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Special report on the possible impact of military and economic intervention in the Cabo Delgado war

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Looking ahead in Cabo Delgado:

How might military and economic intervention shape the war?

Pressure is growing to attempt a military solution to the Cabo Delgado insurgency. Initially this would ensure that liquefied natural gas (LNG) production can be started as planned largely off shore, and thus that the war could be ignored. Only the Afungi peninsula and a small base in Pemba need to be kept secure and all access can be by sea and air. The gas companies do not need Mocimboa de Praia or the road. Planes up to 737 size can land at Afungi and the LNG trains and gas wells can be built with material brought by sea from Nacala.

Next, and much more complex, would be significant foreign military intervention to try to stop the war itself.

A three part military plan is currently under discussion.

+ Marine security around the gas wells and along the coast would be provided by a foreign navy, probably French, but with possible United States involvement.

+ Land security would initially involve up to 500 Mozambican special forces controlling villages near Afungi, with funding and supplies from the gas companies. A second phase would involve up to 750 more special forces patrolling the road south from Palma, protecting a Pemba base, and perhaps attacking insurgents.

+ Third would be the use of private military companies (PMCs, mercenaries) in two ways. The limited air support currently provided by Dyck Advisory Services (DAG) would be expanded. The ground units of Mozambican special forces would probably be accompanied by PMC "advisors" both to try to reduce abuse of civilians and to increase the effectiveness of attacks on insurgents.

It sounds good on paper, but agreement, implementation and effectiveness face a host of local problems. Mozambique has become a "resource curse" state, with declining levels of democracy and a predominate party ruling an increasingly corrupt state through a patronage system, and with powerful and unchallengeable party barons. Inequality is increasing and in recent years there has been little economic development. Debate continues about the origins of the insurgency, but growing inequality and failure to share the resource wealth is agreed to be fuelling the insurgency. The Integrated Development Agency for the North (ADIN) launched on 31 August may be a first attempt to bypass the party barons and get some money to disillusioned young people.

Powerful special interests not only prevent the amelioration of inequalities, but are also blocking the proposed military response. In this special study, we look at how blockages on the path of military intervention might be removed and what shape the war could take. This will be done in the following sections:

1. The war and LNG
2. Resource curse and constraints
3. Deals and removing enough blocks to military action
4. The war on the ground is shaped by history
5. The small war so far
6. Can the small war be contained?
7. Can the grievance be resolved?

1. The war and LNG

The insurgency began on 5 October 2017 with a two-day occupation of Mocimboa da Praia. In the subsequent nearly three years, there has been fighting in the 10 north-eastern districts of Cabo Delgado. In three and a half districts the state has lost control: Mocimboa da Praia, Macomia, Quissanga, and the eastern half of Muidumbe. All four district headquarters towns have been occupied and sacked, some several times, with administrative buildings, banks, shops and other permanent buildings burned or destroyed. At 27 August 2020 Mocimboa da Praia town centre and small port were still insurgent controlled after a 12 August occupation. Quissanga and Macomia towns are destroyed and largely empty. The normal population of those three and a half districts would be about 380,000, and it is estimated that there are now 250,000 war refugees - more than half the population of the most affected districts. [Cabo Ligado](#) reports 1,495 fatalities from organized violence so far, which is enough for this to be considered a "civil war".

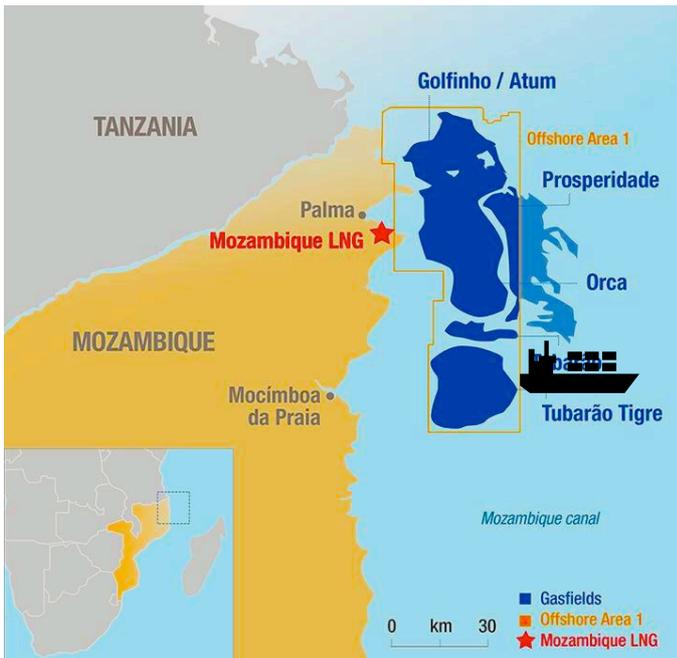
I am the co-author of *Civil War, Civil Peace*, which was the text book for a UK Open University MSc course "War, intervention and development" a decade ago. Some of the analysis of this paper is based on that book and research. We defined "civil war" as "collective killing for some collective purpose, mainly within one country, and where the fighting is primarily between people of that country". Sometimes small armed struggles are excluded, and a minimum threshold, typically 1000 deaths, is used. Thus this insurgency is a civil war. Definitions and roots of any civil war are normally contested, and here the dispute is over whether the roots are primarily internal or external. This will be discussed later in this article. But three things are common to nearly all civil wars. There is always a grievance, which must be serious enough that people are prepared to risk their lives and kill their neighbours. And there are always external actors, who either provoke the war or support one side or the other after the war has started. And civil wars are rarely ended by purely military means, and peace requires that the grievance be resolved as well.

