

Inclusive dialogue is key to ending the conflict in Cabo Delgado

- “Normalization” of the situation in Cabo Delgado should not imply returning to the “normal” prior to October 2017, as it was this “normal” that created the conditions for violent extremism. The focus cannot be to go back to normal, but rather the need to introduce changes, to look to the future. “It is necessary to make improvements in central, provincial and even district governance, looking at the socio-economic conditions that have been unfavorable for the communities of Cabo Delgado.



CDD's annual report on "Conflict Resolution in Cabo Delgado and Resolution Dialogue in 2022 and Beyond" finds that the situation in this northern Mozambican province is complicated, but not complex. The main argument for non-complexity lies in the fact that the violent extremism can be solved through dialogue-centered approaches to conflict resolution, with a focus on reconciling the interests of various actors.

Launched on Thursday, May 5, in Maputo City, the report argues that dialogue for conflict resolution should be the priority this year (2022), before violent extremism spreads throughout the northern region and becomes an increasingly widespread problem. Indeed, global and continental experiences show that military operations alone do not solve a conflict of a violent extremist nature, particularly when it is driven by socio-economic deprivation, ethnic marginalization and intra-religious frustrations, and influenced by illicit trade and organized crime - as is the case in Cabo Delgado.

Exclusive reliance on military approaches is more likely to exacerbate conflict than to solve it, in the long term. This is not to underestimate the importance of military operations: they can play an important role in establishing the conditions for conflict resolution, especially if they are carefully designed and executed according to a coherent strategy that includes resolution dialogue, humanitarian support, development, and preventing and countering the initiatives of violent extremists.

Military operations in Cabo Delgado have already reached the maximum level of military advantage over the enemy, the so-called "tipping point. This is the time at which negotiations can be most effective and quickly activate other non-military responses . "The SADC and Rwandan forces have done their utmost and achieved their goals of restoring security, so the time has come to activate other initiatives to address the causes and origins of violent extremism."

The Northern Integrated Development Agency (ADIN) is part of the existing initiatives to "attack" the roots of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. ADIN was created in March 2020 to complement the military strategy through socio-economic development actions. In addition to state agency engagement, there is an international private sector in Cabo Delgado interested in supporting dialogue initiatives to resolve the conflict. The international private sector needs to resume its projects and obtain social license from local communities to be able to exploit natural resources in an environment of stability.

The report presented by Richard Rands, CDD Advisor, recommends that conflict resolution dialogue should be done in formats

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Siphiwe Nyanda, High Commissioner of South Africa in Mozambique



Siphosami Malunga, Executive Director of OSISA

that embrace multiple sectors and at multiple levels, from central, provincial to district ones. An approach to resolution dialogue based on the underlying interests of the stakeholders allows their feelings, concerns,

and needs to be the basis of the dialogue. "The parties' interests may include issues of power, resources, rights, or financial gain, but also less tangible issues such as respect, esteem, and feelings."

The CDD Advisor argues that the “normalization” of the situation in Cabo Delgado should not entail returning to the “normal” prior to October 2017, because it was this “normal” that created the conditions of possibility for violent extremism. So the focus cannot be to go back to normal, but to introduce changes, to look to the future. “It is necessary to make improvements in central, provincial and even district governance, looking at the socio-economic conditions that have been unfavorable for the communities in Cabo Delgado. Internal actions need to be developed to prevent that vulnerable youth adhere to violent extremism. And finally, discuss what needs to be done at the level of the Defense and Security Forces to avoid making the same mistakes.

At the launching ceremony of the report were present personalities with emphasis on the High Commissioner of South Africa in Mozambique, Sipiwe Nyanda; the Executive Director of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), Siphosami Malunga; the Director of Good Governance Africa (GGA), Chris Maroleng; and the representative of the Agency for Integrated Development in the North (ADIN), Prof. João Machatine.

