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<sup>44</sup> Violent Extremists, Propaganda video: 29/03/2020 (2020); Violent Extremists, Propaganda Video: 11/05/2020 (2020).

<sup>45</sup> Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State: Understanding Atrocity in the Sierra Leone Civil War*, 177.

## VEO targets

Since the start of the insurgency, VE have overwhelmingly targeted the authorities and those who actively support them. Authority figures such as religious elders, village elders, local administrators, public officials, policemen and politicians have all been associated with the government and have been perceived as sympathisers. Furthermore, Sufi elders and CISLAMO-affiliated preachers, whom the VEO consider impious and in league with the government, have also been marked as legitimate targets.

So far, the FDS, and their private and regional military allies, has been the most explicit target of the VEO. This situation emerged out of the VEO's desire to rid areas of governance structures and create an atmosphere of terror in which they could step in and replace the government. In attempts to thwart those plans, the FDS was tasked with protecting what remained of local official governance structures. As such, they have become the primary targets because they are often the last manifest representation of state authority in embattled areas. In their propaganda, the VEO have gone to great lengths to demonise the military and security forces, arguing that they are an invading force who have inflicted misery and suffering on the people of CD:

*We have to fight these leeches and corrupt people who are uniformed everywhere and specifically here in our land. We will get our revenge because it is Allah's will and we are sons of this land, and we know our land and our forests well. Those who will come, will come from Maputo to kill us. They will need guides to approach. If that happens, we will hunt everything that breathes, and nothing will be left behind.*<sup>46</sup>

The uncompromising nature of the VEO's struggle against the armed forces is further evidenced by their reference to the FDS as 'pigs', 'crusaders', and 'cowards'.<sup>47</sup> They have also gone to great lengths to discredit the FDS's counterinsurgency campaign, denouncing its brutality:

*And this is especially so as it is of the policy of this cowardly army that after it receives a damaging defeat at the hands of the soldiers of the Caliphate, it increases its hostility against the peoples in the area in which it is defeated, hoping in that to recover a claimed prestige it tries to impose on the oppressed through tyranny and terror.*<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Violent Extremists, Propaganda Video: 11

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.; Islamic State Al-Naba' newsletter, Violent Extremists' Communique in IS Newsletter (2020).

<sup>48</sup> Islamic State Al-Naba' newsletter, Violent Extremists' Communique in IS Newsletter.

All of this is consistent with research conducted by other academics who have studied the recruitment patterns of violent extremists and have argued that significant numbers of recruits joined the movement in response to the brutality of the FDS,<sup>49</sup> which is a considerable driver alongside socio-economic push factors.

The VEO has also been targeting the civilian authorities and those accused of supporting them. In these attacks, they have, so far, refrained from indiscriminate violence against 'neutral' civilians. Although most attacks initiated by the VEO have been against undefended town or villages, most of these incidents did not result in casualties. Violence against the civil population is therefore rarely indiscriminate and is either part of a reprisal campaign or to consolidate support by eliminating suspected government collaborators.<sup>50</sup> Though the violent extremists can display incredible levels of brutality, with beheadings and mutilations being commonplace, there is absolutely nothing exceptional about such methods in the context of non-state armed groups in Africa.<sup>51</sup> This conclusion is further supported by interviews conducted by other academics which have shown that the VEO generally target only those civilians who have actively supported the government, for example those involved in local governance or people who have 'betrayed' the movement.<sup>52</sup> As such, it is clear the VEO use both violence and atrocities for strategic effect. Extreme violence, however, is not always a rational choice borne out of a strategic policy.<sup>53</sup> Some of the massacres that have taken place can only be explained by an irrational desire for violence among certain sections of the public. Such unrestrained violence is often the result of brutalisation and a general absence of respect for human rights and the rule of law that exists in societies which have experienced warfare, misery, and death on a grand scale.<sup>54</sup>

As of June 2021, the VEO have always refrained from directly attacking international assets in CD. Although disinformation has been running rampant about alleged attacks on the installations of extractive or energy multinationals in CD, there has been no evidence of any intention, or coordinated campaign by the VEO, to target international assets or foreign personnel in the region. Only a handful of incidents have involved employees of multinationals, and these were a consequence of collateral circumstances rather than direct targeting. They do not reflect a broader pattern of targeting international assets by the VEO.

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<sup>49</sup> Mangena and Pherudi, "Disentangling Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado Province, Northern Mozambique: Challenges and Prospects," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 357.

<sup>50</sup> Mangena and Pherudi, "Disentangling Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado Province, Northern Mozambique: Challenges and Prospects," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 355.

<sup>51</sup> Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 223.

<sup>52</sup> Mangena and Pherudi, "Disentangling Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado Province, Northern Mozambique: Challenges and Prospects," in *Extremisms in Africa*, 356.

<sup>53</sup> Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 52.

<sup>54</sup> Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State: Understanding Atrocity in the Sierra Leone Civil War*, 240-45.



Since the attack on Palma in March 2021, the *modus operandi* of the violent extremists has changed very little. Though foreigners were indeed killed during the fighting in the city, they were not directly targeted by the group. The Amarula Lodge, where most foreigners sought refuge, was not attacked, even though members of the VEO were in proximity and could have stormed it easily. Foreigners were only engaged (as a small element of a much larger Mozambican contingent) when their convoy sought to force a way through a VEO barrage outside the lodge. Those who remained inside the compound were not harmed. Though this shows escalation, i.e., the Palma cell now seemingly considers foreigners as acceptable collateral damage, it does not indicate a deliberate targeting of international persons or assets.

Two competing hypotheses have emerged to explain the lack of interest the VEO has for international assets. On the one hand, some commentators have argued that the group has not targeted international assets as those are heavily defended sites and they do not have the means to attack them yet. On the other hand, competing analysis argues that international assets are of little concern for the VEO because they are not a direct threat to their aims. Moreover, the VEO has not attacked international assets because they see them as part of their future, in which co-existence would be beneficial for the movement.

The first hypothesis rests on two assumptions. Firstly, they assume that the VEO is part of a global Salafi-Jihadi nebula which seeks to harm Western interests throughout the globe. We will examine this assumption further at a later point. Secondly, they assume the VEO do not have the capability to attack these assets with any success. This was a serious miscalculation of the tactical situation before the arrival of the RDF. The main project in the region, the Total Energies Afungi LNG site, was protected (pre-July/August 2021) by a Joint Task Force (JTF) made up of chosen units within the FDS. Though the JTF grew significantly over the last year, the strength of the unit *per se* is not important as a simple stand-off attack – firing directly at the site – would have been sufficient to halt development. Furthermore, it would have been easy for the VEO, before the arrival of the RDF, to attack the site to secure supplies or loot. The fact that they did not pursue such a potentially profitable operation discredits the idea that international assets have been spared because they are difficult targets. If the VEO wanted to shut down the site completely prior to March 2021 - and even in the period March-July before the arrival of the RDF - they could have done so easily, ergo LNG development is still possible because the VEO want it to be.

A competing hypothesis is anchored in the VEO's ideology, as communicated through their propaganda. Their propaganda has made it clear that they have no interest in targeting the energy sector, declaring in one of their communiqués that 'Our war is not about this gas [referring to the LNG site in Afungi].'<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, their ideology

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<sup>55</sup> Violent Extremists, Propaganda Video: 11/05/2020.

does not preclude them from tolerating, and even profiting from, the presence of multinationals in the region. Even if they were Salafis, provisions can be made for Muslims to work with non-Muslims, thus defying the proscription on working with kufrs (*isti'ana bi-l-kufr*) within Salafi theology.<sup>56</sup> *Isti'ana bi-l-kufr* is acceptable if it is the lesser of two evils (*akhaff al-dararayn*), serves the public good (*maslaha al-mursala*), and does not conflict with their quest to impose *sharia* (*maqasid al-shari'a*).<sup>57</sup> The presence of multinationals in CD does not violate these conditions. The VEO is at war with the government, not international businesses, therefore, according to the principle of *akhaff al-dararayn*, the focus will remain on the enemies of stricter Islam (primarily the government and its organs) and not on multinationals, regardless of their reputation within the VEO. Furthermore, mega-projects could still have a positive impact on the socio-economic development of the province, even though they are unpopular with some among the local population, and thus the criteria of *maslaha al-mursala* can be fulfilled. Finally, international assets do not, in principle, conflict with the desire of the VEO to live within a more stringent interpretation of Islam based on literal application of *sharia*. The development of international projects by foreign multinationals can be done in accordance with *maqasid al-shari'a*. Overall, international assets have not been targeted by the VEO as they pose no direct threat to their current short-term aims. However, should this change, either through continued and substantial direct association between mega-projects, the government, and allies - particularly if it is perceived that the association is supporting military efforts - international assets might be targeted.

## Financing through the Illicit Economy

The VEO has used a variety of means to finance their operations since the start of the armed conflict in 2017. Revenues from the licit and illicit economy and donations have provided most of the funds.

Before the movement militarised and embraced violent extremism, most of the income came from the proceeds of legitimate small businesses which their leaders and influencers controlled.<sup>58</sup> The proceeds from these companies were then used to offer loans or scholarships to potential recruits and build mosques and madrassas. Since the start of the armed conflict, however, these businesses have been closed by the authorities. Nonetheless, the VEO continued to finance themselves through the licit economy by relying on supporters who own small shops and provide a portion of

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<sup>56</sup> Maher, Salafi-Jihadism The History Of An Idea, 126.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>58</sup> Hayson, "Where crime compounds conflict: Understanding northern Mozambique's vulnerabilities." 17.8

their income to the movement.<sup>59</sup> Some of these businesses are indebted to the VEO as they were set up using loans provided by the movement.<sup>60</sup> The movement has also charged protection money to legitimate businesses to finance their operation, most notably in Nampula, where businessmen have allegedly been working with members of the VEO to protect their trading operations.<sup>61</sup>

The VEO also have links to the illicit economy, charging facilitation money to different smuggling networks to transit through the territory they dominate.<sup>62</sup> They have also reportedly financed their operation through human trafficking by helping Somali migrants in their journey to South Africa,<sup>63</sup> or by engaging in sexual human trafficking by selling young women they hold captive in Tanzania.<sup>64</sup> The VEO has also financed their operations by receiving a portion of the income of illicit networks that were set up using their loans. As the cost of entering the lucrative illicit economy in CD is prohibitive for most of the population, many young men took interest-free loans from the VEO to set up their informal trading networks. In return, they contribute financially to the movement. It is important to highlight that this was not a concerted effort by the VEO to overtake illicit networks but a by-product of the indistinguishable nature of the licit and illicit economy in CD.<sup>65</sup>

The VEO has also been financed by private donations from supporters. These donations transit from a variety of Mozambican bank accounts before being sent abroad, first to Somalia, then to Dubai, and finally to Sudan, using mobile applications.<sup>66</sup> Once the money is in Khartoum, it is used to pay wages to fighters, provide more loans to locals in a bid to recruit them, finance scholarships for potential recruits, and buy weapons and supplies.<sup>67</sup>

The influence of the illicit economy in VEO financing cannot be under-stated and it is important to understand the profound implications of this reliance on criminal proceeds. Over time, it is likely that the VEO might become more and more 'commercially' interested and less ideological.<sup>68</sup> Proceeds from the illicit economy drive new recruits to the movement, thus further marginalising the ideologues: 'Comrades who share a cause can quickly become clients whose demands need to be met.'<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> International Crisis Group, *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado*, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Hayson, "Where crime compounds conflict: Understanding northern Mozambique's vulnerabilities." 18.