The people in the area of the Cabo Delgado insurgency are predominantly Muslim and the external link is Islamist fundamentalism, which is seen as a solution to the grievance. Insurgents have linked to Islamic State (IS), although the importance of this is hotly disputed. Many analysts see the grievance as key and that grievance is inequality and the failure to benefit from natural resources, first rubies and now gas. Thus the gas developments are a key factor in this war.

Maps of the gas fields, roads and war are on the next page.

Mozambique has one of the largest gas fields in Africa, off the coast of Cabo Delgado, and these are now being developed. The main cost is complex machinery to clean, cool and concentrate the gas into Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) at about -160°C. The whole project could cost \$50-\$100 billion over a decade, making it one of the largest investment projects in Africa. Three of the largest gas and oil companies are heading consortia. ENI (from Italy) is already building a \$4.7 bn floating gas liquification platform 50 km off shore. Loans of \$14.9 bn were signed on 17 July 2020 for the French company Total to build the first two gas liquification trains on shore on the Afungi peninsula, southeast of Palma. The US company Exxon Mobile heads the consortium developing the gas between Total's and ENI's areas; it will not make a final investment decision for two years, but is part of security discussions. Its LNG trains will also be on Afungi.

Maps showing Cabo Delgado gas, war and roads



Above. ★ shows the Afungi peninsula, southeast of Palma. Area 1 is Total's zone. Area 4 is to the right (east) of Area 1 and is run by Exxon Mobile and ENI. ENI's floating LNG platform is shown by the ship icon south of area Orca. Note how small the distances are - area 1 is only 40 km wide. (Total map)

Below, key roads. Wide lines are the only paved roads. Narrow solid are improved dirt. Dashed are dirt roads accessible only with 4x4. (Ezilon map)



Above: Districts with attacks. (CDD map updated to include Pemba Metuge.)

Below, road map showing area not controlled by government, which includes the N380, the only paved road north. Note that government still controls Ibo island, but not the coast



At Afungi, a large port is being built and an airstrip has already been built. Servicing the ENI project and well drilling for all three companies will be based at Pemba, the largest port in Cabo Delgado. In the early years of the project Palma and Afungi were reached by the N380 paved road from Pemba via Mocomia and Mocimboa da Praia. The small port at Mocimboa da Praia was developed on the assumption of a coastal shipping route Nacala-Pemba-Mocimboa-Palma to carry goods to the huge gas projects. Palma is small town which is only 85 km from the larger Mocimboa da Praia, which looked like becoming a base for the gas companies. Now both routes are too insecure to use, and Mocimboa is occupied. Thus the gas companies have switched to not touching land in the war zone. There is a major programme to defend Afungi, the only on-shore zone, which will house thousands of workers and billions of dollars of equipment. Everyone will live and work within the compound or off shore - people and goods will be flown in and out from Pemba and Maputo, and goods will be brought directly by boat from Pemba and Nacala.

Government has lost control of a large section of the land between Pemba and Palma, but the gas companies are clear that they can operate indefinitely with this war going on. They only need to protect Palma-Afungi, a small Pemba base, and ocean-going ships. This requires coastal protection and serious perimeter protection at Afungi and Pemba. (The maps on the previous page show the various locations.)

2. Resource curse and constraints

Norway is often portrayed as the most successful resource country. But the 2018 BBC drama series "[State of Happiness](#)" (Lykkeland) shows just how close Norway came to the resource curse path. In 1969 Norway was a relatively poor country and the ship owners were the wealthy elite and they joined with the oil companies to try control the resource, while local councillors wanted the profits for development. It was hard fought, and economic development won. In Mozambique it went the other way - a Frelimo elite aligned with trans-national resource companies to gain control of the resource incomes.

The "resource curse" is common in many countries where there is less development and increasing inequality. A common explanation is that when leaders receive easy money without work (usually known as "rents") they no longer focus on development of the country or even on the hard work of creating profitable and productive businesses. In southern African, this is compounded by liberation war veterans who believe that because as young people they risked their lives for independence, they now deserve the easy money of rents and should receive more. And the "trickle down" theory works with entitlement - at lower levels teachers believe that they are entitled to money from parents, nurses from patients, police from motorists, clerks from anyone needing a document. This is compounded in Mozambique because Frelimo has remained the predominant party and has created a patrimonial system in which jobs, promotion, contracts, licences, land and access to resources are dependent not just on party membership, but on patrons and status in the party hierarchy.