Speaking in the opening remarks, the South African High Commissioner argued that the military intervention by Rwanda and SADC was necessary because Mozambique lacked the capacity to deal alone against violent extremists. Sipiwe Nyanda highlighted the fact that foreign forces in Cabo Delgado have been instrumental in destroying the abilities of violent extremists. Still, he drew attention to the need for preparation and training of Mozambican forces to take control of the conquered areas.

The South African diplomat recalled that before the arrival of Rwandan and SADC troops it was said that the insurgents had no face. “With the intervention of that troops it was possible to reveal the faces of the leaders of the violent extremist groups. It is clear that terrorism in Cabo Delgado has faces, it has leaders,” said Sipiwe Nyanda, South Africa’s High Commissioner in Mozambique. Despite recognizing the advances made by foreign forces, the diplomat warned that that conflict will not be solved exclusively with military interventions. It is necessary to sit down and have dialogue with the people, he argued.

“When the conflict in Cabo Delgado reached an extreme escalation of violence, we as civil society were very angry because we were not understanding why SADC was not helping Mozambique in the fight against the insurgency. We were happy when the Government of Mozambique requested military support and the SADC countries answered with the deployment of troops to intervene in Mozambique Cabo Delgado. It is good



Prof João Machatine, ADIN



Marta Licuco, Human Rights Defender in Cabo Delgado



Chris Maroleng, Executive Director of GGA

when African countries help each other to solve their problems. Look at how Europe is helping Ukraine. Europe didn't have to wait months to help Ukraine," said Siphosami Malunga, Executive Director of OSISA.

Mr Malunga argued that solidarity among African countries is important and must continue, and highlighted the importance of initiatives like CDD that seek a better understanding of the conflict. "There is not one truth, there are many truths. If you ask someone from Cabo Delgado about the conflict they will give you one answer; and if you ask the same question to someone from Maputo they will give you a different answer. Initiatives like this one from CDD are important because they help us understand the multiplicity of approaches to the conflict in Cabo Delgado.

Like other speakers at the event, the OSISA Executive Director argued for the need to define a security and peacekeeping strategy. "This cannot be achieved through a purely military solution. Other approaches are needed, including an open dialogue. I liked hearing from Professor Machatine that the government, through ADIN, is making investments in Cabo Delgado. We must solve the conflict in Cabo Delgado to allow Mozambique and the SADC region in general to benefit from the natural gas in the Rovuma Basin."

For his part, Chris Maroleng began by explaining that GGA is a think tank focused on

understanding the challenges and benefits of good governance in African countries. "In our view, the deficit of good governance in Mozambique is one of the factors that contributed to the emergence of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. There is a need for us to include dialogue in solving that conflict. Regional solidarity and engagement can be the key in solving the conflict, not only through military support, but also through dialogue. We also believe that good governance is the solution to many problems that we see in African countries, including Mozambique," argued GGA's Executive Director, Chris Maroleng.

Representing ADIN was Prof. João Machatine, who began by explaining that the agency is only two years old and was established with the purpose of promoting, coordinating and facilitating the multifaceted development processes in the northern region. "When ADIN was created it raised many expectations that it would solve the problems of the conflict in Cabo Delgado. ADIN was created after it was realized that this had a complex nature. It had not only a security dimension, but also an economic, political, social and psychological dimension, so it would not be up to the military and law and order institutions alone to solve it. An atypical entity was needed for that atypical situation. It is in that context that the agency is created."

Once it was established, ADIN mapped the situation in the region to determine the areas

that should be targeted for interventions, since it was clear that the insurgency in Cabo Delgado had supply lines. "It was necessary to know what those lines were, what their potential was, and what should be done. Not in military terms, but making development actions as tools for building harmony and social cohesion; creating facilities for economic agents to develop their activities in those areas, attacking those problems that civil society and other actors had already identified; identifying quick ways to empower young people for employment and self-employment, discouraging them from joining the insurgency."