<sup>62</sup> Crime, Observatory of Illicit Economies in Eastern and Southern Africa, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Hayson, "Where crime compounds conflict: Understanding northern Mozambique's vulnerabilities." 12.

<sup>64</sup> Feijó, *Caracterizacao E Organizacao Social Dos Machababos A Partir Dos Discursos De Mulheres Raptadas*, [Characteristics and Organization of the Violent Extremists based on the Testimonies of Abducted Women], 13.

<sup>65</sup> Hayson, "Where crime compounds conflict: Understanding northern Mozambique's vulnerabilities." 16.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>68</sup> Columbo, "The Secret to the Northern Mozambique Insurgency's Success."

<sup>69</sup> Kan, "Defeating the Islamic State: A Financial-Military Strategy" 74.









Maputo Round Table, November 17, 2021



Pemba workshop, Cabo Delgado, 13-14 October 2021





Muhammad Abdool, SA High Commissionl



Excellency, General (Ret) Sipiwe Nyanada, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa to the Republic of Mozambique



Brian Kagoro, Lawyer, Africanist



Delphine Fauque, Total



António Costa Moura, embaixador de Portugal;



Joana Martins, VAMAZ;

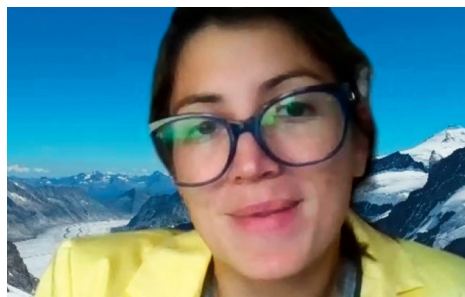




Rahim Bangy, AKF-M;



Julia Wachave, PROMURA



Lilla Schumicky-Logan, GCERF;



Isabel Francisco, Ministerio da Defesa Nacional;



Ricard Rands (CDD) and Joana Martins, VAMAZ

It is likely that the escalation of the war in CD has modified the dynamics between serious organised crime, the illicit economy, and the VEO.<sup>70</sup> For one, the increased presence of FDS in coastal areas where smugglers used to transit means that the traffic has most likely been diverted through less securitised areas, most likely through areas of high VEO influence. Though some analysts have argued that illicit smuggling networks have shifted out of CD due to the securitisation of the province by the FDS, these are misleading reports as no one had access to the areas of high VEO influence, at the time, thus completely skewing their findings.<sup>71</sup> All of our research confirmed that the VEO is not only financed by the illicit economy but are actively involved in it. They all reported that the VEO had a large role in facilitating the transit of illicit goods when they controlled most areas where traditional smuggling routes were situated. The VEO has extensive links with the business community in CD, charging protection money, facilitating smuggling, and securing transit routes for illicit goods such as drugs and illegally mined gemstones. Therefore, it appears the VEO are not only facilitators within the licit and illicit economies, but active participants.

The UN Office for Drugs and Organized Crime (UNODC) has constantly pointed to the control of trafficking as one of the reasons for the conflict in the Mozambican province, which supports our understanding. In October 2021, Mozambican authorities announced they had seized 28kg of heroin in areas controlled by the VEO in Cabo Delgado, indicating the continued presence of trafficking networks despite claims that trafficking networks had shifted to new and safer routes.<sup>72</sup>

In just one year, law enforcement officials incinerated nearly a ton of drugs in Cabo Delgado as the province continues to be identified as a corridor for heroin trafficking from Asia (Pakistan / Afghanistan), mostly destined to Europe, prompting claims from officials in UNODC that “terrorist attacks have nothing to do with Islam [in Cabo Delgado]”. Instead, the attacks reinforce control over trafficking routes, particularly relating to the Macomia littoral, and the subsequent financial rewards that can be gained from it.

Recent reports indicate that operations by RDF and SAMIM resulted in intelligence suggesting six possible funders of violent extremism had been identified: three based in Tanzania and three in Mozambique. Independent financial investigations and regional authorities also identified the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars from at least one extremist cell in Kenya to individuals in the DRC and Uganda, as well as to unknown persons in Tanzania and Mozambique. Kenyan officials say they are investigating whether the money is connected to IS. If IS is ultimately behind the transfers, it potentially signals transition, competition, or collaboration for influence

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<sup>70</sup> Crime, Observatory of Illicit Economies in Eastern and Southern Africa, 5.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Observatory of Illicit Economies in Eastern and Southern Africa - Issue 17 (March-April 2021)

in CD, given concurrent VEO funding from illegal trade and trafficking.<sup>73</sup> It is therefore a realistic possibility that the nexus between terrorist financing and organised crime could increase in Cabo Delgado in the future, particularly in connection with a VEO whose members are mainly driven by financial incentives.

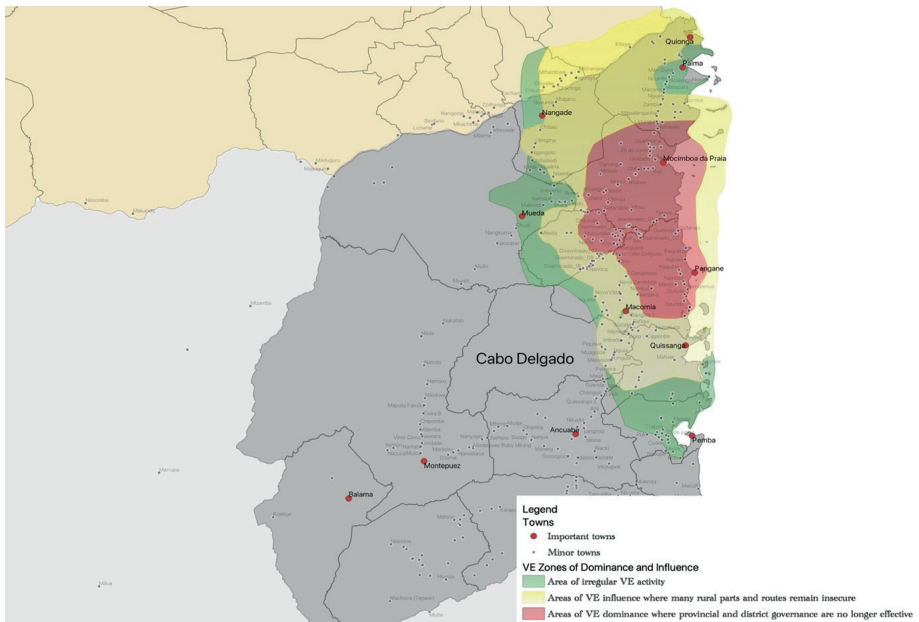


FIGURE 1: AREAS UNDER VE INFLUENCE (AS AT 1 JULY 2021)

## 1.4 Transnational Links

### The Tanzanian connection

The violent extremists also have extensive kinship and familial ties with the different communities residing across the Rovuma in Mtwara, Tanzania. The Mwani are historically linked to the Makwe ethnic group, a Swahili people, with whom they have long associated and intermarried with. As such, many within the VEO's early leadership had been in Tanzania for religious studies or had extensive business links with the coastal communities in Mtwara.<sup>74</sup> These connections have been maintained

<sup>73</sup> International Crisis Group Q&A, The Kampala Attacks and their Regional Implications.

<sup>74</sup> For example, Suahele Rafael, one of the movement's early leader and still a major figure within VE, spent years in Tanzania studying under radical clerics. Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 401-02.

since militarisation and Tanzanians are the largest foreign contingent within the VEO and that Swahili, the language of the Makwe, is widely spoken in their camps. This historic connection and the continued relevance within the context of the conflict is further illustrated by instances of VEO incursions against the Tanzanian Defence Forces in Mtwara, most notably their high-profile attack in October 2020<sup>75</sup> and subsequent raids in October 2021. Furthermore, following the attack on Palma, the US State Department designated a Tanzanian national, Abu Yasir Hassan, as the leader of the VEO. Though Hassan is unlikely to be the leader (Tanzanian authorities reporting him dead a few years back) it nonetheless shows that Tanzania and Tanzanian nationals are an important part of the violent extremist nebula.

The VEO has also clearly been influenced by religious radicals from Tanzanian. Mozambican Islamic clerics have trained in Tanzania for more than a century and exchanges have taken place for longer, among religious communities on both sides of the border.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, following the crackdown on Islamism in 2018 by Tanzanian authorities, Tanzanian clerics who were targeted by the authorities decided to relocate to CD to continue their activities.<sup>77</sup>

After Tanzanian radicals became violent and the state responded forcefully against them after 2015, and particularly strongly in early 2017, some of them took refuge with the Mozambican VEO. This has reinforced and partially internationalized the conflict.