This has become most extreme in Cabo Delgado. Virtually all land is designated for mining exploitation or exploration, or for national parks. And much is controlled by an elite and their international resource company partners. Thousands have been thrown off land and have no legal way to earn a living. But the profits, for example from rubies, can be millions of dollars. Cabo Delgado has also been the centre of whole range of illicit trades. Massive illegal hardwood exports to China are said to be controlled by a former governor. Animal products are exported, such as pangolin scales, although international pressure has cut the ivory trade. Cabo Delgado is the centre of the people smuggling route from East Africa to South Africa. There is a huge and widely reported heroin trade, exceeding 40 tonnes per year. All is controlled by senior Frelimo barons, in alliance with certain local businesspeople, police, customs, etc.

Indeed, this has become institutionalised at all levels from district to locality to village, where the local important people expect to control - and profit from - whatever is happening in their area. Always, of course, owing obedience to the people above them in the hierarchy. In the on-going war,

officers syphon off and sell supplies - after all, they are risking their lives so they deserve it. Soldiers are not fed but they have to eat, so they take food and other goods from local people. Uniforms and information are sold to the insurgents.

For most people, the failing patrimonial state is increasing inequality, and the war is making their suffering worse. But there is a group for whom the war and inequality are profitable. Thus the biggest constraint is that as Mozambique becomes a failed state, a significant group of people have come to depend on and profit from the present situation. Any change requires that many people have to be conciliated.

A host of other players also impose constraints on an military intervention. As in many countries the military and security services are kept fragmented to prevent coups. The Ministry of Defence and army have always been kept weak, albeit with noisy weapons. The wars against Renamo in recent years and now in Cabo Delgado are being fought by a better trained and paid riot police (UIR) under the Ministry of Interior. It appears that the Interior Ministry has been bringing in private security companies while the Defence Ministry has resisted, instead demanding that the army be built up to a proper fighting force. The security services SISE have their own interests tied up with the \$2 bn secret debt and earlier failed attempts at coastal protection.

On top of this, many in the Frelimo elite are hostile to the United States which is seen as having opposed Frelimo for decades. And there is a genuine concern about sovereignty and thus about foreign troops not under Mozambican command.

Another constraint is the need to portray this as foreign-led Islamic fundamentalist intervention. For Frelimo, the need is obvious - the war is blamed on a foreign power rather than domestic policy failure. This is also linked to the sovereignty issue - Frelimo does not want foreign interveners looking too closely at the local grievances driving the war, And on the other side, many countries that might support military intervention need that cloak in order to provide troops or financial and technical assistant; they need to say that the war is against the new evil empire, Islamic State.

The final set of constraints are that the gas companies all have some degree of United States links, which makes the subject to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 and other anti-corruption and anti-bribery legislation, which provide real and serious constraints on money going to the Frelimo elites.

In the next section we look at how all of the parties will try to get around the constraints through convoluted wheeling and dealing.

3. Deals and removing enough blocks to military action

Both Exxon Mobile and Total are politically powerful in their home countries, with military and security links. Total's group Security Manager, based in Paris, is former General Denis Favier, who was previously director-general of the French Gendarmerie. He has been in direct action against terrorists, ranging from an assault on pirates near Somalia, freeing hostages in a plane hijack, and freeing hostages in response to the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack in Paris. Thus he has experience and high level access.

Former Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson was US Secretary of States 2017-8, and his appointment had been backed by former CIA director Robert Gates. The *Washington Post* (13 Dec 2016) points out that Exxon is one of the largest companies in the world and "it recruits people from the State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA to help manage its own foreign policy. It has an extensive lobbying operation" in Washington.

Thus they have the power to intervene or to be players in any intervention, and to bend the rules where necessary.

Coastal protection and the Crown Agents model

Both France and the United State have recently done naval exercises in the Mozambique Channel, and have made clear they would like to become a policing force for the Channel. Both have confirmed that they already have forces in Mozambique providing training. The island of Mayotte, just 500 km east of Pemba, is officially part of mainland France (and thus the EU). It has an important French military base. In addition France has several Islands in the Mozambique Channel between Mozambique and Madagascar, shown on this map: <https://bit.ly/llands-Fr>

At a US State Department Bureau of International Narcotics 21 July press conference, Heather Merritt, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, said that in Mozambique "there's a lot of overlap between the drug traffickers and extremists". Thus US involvement in coastal patrolling would involve both. As we note in the constraints section above, that is unacceptable because the heroin trafficking is controlled or "licensed" by powerful Frelimo barons, who in turn give some of the money to the party.

But there is a precedent for sorting this out. Under heavy pressure from donors, Mozambique employed the Crown Agents from 1996 to 2006 to modernise the customs service. The Frelimo-controlled heroin trade was already under way. So the contract with the Crown Agents was explicitly to raise customs revenue. It was clearly understood that the Crown Agents would ignore commodities that had no duty and thus no possible revenue, notably illegal goods such as heroin.

