

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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In this issue

Mining & oligarchs

+ How Frelimo families control gemstones

US, Ukraine & Mozambique

+ Cautious response to Washington carrots

+ Mozambique was the Ukraine of 40 years ago

+ Is Nyusi calling for Cabo Delgado talks?

Mining and oligarchs

Investigative journalist shows how Frelimo oligarchs control Zambézia mining boom

A race to exploit minerals in the hills of northwest Zambézia province "by a tiny group of the Frelimo elite supported by foreigners... is bringing terrible consequences for the population," reports journalist Raul Senda in a detailed investigative report in *Savana* (25 March). Gold, tourmaline, tantalite and quartzes such as amethyst "are in the hands of the nomenclatura involving the families of President Filipe Nyusi, members of parliament, former ministers, and children of liberation war veterans." *Savana* is the oldest independent weekly and has returned to serious investigative journalism. (Portuguese and subscription only, or paper edition on the street in Maputo.)

An amethyst mine in Livale, Molumbo, in dense forest in the hills near the border between Zambézia and Niassa, shows the involvement of - and battles between - Mozambique's oligarchs. Crystal Mining was registered in October 2020 by Ali Mateus, a nephew of Alberto Cipande who is a Cabo Delgado oligarch, leader of the liberation war, and member of the Frelimo Political Commission, and a Malian, Ibrahim Bocoum.

Soon after, Cosme Jacinto Nyusi, brother of President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, entered and gained 20% of the company, which then gained the rights to 19,800 hectares.

But a battle ensued, with Augusto Pio da Costa Matos, son of Zambézia governor Pia Matos, also trying to get the mine. And Mozambique Leaf Tobacco (MLT) which controlled tobacco production in the zone also disputed the mine taking over its tobacco land. Both withdrew, with MLT being paid \$12,000, reports *Savana*. But artisanal miners were already exploiting the amethysts, and at team of 12 police were brought in at a cost of \$5000 per month; police were accused of "atrocities" including beatings and "disappearing" a miner.

Ibrahim Bocoum is already part owner of Gold Mining Corporation which has a mine in Gilé, which was set up by the Sumbana family, brothers and sisters Edgar, Amélia and Hanisse. Gilé district has a number of mines subject to conflicts, reports *Savana*.

Euro-Export Mining is exploiting tourmalines in Gilé and Mozambican company Montanha Branca (white mountain) became a shareholder on 3 May 2021. Both are chaired by Hélio Mualeia, son of Rosário Mualeia, formerly governor of Nampula and Gaza, deputy minister of tourism, and head of the railways (CFM). Another tourmaline mine in Gilé is run by Francisco Faustino, son of the secretary-general of the Liberation War veterans Association ACLLIN (Associação dos Combatentes da Luta da Libertação Nacional). He is working with a Chinese company to exploit the mine.

The Cooperative of Garimpeiros of Intira (Cogic), Gilé has 25 members who control small gold mines. It is controlled by a native of Intira, Salmo Marcelino, but the other 24 members, are from Nampula, Sofala and Maputo. The oligarch power enters via the family of Bonifácio Gruveta, for many years the most powerful man in Zambézia, who died in 2011. Cogic has complex links with a Chinese company. Local garimpeiros have informal contracts with Cogic member who profit from the gold. The garimpeiros officially are paid \$40 per gram of gold, but much of this is withheld to pay for equipment supplied to the miners, leaving them only \$5 per gram. The international gold price last week was \$63 per gram.

In his article Raul Senda stresses the poverty of the people living near these mines, and of the garimpeiros, who gain little from the new mine owners.

[US, Ukraine and Mozambique](#)

Cautious response to Washington carrots

On one day last week the United States made two major interventions in Mozambique, making clear that Washington now sees Mozambique as important. But caution and distrust remain, with Maputo looking for Trojan Horses and being wary of getting involved the President Biden's escalating wars against China, Russia and Islam.

The US launched its Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability on 1 April in just two places in Africa, Mozambique and coastal West Africa (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo). In both, the unspoken target is Islamic State. Three countries will be added later - Libya which is also in Africa and where IS is also the target, plus two island countries outside Africa, Haiti and Papua New Guinea. It is to be a 10-year long-term programme and Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations Anne Witkovsky stressed that a key reason was internal US government: "A decade-long outlook supports greater consistency across US administrations and commitment to working with partners over the long term."

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOSIME/bulletins/311d88f>

The US is Mozambique's largest bilateral donor, giving \$500 million per year. Also on 1 April the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a new \$1.5 billion five-year agreement. It targets central and northern Mozambique, promoting business, helping withstand the shocks of natural disasters, and responding to "violent extremism and food insecurity."