The repression of Islamist movements in Tanzania can also explain the links between the VEO and the border region. Tanzania has an extensive network of Islamist movements in the south of the country, flourishing due to a lack of government grasp on the territory. In 2018, 104 Mozambican members of the group were apprehended by Tanzanian authorities while training in the vicinity of Kitibi. Some escaped to Mozambique, however, around 380 individuals suspected of links with Islamist groups disappeared, allegedly including some Mozambican nationals. There are indicators that they were the victims of extrajudicial killings by the Tanzanian police as reprisals for the attacks against police officers the year before. 11 public officials and 8 police officers were murdered in a series of high-profile assassinations in 2017. In January 2018, Tanzanian authorities announced that they had reached an agreement with Mozambican authorities to extradite those responsible for the violence should they be apprehended in Mozambique.

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<sup>75</sup> International Crisis Group, *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado*, 14.

<sup>76</sup> Bonate, "Transformations de l'islam à Pemba au Mozambique" 62.

<sup>77</sup> Habibe, Forquilha, and Pereira, *Islamic Radicalisation in Northern Mozambique: The Case of Mocimboa da Praia*, 10.

On 23 November 2020, President Magufuli and President Nyusi agreed on framework to tackle the problem of violent extremism jointly. As part of this agreement, 516 insurgents captured by Tanzanian security forces were extradited to Mozambique for trial. This announcement came a month after violent extremists attacked a police station in Kitaya in southern Mtwara. Simon Sirro, Mtwara Police Chief, told the press that this attack was most likely conducted by extremists familiar with Tanzania, and he suspects some might be part of those Tanzanian authorities apprehended in 2018.

Almost a year later, on 16 November 2021, Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan, made a bold and controversial statement that peace had been restored along Tanzania's border with Mozambique, and "militants from Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province, who have been wreaking havoc in the southern Mtwara villages, have been neutralised." This, she claimed, was due to the deployment of a special group of security personnel to bolster defence and security at the border, in collaboration with the SADC mission already in place.

The seeming reluctance of the Tanzanian government to accept the scale of the problem and the key part Tanzanian nationals play in the conflict in Cabo Delgado (and extremism in the wider region) continues to hamper resolution efforts.

## RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN JULY / AUGUST 2021 RELATING TO SOUTHERN TANZANIA INDICATES THE FOLLOWING:

Tanzanian extremists, with transnational Salafi-Jihadi connections, are likely using regional countries where there are underlying issues of socio-economic deprivation (specifically Mozambique and DRC) as proxies, with the potential to escalate/improve “terror” expertise (e.g., the proliferation of improvised explosive device [IED] technology and standoff attacks). So far, only claims of component parts being recovered during military operations in CD, but similar escalations are being witnessed in DRC and Uganda.

- Evidence that significant numbers of Islamists from Tanzania fled to Mozambique on/around 2016.
- Suggestions of further radicalisation in Southern Tanzania, while possible appeasement (or backlash) may result in recent releases of high-profile “*Uamsho*” members. Also, evidence of ‘training’ occurring in some mosques.
- Evidence of international funding from hard-line sources to build Mosques / Madrasahs and influence youth through martial arts training.
- Key districts in question/of interest: Mtwara (rural), Lindi and Tandahimba, and Kibiti (with potentially strong networks of informants).
- Evidence of the VEO from Mozambique moving cross-border to purchase supplies.
- Suggestions of forcible recruitment of Tanzanian personnel by the VEO from Mozambique.
- Evidence of Tanzanian VEO, combined with Mozambican VEO, continuing to conduct attacks in Tanzania.
- Evidence of Tanzanian traders / businessmen being heavily involved in Mozambican VEO and organised crime.
- Evidence of concerns over increased transnational crime and related extremist influences (from Pakistan / Afghanistan).
- Evidence of significant human rights abuses by security forces in recent years.
- Indications of attempts at more sensible approaches by military / security forces to support communities rather than terrorise them, while occupying areas where there has been a history of radicalisation. However, “participatory security” carries significant risk when more structured P/CVE efforts are required.
- Evidence of in-fighting between military and intelligence services, and increased militarisation in many areas of concern - not just military deployments - but military governorship / infiltration into politics.

## The VEO and transnational terrorism

Until recently there was little to no evidence of substantial links between the VEO and the wider transnational Salafi-Jihadi community. Though plenty of alarmist reports emerged following the news that IS had claimed the establishment of a province in Central Africa (ISCAP), the reality is that IS has (yet) no command-and-control ability over violent extremism in Cabo Delgado and has not shared technical or tactical knowhow that has been identifiable during VEO operations. However, evidence suggests that influential links to other groups, such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia or the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the DRC, are credible and the chances of transnational proliferation of ideology, tactics and technical capabilities is a real threat to Cabo Delgado in the near future.

Reports indicate that Musa Baluku's ADF, an IS-aligned faction in DRC, provided combat training to Mozambican "al-Shabaab" from Cabo Delgado, after having benefited from an influx of foreign fighters and advances in its deployment of IEDs and use of drones. Security officials in DRC and a former ADF combatant noted that the group has since 2018 absorbed more foreign fighters, including from Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Kenya.<sup>78</sup>

Documents seized from the VEO during recent security force operations indicates that the leaders have been reporting operational progress to Al-Shabaab North-East (ASNE), a small IS-aligned faction based in north-eastern Puntland. One of its commanders, Mohamed Ahmed Qahiye is known by UN investigators and Somali intelligence sources to have travelled to Mozambique in 2020 to provide training to the VEO.<sup>79</sup> The linkage between ADF and ANSE is also strong, completing the triumvirate of east/central African IS-aligned groups. Meddie Nkalubo (known in ADF circles as "Punisher"), who is based in an ADF camp in the eastern DRC from where he coordinates cells in Kampala and elsewhere (and the main suspect in the November 2021 Kampala bombings) is also known to be in touch with the Puntland ASNE faction.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, there are serious concerns that IS may try and channel more assistance to the VEO in Cabo Delgado, either directly or through ADF or ANSE. Meanwhile, IS continues to claim evermore attacks committed by the ADF and the VEO in Mozambique on its online media channel AMAQ. Therefore, the looming threat of transnational terrorism resulting from regional proliferation of ideology, tactics, and technology by known associates from DRC and Somalia, as well as Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya - particularly the use of IEDs, sophisticated weaponry and indiscriminate attacks

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<sup>78</sup> International Crisis Group Q&A, The Kampala Attacks and their Regional Implications.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.



- should inform conflict resolution approaches in Mozambique. Furthermore, inter-continental influences resulting in increased radicalisation through existing links to organised crime (e.g., Afghanistan / Pakistan), particularly as Cabo Delgado is now an internationalised opportunity for global Salafi-Jihadis, must also be factored into conflict resolution strategy.

While leaders, decision-makers and elites in Mozambique can still address and resolve a mostly homegrown violent extremist problem whose concerns are not global and limited to CD,<sup>80</sup> if the situation goes truly transnational then national influences will be vastly reduced, conflict will become intractable, and resolution increasingly difficult.

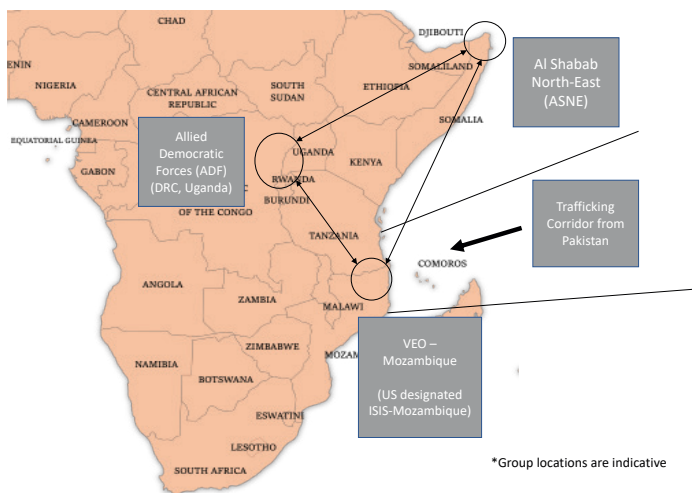


Diagram: The triumvirate of VEO in the horn, east and central Africa

## 1.5 Responses to Violent Extremism

From the beginning of the conflict there has been a focus on military operations to counter violent extremism, with only burgeoning interventions to prevent its spread initiated in 2020, along with increased focus on humanitarian, reconstruction, and development support from 2021. The government has broadly opted for a punitive and ham-fisted approach to tackling the problem, with most international partners largely following suit.

<sup>80</sup> Morier-Genoud, "The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning" 406.



Despite global experiences indicating that military operations alone will not resolve violent extremist conflict, the government continues to pursue this approach in the absence of a coherent strategy that addresses, in a timely manner, socio-economic deprivation, ethnic marginalisation, and intra-religious frustrations, and the influences of illicit trade and organised crime. Even combined with sporadic reconstruction and development efforts, which are unlikely to be impactful in the short-term, the government's reliance on multinational military approaches is more likely to exacerbate the conflict than resolve it in the long-term. While the root causes of conflict cannot be addressed or resolved through force, military operations can play an important role in setting the conditions for conflict resolution, particularly if they are carefully designed and executed in line with a coherent strategy that includes resolution dialogue, humanitarian support, development, and preventing and countering violent extremist (P/CVE) initiatives.

## **National responses**

Until July 2021 and the deployment of the RDF/RNP to Cabo Delgado (and subsequently SAMIM), the FDS was the primary tool in the government's strategy to counter violent extremism. Force was seen as the solution early on, when the FDS was deployed against ASWJ militants in CD to crush their organisation, resulting in their militarisation (as previously discussed). The military (FADM) assumed primacy for the conflict from the police (PRM) and was quick to demonstrate that it is an extremely poorly prepared and largely ineffective fighting force, incapable of conducting successful operations in a complicated grievance-driven environment, or a pursue a productive counterinsurgency / counter-terror campaign. Their combat record is abysmal, with the VEO regularly routing significantly larger forces until the FADM were joined by regional allies. Morale in the force is also extremely low as soldiers often survive in difficult conditions with little food and equipment to support them in their task. Institutional corrupt practices have compounded combat ineffectiveness, and severely damaged the morale of the rank and file, who resort to predation against local communities to survive. Officers and soldiers in the FADM have been known to sell military equipment, rations, and humanitarian aid to local communities to supplement their meagre income.<sup>81</sup> Several FADM units have also suffered from indiscipline and desertion, especially when wages are not paid on time. In March 2021, during the siege of Palma, an entire contingent of soldiers simply abandoned their posts and decided to escape the town. Lack of discipline has also led to various cases of human rights abuses against local populations. Soldiers have been known to rape and sexually abuse local women, often resorting to brutal violence to impose their will on the population. Looting and pillaging is also common.