Thus it should be possible to reach a Crown Agents-style agreement with France for coastal patrolling. The targets would only be military or insurgent support - pirates, boats carrying weapons and jihadists, etc. There is a substantial coastal trade linked to Tanzania, Zanzibar and further north around to the Iranian and Pakistani coast. Various informal links would need to be used to tell the traders that every boat entering Mozambican waters would be inspected, and that patrols would need to look even in the secret compartments of the Jelbot dhows used in the illegal trade - but that heroin and similar commodities would not be stopped because that was outside the brief agreed with the French when the patrols were set up.

Mercenaries

In 1776-81 the British were fighting against colonists in north America demanding independence. A quarter of British forces were 30,000 Hessian (German) mercenaries. They lost, setting a long-standing precedent in civil wars. They lost in part because France signed a formal treaty with the revolutionaries and sent 5,000 troops, a large naval contingent and money to provide essential support to the independence struggle.

Mercenaries are now provided by private military companies (PMCs) which are largely owned by private equity firms and hedge funds. Many are global private security companies (PSCs) such as G4S and GardaWorld, which both have offices in Palma and provide security and protection services to the gas companies and their contractors. And the PMC role has grown; in 2008-12 in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than half of US forces were from PMCs,

In a complex environment like Cabo Delgado, PMCs can wear a variety of uniforms. They can be private companies hired by the government, as with the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) and its helicopters. As in Afghanistan and Iraq, they can be part of the military, or they can be simply portrayed as guards. Thus the new contract with Total to guard the Afungi peninsula has Total providing the money and logistics and Mozambique providing the troops, but these will surely involve PMs in what is officially just facilities security.

This also makes it possible to fudge the flag. Mozambique would like support from the regional organisation, SADC, but without any political interference. Thus it would be possible for Zimbabwe or South Africa to "send" further PMC soldiers and air resources and weapons, totally paid for and organised by other sponsors. For example DAG is run by former Zimbabwean Colonel Lionel Dyck who is now based in South Africa; Dyck has military links in both countries and DAG's activity

apparently violates South Africa's anti-mercenary legislation, but the Pretoria government turns a blind eye.

4. The war on the ground is shaped by history

Control of sea, air and the Afungi peninsula can probably be ensured by international support and PMCs. That is enough for the gas companies, who can function happily largely offshore with that degree of protection - as they do in many countries. But the war is on the ground and the insurgents are still largely local people. Stopping the ground war will be much more difficult, and it could continue for a decade or more.

The gas companies and other international funders will pay for air and sea security, but how much more are they prepared to spend? Gas and mining companies are under some pressure from shareholders and campaigners over sustainability and environment, and they would like to be able to claim Cabo Delgado as a land of milk and honey. But they would only concede and pay so much, until it becomes cheaper and easier to defend their installations with PMCs and fend off protests with small corporate social responsibility projects and misleading publicity campaigns.

And at a national and local level the patrimonial state may be failing, but it needs to keep expanding the patronage system - with its contracts, land grants, licences, jobs, bribes and kickbacks - without much extra revenue. Frelimo hopes that the gas resource means international backing will increase. But Frelimo will still need to extract more rents out of a failing state. Which in turn means squeezing the poor and further increasing inequality - which is fuelling the war.

In this section we briefly step back to look at the context. First we look at societal divisions and a history of violence, and then we note similarities between the independence war and the current war, as well as the 1982-92 war with Renamo. In section 5 we apply this context to look the war so far .

Religion, language and history

Religion and language partly shape Cabo Delgado politics. The people of the province are majority Muslim and Makua speaking, but with significant variations. The nine southern and western districts, little affected by the war, are predominantly Muslim and Makua speaking. The three districts of the northwest of the province on the Maconde plateau are largely Catholic and Maconde speaking. All coastal districts are Muslim. Mwani is spoken along the coast and is the predominant language of Mocimboa da Praia and Ibo districts, while Makua is the predominant language of the other coastal districts. We looked at religion in an earlier special report:

<https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>

Language and religion in Cabo Delgado

	Language			Religion	
	Makua	Maconde	Mwani	Muslim	Catholic
Province	66%	13%	5%	54%	36%
Maconde plateau					
Mueda	4%	84%		20%	54%
Muidumbe	3%	90%		5%	67%
Nangade	5%	71%		36%	42%
Coastal					
Palma	53%	16%	13%	81%	17%
Mocimboa da Praia	10%	40%	45%	72%	20%
Macomia	47%	33%	18%	64%	18%
Ibo	17%	2%	78%	98%	3%
Quissanga	66%	4%	26%	94%	4%

The Maconde¹ plateau slopes down toward the east. The western part of Mocimboa da Prais and north-western corner of Macomia (including Chai, where the independence war began) are Maconde speaking and Catholic. This is clearly an zone of distrust - highly unusually, 40% of people in this area refused to tell census takers their religion. The only paved road north, the N380, passes through this boundary area and there has been heavy fighting there.

The Maconde in Cabo Delgado have traditional links with Makonde in Tanzania. Mwani is a similar language to Swahili and Mwani speakers have traditional links with Zanzibar and coastal cities further north. In the 18th century Mocimboa da Praia and Ibo were the important commercial and political centres of the coastal trade. Thus family and historic links with Tanzania mean that the northern border with Tanzania, the Ruvuma river, is largely ignored as people cross back and forth.