Speaking from Pemba, social activist and human rights defender Marta Licuco began her speech by advocating for the need for greater humanitarian assistance for the hundreds of thousands of displaced people, mostly women and children. In addition to the distribution of food and shelter, psychosocial assistance must be provided to people who have been subjected and/or exposed to the cruelest forms of violence. Marta Licuco harshly criticized Cabo Delgado's reconstruction plan for privileging some districts to the detriment of others. "In a province with 17 districts, the reconstruction plan is directing 80% of the funds to only two districts: Mocímboa da Praia and Palma. This is what creates inequalities, because all districts are in need of assistance."

"The reference of the local youth is an individual who leaves school and goes after illegal mining", João Feijó, OMR Researcher

"We have to do something other than the military issue. Military intervention is important to guarantee the security of the people and the integrity of our territory. But if we don't go to the causes of the problems, we are sacrificing the young people who are defending the country. Contrary to what is always said, there is a lot of wealth in Cabo Delgado. There was an illicit economy based on the illegal exploitation of wood, rubies, ivory, and drug trafficking. Money laundering was visible, even if discreetly. There were thousands of young people who made a living from garimpo and who improved their lives through this illegal practice. The State lost because nobody paid taxes, but those young people gained from it. From 2016 onwards the state has taken an attitude of control over natural resources, throu-



João Feijó, Researcher at OMR

gh the formalization of their exploitation. In the space of a few months we witnessed "Operation Trunk" - against illegal logging; an operation to burn illegal ivory; the expelling of illegal miners from the Namanhum-bir mines in a violent way. This operation had to be done, but we have to understand the impact it had on the local youth who had created enormous expectations around the illegal exploitation of the resources. You

have to talk to children and young people in Cabo Delgado to understand who their role models are: the reference point for the local youth is not an individual who studies, but an individual who leaves school and goes after mining, picks up a stone and suddenly becomes rich. Another point is that we have a very young population in Cabo Delgado: the average fertility rate is above five children per woman. It is true that the rate is de-

creasing, but it still represents a big pressure on public services and resources that we still don't have. Social inequalities have increased tremendously, poverty is now coexisting with an emerging consumer society. This is explosive, as it leaves young people vulnerable to join violent extremist groups, as long as they have money. Especially in a scenario where there are no spaces for participation."

"If we want to solve the situation in Cabo Delgado we have to attack the problem and not the problem's manifestations," Borges Nhamirre, CIP researcher

"The attacks themselves are not the problem, but rather the manifestation of the problem, they are symptoms of the problem. So if we want to solve the situation in Cabo Delgado we have to attack the problem and not its manifestation. But it has to be said that poverty itself may not be the problem. This has not been said: Cabo Delgado is not the poorest province in Mozambique. The social indicators are clear: the poorest province is Niassa. The conflict was born in Cabo Delgado, specifically on the north coast. I feel that the presentation of the report does not go into depth about the causes of the conflict. For example, it was important to talk about the issue of radicalization in Cabo Delgado. I know that it is a sensitive subject because it touches our beliefs. But radicalization is a fact and we need to include it in our approaches. There are studies that show that radicalization began 10 years before the first attack in Cabo Delgado. Religious leaders, civil society, and academia have always warned about the risks of radicalization, but the government has not taken this issue seriously. What we have in Cabo Delgado is an organized uprising to change the foundations of our society, it is an insurgency against the foundations of our society: foundations of economic, po-



Borges Nhamirre, CIP Researcher

litical and social exclusion. The money from the gas projects discovered in Cabo Delgado has not benefited the local people. That is the big problem. And this was seen during the attacks on the town of Palma in March 2021. They sent boats, airplanes, and helicopters to remove people from Palma. The people who

were removed are not from Palma, they are people who went there looking for benefits. The expatriates were removed to Maputo and South Africa. People from there ran out on foot and crossed the Rovuma River into Tanzania and were returned back. And others fled to Nangade and other districts."