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<sup>81</sup> Interviews with humanitarian actors working with Palma district communities, September/October 2021.

The brutality of the FADM cannot, however, be solely explained by the lack of discipline and morale. The overwhelming majority of soldiers come from the south of the country and are Christians. They are often of a different ethnicity than the people of CD. As such, deeply entrenched prejudices against northerners have clearly informed some of the brutality seen in the conflict. Though the FADM has benefitted from increased access to sophisticated weapons, including rotary wing aircraft from increased firepower and mobility, there has been very little improvement in combat capabilities. The FADM is now benefitting from increased training and 'professionalisation' conducted by international partners. As training has only recently started and is mostly reserved for elite contingents of the FADM, it is unclear what effect this will have on the military. Most concerning is the lack of institutional reform and transformation required to vastly improve the accountability of the military and its members, to eradicate corrupt practices and illegal behaviour, and dramatically improve the credibility of (and increase confidence in) the FADM from the perspective of the people they are required to protect.

The PRM and UIR (Rapid Reaction Force, an elite police unit) have also been part of a 'counterinsurgency' effort, though they have been side-lined for FADM and multinational force primacy. However, Gen. Bernardino Rafael, the Commander of the PRM with close relations to elements of the Makonde elite, has been instrumental in providing multinational forces with detailed understanding of the nature and modus operandi of the VEO. The change from a mostly PRM-led counterinsurgency campaign to an FADM-led effort occurred in early 2021, following a series of disasters for the FDS which prompted President Nyusi to act following pressures from the military and the rest of the Frelimo elites. The PRM - similar in its faults to the FADM - is a mostly inefficient force, prone to routine human rights violations. Their combat record in CD is poor, and they have been incapable of stemming the flow of violent extremism. The PRM has suffered from widespread desertion, especially following recurrent failure by the authorities to pay their salaries. The UIR is a more effective combat force, but they have been routinely accused of human rights abuses and extrajudicial killings. UIR servicemen benefit from increased wages and better equipment, and therefore, have reportedly better morale, though some desertions have been known to occur.

The government also resorted to hiring a series of private military contractors to deal with the VEO. In 2020, the Russian 'Wagner Group' was employed by the government to provide aviation and ground forces to the FDS. This quasi private/state military company promptly left the country after suffering significant casualties. Another private company, Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), was hired to replace them and provided effective air support to the FDS, though this was insufficient to prevent the fall of MDP and Palma. Furthermore, DAG was accused of IHL breaches by failing to take sufficient measures to protect populations from collateral damage. DAG was none-

theless crucial in rescue operations during the battle of Palma and was an important asset for the FDS, but one that certain elites controlled for their own aims. Their contract, however, was not renewed after April 2021. Presently, Paramount Group (a South African / UAE defence contractor) – and its sister training company Burnham Global - is contracted to the government to supply armoured personnel carriers and military helicopters, as well as train troops in Nampula. A variety of other private military companies looked to get involved in the conflict, prior to the intervention of regional forces, hoping to secure lucrative contracts or concessions in the province in exchange for reliable firepower.

The government also engaged in raising local militias in areas of high VEO influence. These militias primarily comprise veterans of the independence war and the civil war. Both Frelimo and Renamo militants have joined-up in attempts to protect their communities from the VEO. These militias are commanded by local veterans, mostly war heroes who act as warlords, and provide wages and weapons to their unit. These militias are armed with a variety of weapons locally available, as well as new supplies from the FDS. The militias, at times, have proven to be militarily superior to the FDS as they are a nimble force and commanded by experienced war veterans with a good understanding of local terrain and the dynamics of irregular warfare. They have often overcome groups of violent extremists in engagements, with some uncorroborated reports of inflicting major casualties in prepared ambushes. However, local militias have also been involved in fratricide clashes with the FDS. It appears that a number of these were cases of mistaken identity, but clashes have also emerged in response to looting by the FDS, which has prompted armed responses from the militiamen.

In November 2021, the government took another dangerous step towards militarisation and a lack of civilian oversight of the FDS, when the President sacked both defence and interior ministers (Jaime Neto and Amade Miquidade). They were replaced with senior officers from the military and police (Cristóvão Chume and Arsenia Massingue). The respective professionalism of these service officers may be credible, but it is highly questionable whether their expertise and experience is suited to ministerial positions of such importance, particularly when both assumed their new appointments by jumping ahead of their superior officers in the military and police.

The government has also sought to counter violent extremism through propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Government disinformation actors were extremely active propagating false narratives about the conflict, prior to regional military deployments, and sought to unify the people behind the government's poor response to the violent extremist problem. As outlined above, those who dissent from this government-sanctioned narrative have been persecuted by government. Censorship is becoming omnipresent and local people in CD live in a state of constant paranoia, afraid to be labelled traitors or VEO sympathisers by the authorities.

The government has also used legal responses to counter the problem of violent extremism. This has been largely punitive in nature. A new law, passed in April 2021 and sanctioned by the Attorney General, has made collective guilt legal in terrorism trials. Individuals linked to the conflict can now be prosecuted for the crimes of the group and not only their own participation. However, this provided no evidence of a deterrence to VEO recruitment and led analysts to argue that any reintegration or amnesty programmes would be doomed from the start. Members of the VEO have little incentive to abandon violence while the government is unwilling to forgive their part in the conflict, or at least develop a mutually acceptable transitional justice process. Furthermore, extrajudicial killings have been reported and appear to be a coordinated policy of the FDS. Many violent extremists or people alleged to have collaborated with the VEO have been summarily executed by FDS, or by other authorities, while in custody.

So far, the government has not implemented any tangible socio-economic responses to countering violent extremism. Furthermore, concrete efforts to address some of the key drivers of conflict are only just beginning, and unlikely to have any impact on conflict dynamics in 2022. The hub of government efforts is the Integrated Development Agency for the North (ADIN), which was created in March 2020 and mandated to work across government departments to boost economic development in Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula under four main pillars: humanitarian assistance, economic development, community resilience and communication. ADIN aims to support government efforts to revitalise the north; complement efforts to improve job opportunities for communities affected by the ongoing conflict in Cabo Delgado, including internally displaced populations; and bolster national and international attempts to address the underlying causes of fragility and the key drivers of violent extremism among young people in rural communities.

The World Bank's support to Mozambique will primarily fund and build capacity within ADIN, through the estimated US\$200m "Northern Crisis Recovery Project" (doubled from \$100m in October 2021), which is being implemented through Mozambique's National Sustainable Development Fund (FNDS) with UNOPS providing implementation and advisory support for the project. This is one of at least seven World Bank funded initiatives for the northern provinces that "combine short-term bridging finance with emergency assistance to alleviate the direst impacts of fragility and conflict, and medium to longer term developmental support to address the root causes of fragility, conflict, and violence".<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> World Bank Project Appraisal Document (PAD4585) "Mozambique Northern Urban Development Project"

The additional \$100m for the Northern Crisis Recovery Project, which is expected to be disbursed in January, is supposedly to be “invested in the reconquered areas in the north of the province, and psychosocial support, reconstruction of public buildings and restoration of basic services are among the priorities”. However, this is unrealistic given the continued levels of insecurity and uncertainty in the areas where regional and national forces have reoccupied, but not necessarily reconquered.

In addition, a strategy for ADIN was only submitted to the Council of Ministers in November 2021, and there are fears it is just a vehicle for corruption and the enrichment of elites and their local allies. A major scandal erupted in late 2020 when it was reported that the ADIN had spent 90% of its initially allocated budget without providing any relief to the province. Therefore, there remains serious concerns about the transparency of the agency and its ability (and capacity) to deliver anything impactful in a timely and coordinated manner, particularly when military operations are close to culminating (see Section 3). At best, ADIN and partners may succeed in improving social cohesion between displaced and host communities and strengthen the resilience of the population to the impacts of the conflict. However, tangible steps towards addressing the drivers of conflict and violent extremism are unlikely.

Finally, the government has not yet sought to engage with local communities through structured dialogue to counter/prevent violent extremism by listening and acting on their politico, religious, and socio-economic grievances. However, a growing number of internationally funded P/CVE efforts are underway in some communities, but seemingly without an overarching strategy that is responsive to evolving conflict dynamics and national responses.

## **Regional and international responses**

Several multilateral organisations and countries have sought to involve themselves in countering violent extremism in CD. These include:

### **SADC**

Despite significant deficits in the understanding of the situation in Cabo Delgado,<sup>84</sup> the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) was deployed on 15 July 2021 following approval by the Extraordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Maputo on 23 June 2021. SAMIM is the regional response in support of Mozambique to combat “terrorism and acts of violent extremism” and mandates SAMIM to neutralise terrorist threats and restore security in order to create a secure environment;

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84 On 27 April 2021 the report of the SADC Technical Assessment Mission (15-22 April 2021) was leaked to the public.

Several of its claims, particularly in sections 2.10-2.13 (Intelligence Analysis) were highly questionable. CDD subsequently published a 23 May 2021 brief “Observations relating to the SADC technical mission’s report (intelligence analysis)” addressing some of the misunderstandings.

strengthen and maintain peace and security, restoring law and order in affected areas of Cabo Delgado Province; and support the Republic of Mozambique, in collaboration with humanitarian agencies, to continue providing humanitarian relief to populations affected by terrorist activities, including internally displaced persons (IDPs).

SAMIM comprises troop deployments from eight contributing countries (TCCs) from the SADC region: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, working in collaboration with the FADM and other troops deployed to Cabo Delgado (relating to the RDF / RNP deployment) to combat acts of terrorism and violent extremism.

Since its deployment - mostly to the conflict-affected districts of Quissanga, Macomia, Muidumbe and Nangade - SAMIM reports that it has registered several milestones, including recapturing villages, dislodging terrorists from their bases, and seizing weapons and warfare material, which has contributed to create a relatively secure environment for safer passage of humanitarian support. It further claims that members of the community have developed confidence in SAMIM forces, feeling more secure and allowing internally displaced persons to return to their normal lives.