Comparing the current war and the Independence War

Both the Independence War and the current insurgency were launched in nearly the same place - Chai and Mocimboa da Praia are only 60 km apart. Of course, there are many differences between the liberation war and current insurgency, but there are also striking similarities.

Both have historic links in Tanzania. Frelimo was partly developed in the 1960s by the Makonde based on their links with Tanzania, which became independent in 1962, and its independence party TANU. The 1980s saw a growth of fundamentalist Christian and Muslim sects and missionaries in Tanzania, and they moved into Mozambique with the opening up to religion in the 1990s and radicalised some local people.

Both in the 1960s and the 2000s people felt marginalised by growing inequalities. In the 1960s it was the colonial elite and government oppressing the people, and Frelimo presented independence and socialism as the way to a more equitable distribution of wealth. The 2000s saw a Frelimo elite and government taking control of resources, notably minerals such as rubies, and a sharp increase in inequality and poverty. The discovery of gas brought in people from outside and a further show of wealth. In the coastal Muslim society, radical preachers presented the Sharia state as a route to a more equitable distribution of resources. Traditional Muslim leaders were seen as supporting a greedy Frelimo elite which was refusing to share the wealth.

For both there was a turning point to violence. For Frelimo it was a massacre by the colonial authorities of peaceful demonstrators in Mueda in 1960. For some young Muslims, the turning point was a series of sometimes violent confrontations in 2015-7 between radical Islamists and the more traditional mosques and their allies in Frelimo and the state. By resorting to violence, people who felt marginalised and without hope were acting in a long tradition in these areas of violence against, and even killing of, elites. (Detailed in two previous papers on <http://bit.ly/Moz-498> and <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>)

As we noted in the introduction, civil wars attract outside actors who become involved. And as the wars developed, both insurgencies looked further afield for training, weapons and support. In the case of Frelimo, it was Algeria and then the socialist states. For the current insurgents, it is Islamic State. And in response, both government of the day said it was destabilisation by foreign powers.

We also noted in the introduction that most civil wars develop around a grievance that is so strong that people feel they have no choice but to risk their lives to bring about change. The colonial government could not resolve the grievance and eventually lost the war. The grievance now is about growing inequality as people are pushed off land and lose their jobs as huge tracts of land are given to minerals companies with elite Frelimo links. And now people see no benefit from the gas.

¹ Spelling is totally inconsistent in English and Portuguese. Both people and language are referred to as Makua, Macua, Makhuwa and the language sometimes as Emakhuwa. Similarly Maconde or Makondi and the language sometimes Kimakonde or Chimakondi. Mwani is used for people and language and Kimwani also for language.

The exact roots of the civil war are less important than the grievance. In Mozambique's other civil war, in 1982-92, Renamo was a creation of the Rhodesians and apartheid South Africans but it was able to expand, especially in Nampula and Zambézia, because Frelimo agriculture policies had not benefitted the peasants and there was a strong local grievance.

Today, the grievance remains and a disaffected population will not support the government to end the war. "Winning hearts and minds" means resolving the grievances, which in turn means ensuring that all local people benefit from the gas, rubies and other resources. That will require convincing a Frelimo elite to take a smaller share.

5. The small war so far

This is still a small war. In almost three years, there have been 1,495 deaths and an area 60 km by 150 km is out of government control. Attempts by insurgents to push northwest onto the Maconde plateau and to move south toward the provincial capital, Pemba, have been rebuffed. But government has failed to take retake control of three districts, Mocimboa da Praia, Macomia and Quissanga.

Knowledge of the war is sketchy and sometimes contradictory, in part because journalists and researchers have not been allowed into the area (although President Nyusi announced on 31 August that this has changed.). But social media is full of reports and videos from civilians and soldiers in and near the war zone, travellers passing through it, and commentators on it. But not all are accurate and some are fake news. Both government and the insurgents are now using proxy websites to report claims of success.

In this section, I attempt to assess the development of the war, using the best information available from researchers and others. I hope the general picture is approximately correct, but there can be no guarantee of total accuracy. Then, in the final section, assuming that sea, air and Afungi can be controlled by international patrols and PMCs, and the gas sector walled off from the war, I speculate on the progress of the ground war.

Two factors contributed to the growing grievance in the 2010-15 period. First was the youth bulge. There were more young people with a basic education who did not want to be like their illiterate parents - peasant farmers with only a hoe, or fishers standing on the beach in shallow water with nets. They wanted something better, and often tried street trading, but became disenchanted and saw no future. Second was the growth of the patronage state; people were thrown off land and left with no legal way to earn a living. The big people in Frelimo, often seen as older Maconde, controlled mining, much of the illegal trade, and local jobs linked to the new gas sector. There was little investment in rural development or job creation. With increasing poverty and inequality, disenchanted young people saw no future for themselves and blamed the Frelimo nomenklatura.