The testimony of two young people from Cabo Delgado

Milda Quaria, journalist and social activist: "I am from Cabo Delgado and I feel in my skin the pain that my brothers, uncles and neighbors go through since 2017. As citizens of Cabo Delgado we have been reporting signs of insurgency since the years 2002 and 2003. I, in particular, started reporting from the years 2012 and 2013, but we were never taken seriously. So far the military intervention has had good results. But now it is important to

know what is the next step? It is important that there is a deep dialogue with the people of Cabo Delgado. Cabo Delgado needs to be heard, the communities need to participate in the dialogue spaces. I am thinking about the importance of involving community members in the conversation that we are having here. We could involve religious leaders, community leaders, fishermen, farmers. The communities know who is in the forests, but

for lack of trust they end up remaining silent. The government, the Defense and Security Forces, and the civil society should have a solid relationship with the population, they should transmit trust so that the communities can collaborate. We have had several human rights violations, so it is important to reflect on this so that communities know that there are those who feel their pain, so that communities feel free to express their pain."



Milda Quaria, Journalist and social activist



Abudo Gafuro, Human Rights Defender in Cabo Delgado

Abudo Gafuro, human rights defender in Cabo Delgado: "The population in northern Cabo Delgado suffers from a lack of formal education and technical-vocational training. Palma, a district that holds huge natural gas reserves, only had one secondary school in 2019. How can young people who have not had the opportunity for training contribute to socio-economic development? Today, when our young volunteers ask displaced people what they need to return to their

areas of origin, they respond by saying that they don't trust the military of the Armed Defense Forces of Mozambique. 'If the state itself didn't trust the FADM and went and got the Rwandans to defend us. They say that they can only return if there are guarantees that the Rwandans will be there to defend them. Right now, the population that has returned to the village of Palma is not the one that is in Pemba or in Montepuez. The population returning is the one that was close by,

had not left the district, was on the island of Namadingo and in Quitunda. The populations are afraid to return to their homes because they have seen scenes of extreme violence, such as beheading of family members by the insurgents, violation of human rights by the Defense and Security Forces. This has left many people traumatized. The government must promote more inclusive policies, create spaces for participation and dialogue."

Members of Parliament recognize the importance of dialogue to solve the conflict



Venâncio Mondlane, Renamo Member of Parliament



Caifadine Manasse, Frelimo Member of Parliament

Venâncio Mondlane, Renamo MP in the National Assembly: "Systemic action is needed regarding the conflict. The way in which the military intervention was done and is being done in Mozambique needs to be discussed. The way in which the agreements for military intervention in Cabo Delgado were made,

both with Rwanda and with SADC, was problematic, because it did not result from an open debate, with previous consultations, not only at the level of Parliament, but also with society in general. There was no open dialogue to reach a conclusion on the best platform for military intervention. ADIN may

have the tutelage of the Council of Ministers, but it should periodically report to the Assembly of the Republic, as the representative body of the people. We have to strengthen the various forms of military action, socio-economic development and humanitarian aid with a very strong component of openness

to dialogue, to the adoption of various opinions and studies”.

Caifadine Manasse, Frelimo MP in the Assembly of the Republic: “Our country has lived and is living moments of tension. The Government has done everything in its power to stop the atrocities in Cabo Delgado. I would like to thank the effort of civil society or-

ganizations to give their contribution so that the situation in Cabo Delgado finds the best solution. There has been much talk about the need for dialogue, and President Filipe Nyusi has been open to dialogue. We all should give our contribution because dialogue is what is wanted, so that this conflict comes to an end, like other conflicts that have occurred

in Mozambique. The unity of Mozambicans and the recognition of the work of all actors is fundamental to achieving peace. Patriotism is important to continue to defend our sovereignty. If today we have a state on its feet it is because we have Defense and Security Forces that are defending our sovereignty and territorial integrity.





CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN CABO DELGADO: SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE PEACE

THE LAUNCHING OF CDD'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021: CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN CABO DELGADO AND RESOLUTION DIALOGUE IN 2022 AND BEYOND



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