Despite recommendations for a deployment of up to 3,000, it is unlikely SAMIM forces have reached this ceiling. They continue to be mandated on a three-month rolling basis, with the current mandate due to end in January 2022. The reason behind the short-term mandate is part of SADC's budget management process, as TCCs continue to be self-funding, as well as claims that a three-month cycle can facilitate a relatively rapid exit strategy. Undoubtedly some TCCs are supportive of a long-term, self-perpetuating mission, transforming to peacekeeping under the banner of the AU/UN, with international funding. This is particularly true for South Africa where military funding has been significantly slashed.

### ***Portugal and the EU***

As the former colonial power, Portugal has sought to involve itself in attempts to address the conflict, both bilaterally and as the lead nation on EU interventions. Initially, a bilateral security agreement was signed by the two countries and Portugal sent special forces operators to help train the FDS. Lisbon, currently at the head of the rotating presidency of the European Council, then sought further support from the EU to expand the training mission. In response, Josep Borrell, the EU head of diplomacy, confirmed his support for such an endeavour alongside numerous EU members states.

This resulted in the training of two companies in 2021, through bilateral arrangements, with plans that 11 companies (1,100 troops)<sup>85</sup> of the Mozambican army commandos (trained in Chimoio) and marines (trained in Maputo) will undergo training by the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in several batches in 2022/23, and subsequently form a Quick Reaction Force. The EUTM, which will not engage in military operations, will have around 140 military personnel divided between two training centres: one for commando training and the other for marines. The mission will provide military and specialised counter-terrorism training, operational readiness training, education on the protection of civilians and, according to reports, will provide compliance with International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law, and expects it to reach full operational capability by mid-December 2021.

The costs for the training mission, to be covered through the European Peace Facility (EPF), have been assessed at €15.16m for a period of two years, the expected timeframe for its operations. However, on 19 November 2021, the EU further adopted a decision establishing a €40 million assistance measure under the EPF to provide non-lethal equipment to the FADM companies under training. This includes individual and collective equipment, ground mobility assets, technical tools, and a field hospital. This assistance measure complements an urgent measure amounting to €4 million approved by the Council under the EPF on 30 July 2021 for equipment required immediately.

The EU has also sought to get involved, alongside the British Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), in providing P/CVE training in Maputo. The first workshop in a series was planned for November 2021 but postponed for unknown reasons.

## **Rwanda**

President Kagame was in regular talks with President Nyusi to send the Rwandan military and police Forces to CD, with Nyusi publicly stating his preference for bilateral rather than multilateral intervention, despite accepting both in the end. Nyusi flew to Rwanda in May to meet with Kagame to broker a bilateral security agreement, with France's President Macron also visiting Kigali during the same month with CD on the agenda. Some reports allege that Macron funded the subsequent July deployment of 2,000 RDF/RNP to shore-up France's interests, principally the gas reserves at the Area 1 concession owned by Total Energies. The Rwandan's have rejected this claim, but it seems - as a minimum - France has agreed to underwrite any costs that are subsequently unpaid through bilateral arrangements with Mozambique.

The deployment of RDF/RNP in early July 2021, following a formal announcement by President Nyusi in the stronghold Makonde town of Mueda on the 9<sup>th</sup>, was emphasized by the Rwandese as a humanitarian-based intervention. However, many de-

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<sup>85</sup> 1,100 troops represents less than 10% of the Mozambican military.

ployment flights went directly into Afungi to increase security at the LNG site and to enable troops to quickly begin the clearance of Palma town and surrounding areas. RDF heavy equipment was deployed to Nacala airport followed by a drive to Mueda, the location of the headquarters of the FADM northern command. The RDF then secured the route from Mueda to MDP, with forces from Afungi concurrently securing the route from Palma south to MDP. Eventually RDF and FADM forces were able to re-occupy MDP town with little resistance from the VEO that had mostly fled to the bush. What is significant however, is that all these routes and locations are deemed to be essential by Total Energies, and therefore their continued security is necessary to resume development of the LNG site. Therefore, there is little doubting the real purpose of the RDF / RNP deployments as they have continued to focus operations on these areas since initial deployment. Concurrently, Total seeks assurance that the Rwandans will remain to provide long-term protection and security - possibly for 2-3 years - to provide time for the site, and associated facilities, to be developed or until Mozambican forces are sufficiently capable to resume the responsibility.

Furthermore, the RDF gets a significant amount of its logistics support from the Afungi site, with many of its forces based there. Despite Total's withdrawal from the site in March 2021 and declaration of Force Majeure in late April 2021 (when responsibility for the site was supposedly handed to the government), the contractors hired to maintain the site in the interim were selected by Total, take direction from them, and are financed by Total through a third-party. Moreover, Total continues to fund and direct the Mozambican "Joint Task Force", a combination of military and police forces designed to provide site protection, with the RDF being supported through the same facilities. Total Energies therefore pays for much of the logistic support to the RDF deployed at the Afungi site.

The series of high-level talks between France, Rwanda and South Africa about the Cabo Delgado conflict in the months preceding their interventions in Mozambique, and the subsequent design of the deployments, suggests close coordination between Paris and these actors, reflecting the enormous French interests at stake. Alongside its alleged humanitarian objectives, it is clear the Rwandan government stands to benefit in security, diplomatic and commercial terms from its involvement in Cabo Delgado, particularly since Rwanda and Mozambique signed agreements in September and October 2021 that will boost mutual economic development through trade and investment activities, covering the domains of security and economic cooperation, with emphasis on mineral resources, energy, industry, and trade.

## **UN**

By September 2021 international partners had contributed US\$161.5m in humanitarian funding, when an estimated US\$254m was required. However, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Mozambique (OCHA) reported in its Sep-



tember update that less than 37% (US\$93m) had been received for humanitarian action in the northern provinces by August 2021, with humanitarian organizations reporting that they did not have sufficient resources to respond, causing a gap in life-saving operations, especially food assistance. More than 1.16 million people in northern Mozambique were assisted from January to August 2021, including around 861,000 people who received food assistance. However, in August, most food distributions were halted due to a pipeline break, and only around 49,900 people received food assistance. In addition, due to insecurity, there were no inter-agency missions during August, which is indicative of the challenges facing UN humanitarian operations.

## **USA**

The US government named VEO leaders as SDGT and the group as a FTO, as previously discussed. In October 2021, Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel “Woody” Williams made a scheduled port visit to Maputo, an example of the growing U.S.-Mozambique relationship. Also in 2021, the U.S. Department of Defence conducted two Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) programmes between U.S. Special Operations Forces and Mozambican Commandos and Fuzileiros. The U.S. Department of Defence also conducted tactical combat casualty care and combat lifesaver training courses for the armed forces. Mozambique participated in a second multinational maritime exercise “Cutlass Express” and continues its long-standing participation in the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme. The Counter Terrorism department of the US Department of State is also disbursing funds for P/CVE efforts in CD, as are USAID with a significant project completed by Development Alternatives International (under the direction of the Office of Transition Initiatives) in 2021, with a follow-on project designed for 2022.

## **Russia**

Despite Wagner’s abysmal and short-lived performance in CD, Russia claimed in November 2021 that it is ready to support Mozambique in the “fight against terrorism”. Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Mikhail Bogdanov considered the situation in Cabo Delgado a serious issue, which is why his country was offering to help address it. It is worth noting that during an earlier visit to Maputo by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, it was announced that Russia would increase counter-terrorism cooperation with Mozambique. Since then, there has been no evidence of any significant tangible support. However, the likelihood of Russian intervention increases - even just to complicate the situation and to heighten Russian-European antagonism - the more western influences increase.



## PLATAFORMA DE DIÁLOGO PARA A RESOLUÇÃO DO CONFLITO EM CABO DELGADO

# EXAMINING CONFLICT RESOLUTION INITIATIVES IN CABO DELGADO AND DISCUSSING FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION



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NJANJE SUPEIA**

Secretário do Estado da Província  
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**JÚLIA WACHAVE**

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

WEBINAR



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September 16, 2021



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# PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN CABO DELGADO

## SECURITY, DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT

**POLICY WEBINAR, 30 JUNE 2021**

**15:00 – 17:00 (Central Africa Time)**



**OMAR SARANGA**

(Infantry colonel  
National Director of National Defense Policy)



**VALIGE TAUABO**

(Governor of Cabo Delgado)



**COMFORT ERO**

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



**JÚLIA WACHAVE**

(Director of the Association for the  
Protection of Women and Girls) -  
Responses to GBV in Cabo Delgado.



**LIESEL LOUN-VAUDRAN**

(Institute for Security Studies)



**DELPHINE FAUQUE**

(TOTAL)



**PROF. ADRIANO NUVUNGA**

(Director of CDD)



**OSMAN YACOB**

Private Sector, Cabo Delgado



**RICHARD RANDS**

(CDD Expert)



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## Section 2: Lessons Learned from Multistakeholder Dialogue

- **Limited appreciation of conflict dynamics by key stakeholders**
- **Inadequate understanding of the scope and effects of dialogue-related interventions**
- **The fallacy of the faceless enemy and negotiating with violent extremists**
- **Limited harmonisation of multidimensional interventions (conflict management)**
- **A strategic framework to resolve armed conflict in Cabo Delgado**

This section focuses on what we *learned* from ongoing research and analysis (Section 1), and what we *did* resulting from our understanding of the conflict during 2021. It also highlights the main lessons learned from CDD's multistakeholder dialogue and related initiatives over the last year.

Our analysis of the conflict led CDD to recognise:

- The extremely complicated nature of the conflict, its rapid evolution and likely shifting dynamics. We therefore acknowledged the need for ongoing monitoring, analysis and reporting through regular engagement with stakeholders, particularly in Cabo Delgado.
- The dangerous overreliance on militarisation by national, regional, international and LNG operators and contractors, particularly in the face of transnational escalation. Global and continental experiences indicate that military operations alone will not resolve a violent extremist conflict, particularly when the conflict is driven by socio-economic deprivation, ethnic marginalisation, and intra-religious frustrations, and influenced by illicit trade and organised crime - as is the case in Cabo Delgado. The root causes of conflicts will not be addressed or resolved using force.
- Government reconstruction and development efforts resulting from international investments, which could contribute to conflict resolution in the short-term if properly focused, will not be sufficient to ensure peace (even if synchronised with military operations) unless the underlying drivers of conflict are addressed.
- The need to reconcile a multitude of disparate and competing interests from a wide range of stakeholders, all with varying levels of influence on the conflict and/or its resolution. The only way of achieving this is through

multistakeholder dialogue and direct or facilitated negotiations.