In Mozambique, churches and mosques are often seen as social and welfare centres. Christian fundamentalist and Zionist (unrelated to the Jewish political Zionist movement) churches became important in southern Mozambique in part because they filled the social support gap created by market-based neo-liberalism. In a crisis, support came from the church and its members. Mosques, too, serve this role. In Cabo Delgado, new fundamentalist mosques were being created, and they began to offer money to help to successfully create small businesses and jobs not being created by government or the normal private sector. The money appears to have come from larger Muslim business people, who may have obtained it from abroad. In the 2014-6 period, some fundamentalist mosques began militia training. The key message was that the established Imams had allowed themselves to be co-opted by Frelimo and its growing greed, and that a Sharia state would be more equitable.

The attackers in the 5 October 2017 occupation of Mocimboa da Praia have been identified as Mwani speaking young men called together from some mosque militias, as well a few older local men who had family and business links in the port town of Mtwara, Tanzania, 150 km north. The

insurgency grew and also attracted young Macua speakers and even young Maconde critical of the greed of their elders. Following classic guerrilla tactics, groups were kept small and local, but now communicating by mobile telephone. There were attacks on villages which followed the same pattern - a group of less than a dozen, mostly armed with machetes and only one or two with guns, would attack at night and target specific houses and behead or kill specific individuals, then leave after an hour, before the police or army could arrive.

Early attacks were against the state and the relatively wealthy (which in a village could mean the only owner of a motorcycle). And attacks were based on good local information. The 5 October raid on Mocimboa de Praia was on a day when local officials were all away at a meeting in Pemba and there was no one to give orders to respond. When villages were attacked, houses were burned of the best off, people with official links, or those who had taken money from the mosques but not joined the jihad. A few were executed.

As the war progressed and there were more troops, soldiers and riot police were attacked on the night they were paid and were drunk in the local market. Military camps were raided to take weapons and uniforms. Some villagers have family with the insurgents and are supporting the insurgency. Indeed Interior Minister Amade Miquidade admitted in an interview with VoA (28 Aug) that "the terrorists are mixed in with the population."

Later, two tactics similar to those used in the Renamo 1982-92 war were also used. Road traffic was attacked by snipers and roadblocks. And telecommunications posts and electricity towers were destroyed, cutting power and communications.

Initially there was a serious attempt to avoid casualties on the insurgent side, leaving quickly rather than confronting the paramilitary riot police (UIR) who are fighting the war. But in the past year, groups of 100 or more insurgents have been assembled and occupied the three district capitals for long periods of time. Insurgent bases have been established, especially in dense forest. It has been argued that there are now four different groups, acting somewhat autonomously and without a strong central leadership.

It appears that there are no longer enough volunteers and the insurgents are increasingly using false offers of paid work to young men in Muslim areas of the neighbouring provinces of Nampula and Niassa. A few people have been kidnapped.

So far, the degree of outside support seems limited. There are definitely foreign and foreign-trained fighters involved. But weapons and vehicles still seem to be largely captured or stolen. Tactics seem to be classic guerrilla and no different from those used by Renamo - with the addition of attacks on elites that had been common in this coastal zone. There have been no specifically jihad tactics, such as suicide bombing.

Mozambique and Cabo Delgado have a long history of dealing with the aid industry. Aid agencies such as Oxfam or Unicef provide financial and technical support in exchange for flying their flag and making statements praising them. So far, the relationship with Islamic State seems similar, with insurgents flying the black IS flag and reading prepared statements posted on social media. But the communication is often not close; reports of battles posted on the IS website are often delayed, garbled and taken from other posts. Thus it appears that there is IS support but it is not yet substantial.

6. Can the war be contained?

Even if sea, air and Afungi can be controlled and protected and the gas companies can ignore the war, what happens on the ground remains an issue. Fears have been expressed that IS might create an advance base in Cabo Delgado and use this to send people into Muslim areas of South Africa.

There are many free lance jihadis who go from war to war - Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, etc. Some will surely find their way to Cabo Delgado, especially as the war escalates and there is more foreign intervention on the government side. Sea and air can be controlled, but the long borders with Tanzania and Malawi are impossible to patrol, and there is already a huge illegal cross border trade and people smuggling. Local sympathizers could help militants to cross the border and bring weapons and communications systems into Mozambique. Those militants could create a forward post and help to train and advise Mozambican insurgents.

Expanding

A key question is how the insurgents might move out of their present relatively small area. So far, they have engaged in few high casualty battles. They have not attacked Afungi, probably because it is too well protected. Attempts to advance on Mueda and Pemba were unsuccessful and the insurgents had to retreat when they came under heavy pressure. This points to two possible targets within Cabo Delgado. The most obvious would be to move west into Montepuez district, where there is substantial discontent around rubies and cotton. The other move would be into the southern districts of Mecufi on the coast and Chiure, where Frelimo unexpectedly lost the municipal election in Chiure town with only 38% of the vote. From Montepuez insurgents could easily move into Niassa, and from Chiure and Mecufi into Nampula, which are the only other Muslim majority provinces. Although gas makes the grievance more acute in Cabo Delgado, objections to inequality, growing poverty and lack of jobs is widespread. Being active in the three northern provinces would create a major war and could encourage separatist sentiment bubbling just below the surface.