- There is a complete absence of any government initiated multistakeholder resolution dialogue.

Based on these deductions, CDD's evolving focus in 2021 was centred on:

- Conflict Monitoring and Reporting
- Multistakeholder Dialogue
- Civil Society Action for Social Cohesion in Northern Mozambique.

The lessons learned in this section of the report focus on multistakeholder dialogue and the results of conflict monitoring and reporting. Further information on the *Civil Society Action for Social Cohesion in Northern Mozambique* project, implemented through a collaboration with MASC and IESE, can be obtained from CDD.

Using the theme of “business, security and human rights” as an entry point for initial for multistakeholder dialogue and to coalesce a strong cohort of participants, we switched to more focused conflict resolution-related dialogue from April 2021. This was due to a change in the conflict dynamics as the VEO significantly raised the stakes by attacking Palma at the end of March, which led to intensified fighting, thousands more displaced people, and the eventual withdrawal of Total Energies triggering *force majeure* in relation to their operations at Afungi.

CDD facilitated a multitude of events, mobilising national and international stakeholders who willingly and consistently engaged over several months (see *Table of Activities* overleaf). Primarily, this included the central Government, through a partnership with the Ministry of National Defence, which was represented in all project activities at the highest levels. The project also included the participation of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs; the National Human Rights Commission; the Governor of Cabo Delgado Province and the Secretary of State; representatives from ADIN; and the administrations of nine districts most affected by violent extremism, namely Palma, Mocímboa da Praia, Quissanga, Ibo, Macomia, Mueda, Muidumbe, Nangade and Metuge. Dialogue also involved regional actors from SADC as well as representatives of diplomatic missions from South Africa, Portugal, Holland, UK, Sweden, and the EU. International organisations including the World Bank, IOM, OCHA, and WFP all attended, as well other international actors and partners of CDD including: the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF); the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) of South Africa; Good Governance Africa (GGA) of South Africa; Aga Khan Foundation, Open Society and the International Crisis Group (ICG). The international private sector was represented by Total, Saipem and Gemfields, with representatives from the CTA and Business Council of Cabo Del-

gado representing local private sector stakeholders. Civil society was represented by a range of stakeholders, including the Catholic church, Muslim community, Vamoz (humanitarian volunteers), and the Association of Protection of Women and Girls (Pemba).

A table of activities relating to multistakeholder dialogue initiatives is shown overleaf, followed by the main lessons learned from the facilitation of these events.

Table of Activities: Multistakeholder Dialogue 2021		
Serial	Dates	Activity
01	28 January	<b>Webinar:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue on business, security, and human rights in Cabo Delgado:</i> Setting the scene; establishing standards, responsibilities and outlining the methodology
02	25 February	<b>Webinar:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue on business, security, and human rights in Cabo Delgado:</i> Strengthening provincial level support for the implementation of VPSHR in Cabo Delgado
03	10-11 March	<b>Workshop</b> (in Maputo): <i>Platform for dialogue on business, security, and human rights in Cabo Delgado:</i> Promoting the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Cabo Delgado.
04	17-18 March	<b>Workshop</b> (in Pemba): <i>Platform for dialogue on business, security, and human rights in Cabo Delgado:</i> Promoting the effective implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Cabo Delgado.
05	25 March	<b>Webinar:</b> Lessons Learned, Benefits and Opportunities: Charting Future Paths for Mozambique
06	22 April	<b>Webinar:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue: conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado:</i> Exploring opportunities - strategic considerations, recommendations to policy makers, dialogue, and methodologies.
07	30 June	<b>Webinar:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue: conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado:</i> Security, dialogue, and development.
08	17 July - 10 August	<b>Key stakeholder consultations</b> (Cabo Delgado): Pemba business community, international private sector, PRM, SAMIM, ICRC, Faith-based groups, and community representatives.
09	16 September	<b>Webinar:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue: conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado:</i> Examining conflict resolution initiatives in Cabo Delgado and discussing future courses of action
10	13-14 October	<b>Workshop:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue: resolving conflict in Cabo Delgado</i> (Pemba) - Dialogue, strategy, and positive alternatives to violent extremism - Ensuring the accountability of military forces
11	September - October	<b>Research and analysis:</b> The situation in Tanzania
12	17 November	<b>Multistakeholder roundtable meeting:</b> <i>Platform for dialogue: resolving conflict in Cabo Delgado:</i> Multistakeholder resolution dialogue in Cabo Delgado: lessons learned and next steps.
13	23 November	<b>Faith-based capacity building:</b> Dialogue and social cohesion
14	April - October	<b>CDD's Conflict Resolution Series - written briefings:</b> 1. Resolving conflict in Cabo Delgado: what is resolution dialogue? 2. Resolving conflict in Cabo Delgado: terminology, tools, and processes 3. Preventing and countering violent extremism



## 2.1 Limited Understanding of Conflict Dynamics

While listening to the concerns of stakeholders during the dialogue process it was quickly apparent that many struggled with the confusion of competing conflict narratives, often deliberately driven by the opposing interests of conflict actors and influencers. The geographic and political separation of Maputo and CD contributes to this phenomenon. There is lack of appreciation of the true drivers of conflict particularly by influential actors and observers based in Maputo, and who rarely visit CD. They generally perpetuate the *ISIS-Mozambique / foreign terrorist narrative*, as do regional allies. In contrast, most CD-based actors are acutely aware of the conflict drivers and dynamics and generally support the *Influences and inclusion narrative* while trying to rationalise the *foreign terrorist* discourse. Furthermore, many community actors - including IDPs - struggle to maintain a current and updated understanding of the situation as fast-moving military-related events and promises of future reconstruction and development support add to the competing conflict narratives.

The absence of regular dialogue and communication at multiple levels is preventing a common and accurate understanding of conflict, which has increased suspicion and paranoia among stakeholders and contributes to the general lack of confidence in government responses to date. Furthermore, attempts to obscure the truth behind the situation in CD, and manipulate or confuse stakeholder understanding, will only exacerbate conflict and detract from resolution.

### **SPECIFIC FINDINGS FROM THE PEMBA RESOLUTION DIALOGUE WORKSHOP (13-14 DECEMBER):**

- Further understanding of the motives and mindsets of violent extremists by national actors is required. There remains significant and diverse understanding of the drivers of conflict, and a lack of comprehension because of false or contradictory narratives.
- Concerns over the situation in Tanzania and its impact on the conflict in Cabo Delgado (a first realisation, and improved awareness, for many of the influences emanating from

## 2.2 Inadequate Appreciation of the Scope and Effects of Dialogue-Related Interventions

The assessment of experienced government and diplomatic representatives in Mozambique suggests military operations are close to reaching the “*culminating point*”.<sup>86</sup> This is the time at which forces achieve the maximum amount of military advantage before additional action will come at increasingly unacceptable costs for minimal gains. The timing of the culminating point also relates to how quickly an adversary can adapt, counter, and regain the initiative. Also, as the culminating point approaches, this is one of the times when resolution dialogue may be more effective and other non-military responses need to rapidly come to the fore. Despite this acknowledgement, the only other approach being pursued by the government is reliance on reconstruction and development. One of the constraining aspects preventing the expansion of resolution dialogue - as the primary means of conflict resolution - is an inadequate appreciation of the scope and effects of dialogue-related Interventions by key actors and decision-makers.

Engagements over the last year identified failures to understand the following aspects of dialogue:

### **Resolution dialogue is a tool for peace**

Since the end of the Cold War, Africa has been the theatre of numerous low-intensity conflicts fuelled by violent extremism. Though the causes for these conflicts vary greatly, they are all broadly rooted in issues of greed or grievances.<sup>87</sup> Resolution dialogue is a powerful tool to address these conflicts and can help bring about lasting peace through interest-based negotiations that address the specific grievances and greed of the conflict stakeholders. This approach has been used with some success in the past, bringing about lasting peace, change and stability to previously embattled areas.

### **Conflict resolution through dialogue is possible**

Though resolution dialogue can be a powerful tool for conflict resolution, it must be part of a coherent, collaborative, and voluntary process. Conflicts rooted in greed or grievances are difficult to manage as they often appeal to issues of identity on which the stakeholders to the conflict are not willing to compromise. This difficulty is further compounded because conflict stakeholders must learn to live with each other after resolution. Therefore, to achieve long-lasting peace, it is essential to establish a solid basis of trust between all stakeholders.

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<sup>86</sup> Senior MoD representative and eminent SADC general officer (now diplomat) at the 17 November 2021 multistakeholder roundtable meeting.

<sup>87</sup> Greed is not understood in its ordinary sense here but relates to economic interest. It does not carry a pejorative association and is intended as a neutral, scholarly term widely found in the literature on conflict resolution.

To build the basis for trust stakeholders must engage in conflict resolution willingly, and without reservations. As such, the timing of resolution processes is important. A *mutually hurting stalemate* for all parties involved is the ideal time to start dialogue as stakeholders have little to gain from continuing in the path of violence. It thus dissuades those involved from half-heartedly committing to dialogue as the cost-benefit of engaging fully and transparently in the process is favourable. In essence, when all stakeholders are in a painful deadlock, the potential rewards of peace appear significantly more appealing.

To build lasting peace, all parties must believe that they will profit from the cessation of hostilities. Resolution dialogue is a critical tool to achieve this, as it enlightens all parties as to their desires, aims, and expectations. The peace process, therefore, can be modelled on shared aspirations and through an interest-based approach, to create value for all.

## **The key stages of resolution dialogue**

Suspending judgements and assumptions is essential to finding shared meaning within a dialogue between potentially conflicting stakeholders. The emphasis within the following four key stages is on nurturing stakeholders' ability to engage in collective thinking, reflection, and enquiry to promote meaningful relationships. In the following model, stakeholders move through four stages with the assistance of a neutral facilitator (mediator), whose aim is to motivate, empower and support the stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue, make decisions and resolve conflict together:

### ***1. Establishing a safe environment and common basis for dialogue.***

This involves clarifying the purpose of the dialogue and building a 'dialogue space' that is a safe and private environment. Within this space, meaningful issues can be discussed and explored. From the outset - and often resulting from preliminary stakeholder consultations - it is essential to develop a consensus among stakeholders as to the purpose and structure of the process.

### ***2. Developing a common base of knowledge***

This is done by exploring stakeholder beliefs, perceptions, and narratives, while concurrently suspending judgement. The resulting collation of stakeholder beliefs and knowledge should be explored, synthesised where possible, and a common base of knowledge established. It is essential, at this stage, to engage in relationship-building dialogue and for the facilitation to ensure a basis of trust is built between stakeholders. Developing a common base of knowledge is an excellent way to build this rapport as stakeholders

will establish facts on which they can agree, creating a small but steady basis for future collaboration and lasting commitment to peaceful dialogue.

### ***3. Exploring contention and conflict.***

The dialogue needs to focus on key conflict-related issues with a view to probing and deepening discussions, while continuing the suspension of judgement. This way, curiosity and creativity are allowed to flow freely, and stakeholder interests are more likely to naturally align. The dialogue facilitators may prompt discussion among stakeholders during this stage by tabling concepts and ideas.

### ***4. Moving from dialogue to action.***

This involves assessing the experiences and lessons arising from the sessions of dialogue, establishing new ways for communicating to reach joint decisions together and resolve issues.

## **‘Interest-based’ approaches to resolution dialogue**

An interest-based approach to resolution dialogue focuses on the underlying needs of the stakeholders and permits their feelings, concerns, and needs to be the basis of the dialogue. The interests of the stakeholders may include issues of power, resources, rights, or financial gain, but also the less tangible issues of respect, esteem, and feelings. An interest-based process is often the best choice for stakeholders who are engaged in a power struggle or who have positioned themselves into inescapable corners. If stakeholders are encouraged to explore their underlying interests, which are the needs that motivate any position they may have taken, they are in effect defining the problem. Thus, by exploring stakeholder interests, the problems to be solved take on new dimensions. By focusing on interests, stakeholders who are at an impasse may discover possible solutions to their problems, and likely to discover shared or compatible interests. The goal of the interest-based approach is therefore to resolve conflict through actions that reconcile multiple interests.

## 2.3 The Fallacy of the “Faceless Enemy” and Negotiating with Violent Extremists

On several occasions during the conduct of multistakeholder dialogue the issue of negotiating with a “faceless enemy” was raised, since this is a narrative regularly portrayed by some government and security force actors. On the contrary, the VEO is far from faceless, as multiple individuals have been identified as group or cell leaders over the last four years. As early as August 2018, Commander-General of the Police, General Bernardino Rafael named Abdul Faizal, Abdul Remane, Abdulaim, Nuno Remane (aka Nuro Adremane), Ibn Omar (aka Bonomade Machude Omar) as leading attacks in Cabo Delgado. Nuro Adremane was also named as undertaking Islamic studies in Tanzania, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, along with military training.

The U.S. Department of State subsequently designated Bonomade Machude Omar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist on 6 August 2021 as a senior commander of “ISIS-Mozambique” and alleged external affairs representative. Six days later, then Commander of the National Army Cristovoa Chume (now the Minister of Defence) told the media that leaders close to Bonomade had been captured, and they were collaborating in efforts to neutralise him. The FDS then claimed to have captured and executed Bonomade in September 2021 in Pundanhhar.

Other named commanders include Tanzanian Abu Yasir Hassan (designated by the US in March 2021, Hassan is likely to be dead, as Tanzanian authorities claimed he was a drug dealer killed in 2017); Ali Buana Aiuba (apparently captured in Pundanhhar in September 2021); Rajab Awadhi Ndanjile (killed in SAMIM operations in September 2021); Muhamudu’ (killed by RDF and FADM in October 2021); Abdulaim (killed in late 2020); Darday Jungo Junior (still alive, as at October 2021, and a close associate of Bonomade). SAMIM forces also claimed to have killed operational commanders Rajabo Fiquir and Abu Qitali in Nangade in November 2021.

The fallacy of a faceless enemy is clearly evidenced through this information. Moreover, the fact that so many group and cell commanders can be identified shows a complete lack of creativity and inventiveness in the approaches being used in attempts to resolve conflict, and demonstrates a lack of awareness and understanding - at multiple levels - of dialogue and negotiations strategies that could be more effective than military operations alone.

Even if the perpetrators of violence are ‘faceless’ and largely unknown, resolution dialogue can 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>88</sup> can induce and incentivise violent extremists to conduct activities that support other objectives. For example: in a positive sense, to release abductees / captives. Or, negatively, with rewards for securing illicit trade routes. It is therefore the influencers, and an often-complicated network of interlocutors who operate between influencers and violent extremists, who are potential stakeholders in a resolution dialogue process.

CDD's Conflict Resolution Series (Number 5) *Negotiating with Violent Extremists in Cabo Delgado* provides further details of processes and approaches that are relevant in this context and concludes that: *If negotiations with the VEO in Cabo Delgado are well designed and managed they will be a vital tool for reducing violence and human rights abuses. Negotiations are likely to be even more productive when used as part of a comprehensive local and national strategy involving multiple, synchronised interventions that balance threats and incentives. While negotiations that lead to major transformative settlements and seek a complete end to violence and participation in illegalities are possible, and desirable with the VEO in Cabo Delgado, conditions will be rarely auspicious enough. Nevertheless, negotiations with more limited goals can be worthwhile and deliver important benefits to local communities and the state, while serving as trust and confidence-building measures for broader transitions to lawful order.*

## **2.4 Limited Harmonisation of Multidimensional Interventions**

Multistakeholder dialogue identified shortfalls in the harmonisation, deconfliction and the application of conflict sensitivity related to the multiple interventions underway in Cabo Delgado.

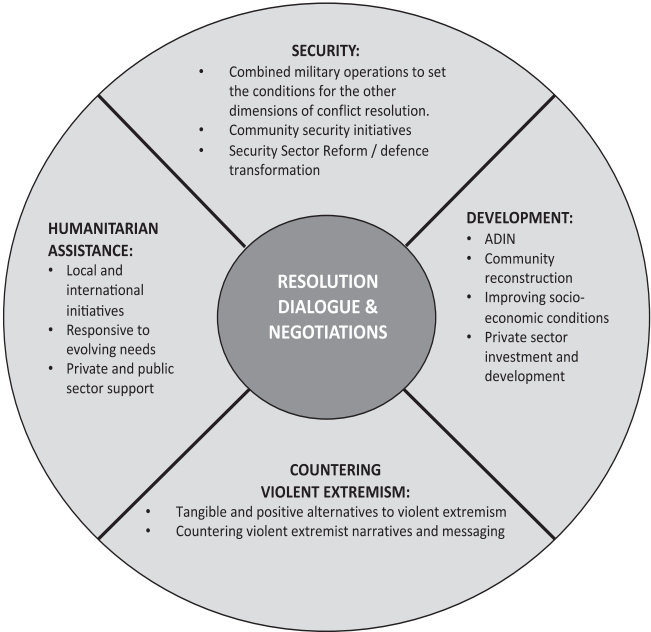
There is sporadic high-level coordination between political leaders, diplomats, and representatives of multilateral organisations, as seen in October / November 2021 meetings between the Mozambican prime minister, Carlos Agostinho do Rosário, and heads of diplomatic missions, World Bank and UN, to discuss the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan. There are also regular military commanders' meetings with representatives from Mozambique, Rwanda, and SADC to enhance intelligence and coordinate operations. Plus, ADIN in its role as coordinator of development and humanitarian efforts in the northern provinces has convened multiple meetings to de-

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<sup>88</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.

velop a strategy and has plans to assume a lead role in the oversight of multiple interventions. ADIN needs to collaborate closely with military commanders too if complementary development and humanitarian initiatives are to advance conflict resolution. However, there is an absence of any detailed activity mapping and de-confliction relating to the multitude of varying interventions, and particularly P/CVE efforts in the northern provinces (which are receiving increased donor support).

However, we do not see the need for the creation of additional structures to improve overall coordination, as there are plenty of organisations mandated for this purpose. However, we see dialogue as the cement that helps to bind and focus multidimensional intervention; as well as improving harmonisation, deconfliction and conflict sensitivity. Moreover, we see a compelling need to map and understand the complete range of conflict resolution / conflict management related activities in Cabo Delgado, the neighbouring provinces of Nampula and Niassa, and in southern Tanzania, with a need to synchronise key interventions as part of an overarching dialogue and negotiations process - as captured below:



## 2.5 A strategic framework to resolve armed conflict in Cabo Delgado

Because of the lessons learned from activities and engagement in 2021, we were able to develop a strategic framework to guide CDD's conflict resolution endeavours in 2022. We believe the aim and strategic objectives, articulated in the framework below, should be the focus of all relevant stakeholders in Mozambique. CDD's primary focus, particularly in the early part of 2022 is the need to exert influence at the national / strategic level to adopt a coherent conflict resolution strategy based around dialogue, while addressing several sensitive issues. This approach is further described in Section 3.