The insurgents probably will not have the capacity to attack Pemba. Looking back, Renamo never actually attacked cities. But during its war, Renamo repeatedly attacked the 60 km water pipeline and the long electricity line that served Beira. Pemba is similarly vulnerable with a 42 km water pipe; in April 2018 power to much of the city was cut for three days when a car knocked down a single pole carrying an important electricity line.

Currently, the Mozambican military has not been able to stop the "Renamo Junta", a small group which has been shooting at the main N1 road in Sofala for more than a year. Cabo Delgado insurgents have already partially closed the N380 north from Pemba, and they might choose to attack roads out of Pemba - the N1 south to Nampula and the N14 west to Montepuez.

Empty the present war zone?

UN OCHA estimates that at 7 June, more than 250,000 people had been displaced by the war - up from 110,000 in March. This is about half the population of the war zone. In late August the ombudsperson Isaque Chande said the refugees were "living in deplorable conditions" while the president of the Human Rights Commission said the displaced "need everything". Displaced people arriving in Pemba must live with relatives or rent houses, and the municipal council said on 27 August that it had no land for the refugees.

Although some local people support the insurgents, they have also lost support because some attacks have been particularly violent and brutal. People have fled because of insurgent attacks, and because the Mozambican defence forces cannot protect them and often harasses them. Could it be government policy to encourage refugees? Mao Zedong said "the guerrilla must move among the people as a fish swims in the sea," so Frelimo could be draining the sea - or at least creating a huge free fire zone.

Government is appealing to the international community to support the refugees, which would mean donors absorbing some of the costs of the war.

Having 250,000 discontented refugees is not likely win hearts and minds, so there must be some pressure to push them back to their home areas. Might Frelimo adopt the fortified village (aldeamento) model of the colonial government in which local people were locked in villages to

prevent them contacting Frelimo guerrillas? By 1972 half the population of Cabo Delgado was in aldeamentos. Could the government call them "protected villages" and gain aid to create them in the war zones?

7. Can the grievance be resolved?

The colonial authorities understood, as Frelimo does now, that many local people support the insurgency. At independence Frelimo brought health, education, freedom of movement, and a vision of a future. Improved health and education means tens of thousands of people with at least basic literacy want something more - to not be farmers with just a hoe like their parents. But the young men who brought independence 45 years ago are now in their 70s and 80s and are still in control. And they have created a patrimonial state to their own benefit that is becoming a failing state. Resources are central. Thousands made their living through artisanal mining of gemstones, which is promoted in many countries, with the state buying to stones for a good price. But in Mozambique artisanal mining was made illegal so that the big men in Frelimo and their foreign partners could control the stones. Farmers were also pushed off their land. Young people see no future, and like their grandparents, back the insurgency.

The gas projects can be walled off and the war ignored. Mines can be protected by PMC soldiers. Perhaps PMCs could even guard aldeamentos. But that guarantees that the war will continue indefinitely, and probably expand and become a base for Islamic State or another Islamist group. The civil war will continue as long as the grievance continues. Frelimo and its barons continue to say that this is foreign destabilisation by Islamic State. But even if that were true, the insurgents are making headway because of the grievance, which must be resolved.

In a 31 August speech, Filipe Nyusi Nyusi again blamed the war on "an international terrorist network that is promoting an aggression against our country." But, perhaps for the first time, he went on to say that the insurgents were recruiting members by exploiting the poverty of young people in the north. And he pointed out that the three northern provinces have much higher levels of poverty than the national average, despite their enormous natural resource and agricultural potential. Finally, the grievance has been publicly recognised as a factor in the insurgency.

Bypassing the barons to redress the grievance?

The speech was at the launch in Pemba on 31 August of the Integrated Development Agency for the North (ADIN), which could be a serious and bold attempt to bypass the Frelimo barons in Cabo Delgado and use money to redress the grievances.

ADIN is a new institution, which will be personally run by Agriculture and Development Minister Celso Correia. A personal confidante of Nyusi, Correia is the most powerful man in government, and one of the few ministers with a reputation for getting things done. He coordinated Nyusi's dubious landslide victory in the 2019 elections and showed he had power down to district level. Nevertheless, Correia faces a real challenge in facing down a battalion of the Cabo Delgado Frelimo elite and lower level officials who all believe they have a right to part of this money, and who will try to block its effective use until they receive their share.

Thus an explanation for the unexpected appointment of Armando Panguene as the formal head of ADIN under Correia is that he might be one of the few in Frelimo who could face down the hungry goats gathering at the ADIN trough. He is 77 years and was retired, and he stood quietly on the side lines at the 31 August launch. But Panguene fought in the liberation war, was governor of Cabo Delgado (1980-84), was then (1984-86) deputy defence minister under Alberto Chipande who is now the most important Frelimo baron in Cabo Delgado, and became (1986-88) chief of staff of the armed forces. Frelimo still has a very important informal hierarchy, in which the younger generation like Nyusi and Correia do not have the standing to confront liberation war leaders like Chipande. Was Panguene chosen because he has the status, respect and knowledge to talk seriously with other liberation leaders, and perhaps win concessions? Could he remind Frelimo's elderly barons what they fought for, and show that their actions are causing the war? Could

Panguene convince them to allow land and money to go to young people to create jobs and futures?