<b>Aim:</b> Promote stability, accountability and responsible investment reducing the risk of violence to communities in Cabo Delgado.			
<b>Strategic Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective 1.</b> Ensure the timely development of national strategic economic interests.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 2.</b> Provide secure and prosperous environments for the return and/or resettlement of displaced people, and those that have remained in the conflict-affected districts.</li> <li>• <b>Objective 3.</b> Enhance security, stability, and resilience in areas on the periphery of the conflict-affected districts and avert the spread of violent extremism.</li> </ul>			
<b>End state:</b> A secure and prosperous, well governed province for its inhabitants; resumption of the development of strategic economic interests as a means of supporting further provincial growth, stability and improved public governance; drivers of violent extremism addressed and its spread averted.			
Level	Effects to be Achieved	Methodology	Resource
<b>National - Strategic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convince, reassure, and support key leadership on "sensitive issues" (See Note below).</li> <li>- Shape, convince, and synchronise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through eminent regional and international persons: political, diplomatic, and academic actors, and experienced practitioners</li> <li>- Informal channels to "elites"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peace-Making Advisory Group (Cabo Delgado) (See Section 3)</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial - Operational</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build trust, improve communications, reassure, shape, and problem solve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multistakeholder resolution dialogue</li> <li>- Negotiations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CDD Platform for Dialogue: Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado</li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shape, problem solve, build cohesion resilience, provide opportunities, and stabilise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social cohesion project</li> <li>- International and national P/CVE partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internationally funded with further donor procurement processes expected in 2022</li> </ul>

**Note:**

1. We have identified five “sensitive issues” that seriously impact the conflict and require engagement at the highest levels: (1) Negotiate: convince decision-makers that military solutions alone will not work and, in the absence of a coherent multi-dimensional strategy to address the drivers of violent extremism, conflict will - in the long-term - increase. (2) Defining success and the conditions for the exit of multinational forces, and the transition to improved policing/law and order institutions. (3) Addressing a culture of impunity for human rights abuses in FDS and the need for wholesale defence transformation. (4) Setting the conditions for regaining the societal licence to enable the successful resumption of LNG development to realise the benefits of vital strategic economic interests. (5) Addressing serious and organised crime in northern Mozambique (which impacts the continent and Europe) as a driver of elite competition and conflict.

## Section 3: Conflict Resolution in 2022

To implement the national-strategic component of the strategic framework, illustrated in 2.5, CDD has identified an urgent and compelling need for a **Peace-making Advisory Group** to advance conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado (**PAG-CD**). This section summarises the background and logic behind the peace-making group, and provides details for its implementation:

### The urgent need for peace-making

Global and continental experiences indicate that military operations alone will not resolve a violent extremist conflict, particularly when the conflict is driven by socio-economic deprivation, ethnic marginalisation, and intra-religious frustrations, and influenced by illicit trade and organised crime - as is the case in Cabo Delgado. Moreover, reliance on military approaches alone is more likely to exacerbate the conflict than resolve it, in the long-term. However, military operations can play an important role in setting the conditions for conflict resolution, particularly if they are carefully designed and executed in line with a coherent strategy that includes resolution dialogue, humanitarian support, development, and preventing and countering violent extremist (P/CVE) initiatives.

In response to military operations, Violent Extremist Organisations (VEO) - as seen in Cabo Delgado - soon learn to adapt to their new enemies and conditions, develop different and improved operating techniques, and receive increased external support for their cause to survive and flourish.<sup>89</sup> This is because **the root causes of conflicts are not addressed or resolved using force.**

The assessment of experienced government and diplomatic representatives in Mozambique suggests **military operations are close to reaching the “culminating point”**. This is the time at which forces achieve the maximum amount of military advantage before additional action will come at increasingly unacceptable costs for minimal gains. The timing of the culminating point also relates to how quickly an adversary can adapt, counter, and regain the initiative. Also, as the culminating point approaches, this is one of the times when negotiations may be more effective and other non-military responses need to rapidly come to the fore.

Of particular concern is the looming threat of transnational terrorism resulting from regional proliferation of tactics, techniques, and procedures by known associates of violent extremists in Cabo Delgado (in Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, and DRC). This includes the potential for the use of IEDs and more sophisticated weaponry, as well as indiscriminate attacks in Cabo Delgado. Plus, intercontinental influences resulting in increased radicalisation and organised crime are likely (e.g., from Afghanistan / Pakistan), particularly as Cabo Delgado is now an internationalised opportunity for global Salafi-Jihadis. While leaders, decision-makers and elites in Mozambique can still address and resolve a mostly homegrown violent extremist problem, if the situation becomes truly transnational then conflict will be intractable and resolution increasingly difficult.

While time is limited, the window to develop and implement a coherent strategy is still open. Furthermore, the major resources and capabilities required to deliver sustainable conflict resolution are already assigned to Cabo Delgado. However, there is an urgent need for a harmonised multi-dimensional and sustainable conflict resolution strategy (which initiates the challenging process of addressing entrenched grievances, socio-economic deprivation, and extreme ideology), involving complementary initiatives in the humanitarian and development space, specialist approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) and - critically - early-stage dialogue and negotiations to exploit military gains and other levers.

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<sup>89</sup> At least 100 people were kidnapped by a group of unidentified armed men during the attack that took place on 27 November 2021 in the locality of Naulala, about 60 kilometres from Mecula District, in Niassa Province. Besides kidnapping young people to an unknown destination, the group set fire to residences and commercial establishments, looted food products and medicines at the local health centre. This is the first attack of its kind in this province and signals a significant escalation.



## Aim and purpose of the PAG-CD

To establish a coherent path towards conflict resolution in Cabo Delgado, to minimize violence on communities and foster sustainable peace through:

- Developing and sharing strategic approaches and concepts that promote conflict resolution.
- Harmonising stakeholder initiatives and ensuring conflict sensitivity.
- Advancing the application of human rights and International Humanitarian Law.
- Advising on foreign investment conformance with international standards.

## End State: What does the PAG-CD seek to achieve?

- Bring peace. A secure and prosperous, well governed province for its inhabitants; resumption of the development of strategic economic interests as a means of supporting further provincial growth, stability and improved public governance; drivers of violent extremism addressed and its spread averted.

## What effects need to be realised?

- National-Strategic: *Convince, reassure, and shape* key leader / elite thinking (particularly relating to the “sensitive issues” - see the Strategic Framework at 2.5).
- Provincial-Operational: *Improved communications, increased trust, enhanced alignment / harmonisation* of stakeholder activities, *mainstreaming* conflict sensitivity.

## Membership and participation:

The PAG-CD will comprise three integrated elements:

- *Nucleus*: A focused team of eminent regional and international persons: political, diplomatic, and academic actors, and experienced practitioners (up to 4 people).<sup>90</sup>
- *Secretariat*: Staffed by Mozambican civil society, consultants, and international specialists, with the intent of building a coalition of expertise, combining conflict monitoring, research, strategy and concept development, facilitation, stakeholder capacity building, recording, reporting, administration, logistics and evaluation (up to 6 people).
- *Co-opted Stakeholders*: Government (including military and security forces, ADIN, and Human Rights Commission); multilateral organisations (UN, WB, SADC, EU); selected diplomatic missions/donors; faith-based representatives; international private sector (LNG and gemstone operators).

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<sup>90</sup> We are currently in discussion with eminent persons from the region with the relevant expertise, experience, and access to the highest levels of the Government of Mozambique.

## Geographical focus:

- It is vital that the activities of the PAG-CD (dialogue through hearings, consultations, meetings, conferences, and workshops) are Cabo Delgado-centric to maintain acceptance and credibility, as well as develop “*local solutions to local problems*” and engage in the “*local/local content*” discourse.<sup>91</sup> The concept of conducting events combining personal and virtual attendance has proven successful. This does not detract from the importance of high-level consultations between the nucleus of the group and senior government officials / elites in Maputo.
- Given the threat of the proliferation of terrorism, and the wide-ranging influences of neighbouring/regional countries, PAG-CD shall also engage in consultations with political and security actors in countries in the Great Lakes region (particularly Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda), as well as South Africa and SADC.

## Implementation roadmap:

- ***Socialise, Refine and Fund (December 2021):*** Socialise and refine the concept with stakeholders; develop terms of reference; identify and seek commitment from members and representatives; obtain donor support / funding based on an inception period of three months (January-March 2022 inclusive) and an initial implementation period of nine months.<sup>92</sup>
- ***Stakeholder Activity Mapping (December 2021/January 2022):*** Concurrently, conduct a stakeholder activity mapping exercise to better understand the military, humanitarian, development, and P/CVE landscape, as well as the engagement of public and private sectors. This will be done initially at the macro-level, utilising existing knowledge, documents, and reports to understand broad stakeholder intent and objectives, which will inform concept development and planning. A detailed study - as a second phase - aimed at producing a comprehensive appreciation of exactly who is doing what, where and why will be conducted in January 2022 to coincide with the launch of PAG-CD.
- ***Inception Period Activities (January - March 2022):***
  - The first PAG-CD consultations with key decision-makers shall take place by the end of January 2022, in Mozambique. *Timeliness is key, especially*

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<sup>91</sup> These mantras reflect CD-focused approaches around ownership and are commonly used during dialogue.

<sup>92</sup> The concept was initially introduced in Maputo at a key stakeholder roundtable discussion on conflict resolution approaches and lessons learned from recent dialogue, that took place on 17 November 2021.

*given the current opportunities for conflict resolution generated by regional military responses and attrition of the VEO, while mindful there is significant potential for an escalating and intractable conflict because of regional / international proliferation, inappropriate stakeholder responses and a lack of conflict sensitivity.*

- Workshops for PAG-CD and selected stakeholders: one to complete the stakeholder activity mapping, initiated in December 2021; and one focusing on identifying multistakeholder interests.

- Three one-day capacity building with selected stakeholders, facilitated by the PAG-CD secretariat, to improve understanding of resolution dialogue processes.

- ***Inception Period Outputs:***

- *Comprehensive stakeholder activity mapping:* The completion of stakeholder activity mapping (see above) to inform strategy and harmonisation.

- *Development of a coherent resolution strategy:* Government engagement at the highest levels, combined with key stakeholder consultations in Cabo Delgado, to establish a roadmap to addressing the sensitive issues, and provide vital input to a coherent strategy for conflict resolution.

- *Harmonising key Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding (HDP) initiatives:* In consultation with key stakeholders and decision-makers, improve the harmonisation of key HDP initiatives in line with a coherent conflict resolution strategy, while mainstreaming conflict sensitivity.

- *Stakeholder understanding of resolution dialogue processes improved.*

- *Quarterly Report - 1:* The first report containing recommendations to government (including military and security forces, ADIN, and Human Rights Commission); multilateral organisations (UN, EU, SADC, and WB); selected diplomatic missions/donors; faith-based representatives; international private sector (LNG and gemstone operators) - delivered through good offices and with rights of response.

In conclusion, the situation in Cabo Delgado is complicated but not complex, in the sense that the situation ***is*** determinable and solvable, rather than there being too many unknowns and interrelated factors making the situation insoluble. However, to achieve peace, ***dialogue-centric approaches to conflict resolution - focused on reconciling the interests of multiple stakeholders - must be the priority in 2022*** before the situation becomes intractable and increasingly widespread.