Correia is proposing a \$764 mn budget, with large amounts for job creation and resettlement of the displaced (including \$25 mn in cash transfers to displaced families). He has \$61 mn in hand, of which \$42 mn was announced by the US Embassy on its Facebook page on 1 September. The US statement "congratulated" the launch of ADIN and promised "close collaboration." And Nyusi on his own Facebook page said that on 24 August he had talked on the telephone to the UK Minister for Commonwealth Affairs, Lord Tariq Ahmad, and said the British government "showed interest" in supporting ADIN, particularly helping those displaced by the war. This is important political backing from the US and UK. Correia hopes to raise the remaining \$700 mn from the World Bank. He is considered close to the Bank, which has shown itself to be flexible in handing out money to Mozambique.

If Correia and Panguene succeed, the next challenge will be to convince the Bank and the US and UK that there really is a deal with the Frelimo elite in Cabo Delgado. Then they will have to show that a substantial part of the money is going to the young people and dealing with the underlying grievance, and that not too much is being eaten by the big beasts and their entourages.

Not til next year

Correia's final challenge is timing. In March, ADIN was approved by the Council of Ministers and Panguene was appointed. It took five months to launch ADIN and will surely take more months to negotiate with the party barons and the World Bank. This suggests no more than token actions until after the December-March rainy season. Thus a priority will need to be dislocated families, many of whom do not even have tents.

Similarly, any large scale foreign military intervention is also unlikely until after the rainy season. It will probably take at least that long to negotiate agreements with France (probably formal) and the US (probably informal) on coastal protection. The best that could be expected before the rains would be increased PMC protection of Afungi, some increase in coastal patrolling, and some attempts to train Mozambican soldiers and riot police both in counter-insurgency and in being less aggressive with local people. But even this will be resisted by some in the military and police and the defence and interior ministries, as well as those involved in illegal trades like heroin. Allowing a larger foreign military role could take months to negotiate.

Meanwhile the next seven months will also provide a window for IS and freelance jihadists to go to Cabo Delgado. And the insurgents will not waste the rainy season and will prepare for attacks in March.

Thus one would expect the war to continue largely as it is now until it rains, which will close all the dirt roads, restricting vehicle movement, and make flying difficult. This will allow the insurgents, who mainly move on foot, to consolidate their position.

However, the gas companies are largely walled off from the war, and this will be made more secure by next year. They can continue with installation of their LNG trains, well drilling, and then production whatever happens in the war.

For the next year, the war seems likely to continue in something like its current form. At the end of the rains, both sides will probably make big pushes. Mozambique might be able to stop an insurgent push if can send in better trained and better paid soldiers and riot police, accompanied by experienced PMC personnel, and if it has better PMC air cover and support. PMCs are expensive and using DAG on the cheap has only had limited usefulness. That requires substantially more money which will have to come from outside - indirectly from the gas companies and key governments.

Conclusion

PMC military action can limit the war. Ending the war requires resolving the grievance, and giving young people a way to earn a living and have a vision of a future. That means ending the hopelessness that has caused so many to believe it is worth risking their lives for change. And more than anything else, that depends on what kind of deal Nyusi, Correia and Panguene can negotiate with their own party.

Mozambique is becoming a resource curse country and a key small group are benefitting, while turning Mozambique into a failed state. Like the Portuguese 50 years ago, the important people in Cabo Delgado say (and may perhaps believe) that the war is nothing to do with them and is a foreign terrorist destabilisation. Can they be convinced that ending the war requires land, money, and commercial opportunities to be given to disaffected youth. This means most of ADIN's funds will have to go to young people without party connections, as well as land and space for legal and illegal trade. And if they do not want an on-going war on their doorsteps, the gas companies and the international mining companies in business with the Cabo Delgado elite will have to do more than window-dressing corporate social responsibility to win the hearts and minds of their neighbours. The whole nature of the resource curse is that these foreign companies benefit from their links to local elites, but can they be convinced that if the Mozambican state continues to fail, they might lose out too?

Total and Exxon are under pressure on environment and sustainability, and would both prefer to have Cabo Delgado as a land of milk and honey. They need to decide if they want to become involved, or simply remain off shore, away from a civil war. If they decide to really become involved, both have links at the highest levels in France and the US. France, the US and the World Bank could put pressure on the Cabo Delgado Frelimo barons to stop feeding the war.

If not, the war will continue indefinitely.

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Important external links

Cabo Delgado civil war weekly report - Zitamar, MediaFax, ACLED - <http://bit.ly/CaboLigado>

Covid-19 daily updated data and graphs <https://covidmoz.netlify.app/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: bit.ly/MozNews2020

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Other Mozambique material bit.ly/mozamb

Background reading - Special reports

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng

Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>

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\$2bn secret debt - in English

Kroll - Full report on \$2bn debt - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz-full>

Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>

Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>

Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

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