<https://mz.usembassy.gov/u-s-government-and-government-of-mozambique-sign-1-5-billion-development-cooperation-agreement/> The other \$200 mn per year comes from other programmes ranging from vaccines to military support to the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

The US's 2020-25 strategy for Mozambique comes with a harsh warning: "The headwinds, however, are significant, as Mozambique ranks 180th of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index. Debt distress, widening income inequality, and corruption are significant constraints. Increasingly frequent natural disasters, lack of formal employment, poor health and education opportunities and outcomes present additional challenges. Moreover, emerging threats to economic stability and democratic governance in the form of flawed elections and increasing violent extremism in the north of the country." <https://www.usaid.gov/mozambique/cdcs>

Meanwhile Mozambique twice abstained in UN votes on Ukraine, on 2 and 24 March. It refused to take sides in what is increasingly being presented in the "west" as a battle between the US and NATO on one side and Russia on the other.

The new US ambassador Peter Vrooman, recently arrived from Rwanda, in a note circulated 15 March, reminded Mozambique that the US is the biggest bilateral donor and called for solidarity with Ukraine. "We look for a strong African response to Russian aggression," US ambassador to the African Union Jessica Lapenn said on 27 March.

But on 15 March Foreign Minister Verónica Macamo said Mozambique would not respond to intimidating "messages and pressures" from the US ambassador. Welcoming Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa on 17 March, President Filipe Nyusi stressed it would not take sides: "Mozambique doesn't support war, but Mozambique doesn't say A is right and B or C are not."

Ambassadors from western countries publicly expressed discontent with the Mozambican abstention in the votes on the UN General Assembly. The way US and European diplomats reminded Maputo of their aid was considered blackmail by the Mozambican authorities.

Speaking on 31 March, the day before the two major US aid announcements, Frelimo spokesperson Caifadine Manasse condemned and rejected "pressure" from some Western countries. "Our foreign policy never aligns with group interests, but with the interests of Mozambicans. ... We urge our cooperation partners to understand this, and we will continue to walk the path of good coexistence, strengthening and consolidating the ties of cooperation and friendship." Manasse said that Mozambique's position of neutrality in the war between Russia and Ukraine had already been well defended by President Filipe Nyusi. (@Verdade, AfricaNews 17 Mar; Savana 18 Mar; Radio Moçambique, Notícias, Lusa 1 Apr)

Comment: History matters

Mozambique was the Ukraine of 40 years ago

A fraught history with the US and NATO shapes Mozambique's response to this war. NATO and the US backed fascist Portugal 55 years ago in its war to prevent Mozambican independence, forcing Frelimo to turn to the Soviet Union and China for support. Then 40 years ago US President Ronald Reagan decided to punish Mozambique for winning independence with socialist support. He launched a decade-long proxy war using apartheid South Africa against Mozambique. One million Mozambicans died and 5 million were displaced or made refugees in neighbouring countries - in a country of only 13 million people. In huge parts of the country, the economy and social services were destroyed, with damage estimated at more than \$20 bn. The devastation was far worse than anything Ukraine has suffered, so far. (Calculations and details in *Peace Without Profit*, page 15, free on <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>)

There were no UN resolutions or sanctions against the US, no war crime trials, no compensation. Mozambique survived the war because of military support from Russia and other countries in the Soviet Union, plus political and economic support from the Nordic states and others in what was then called the Like Minded Group of countries. That was real solidarity.

Older Mozambicans know viscerally and from experience what Ukraine is suffering. But for the US, which killed their brothers and sisters, to ask for solidarity sticks in the throat. To ask Mozambique to choose sides in yet another war between the US and Russia is just too much. Most foreign diplomats probably never knew this history. But for Mozambicans, this is not just history, it is living memory - of friends and family massacred in a US proxy war. *jh*

Comment

Is Nyusi proposing Cabo Delgado talks?

"We in Mozambique have an experience of armed conflicts that always ends in dialogue. Russia and Ukraine must talk and quickly resolve the problem. Clearly, Mozambique does not agree with war, and thus we defend dialogue," President Filipe Nyusi told the press after his meeting with the President of Portugal. (@Verdades 17 Mar)

Until now, in talking about his own war in Cabo Delgado, Nyusi refused talks and repeated the catch phrase that "we do not talk to terrorists" and in any case do not know who to talk to. But then, three weeks ago, he reminded us that all Mozambique's war have ended in dialogue, including with terrorists.

Is he quietly accepting that the armed conflict in the north must end in dialogue? Is he suggesting that the advice he hands out to Europe should be applied in Mozambique as well to stop the killing and "quickly resolve the problem" - as has "always" happened in Mozambique? *jh*

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\$2bn secret debt trial: Daily press clippings in English on <https://bit.ly/Moz-Debt-Map-Trial> .

Important external links

Exchange rates 2006-21 & minimum wages 1996-2021 <https://bit.ly/Moz-Exch-wage-2021>

Covid-19 daily updated data <https://www.facebook.com/miguel.de.brito1> and <https://covid19.ins.gov.mz/documentos-em-pdf/boletins-diarios/>

Daily flood and monthly dry season reports - <https://bit.ly/Moz-Flood-2022>

Cyclone trackers, <https://www.cyclocane.com/> and <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war <https://www.caboligado.com/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/MozNews2022> and <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021>

Downloadable books: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books> Election data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

Cabo Delgado

Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data <https://bit.ly/Moz-CDq>

Special reports on the war

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 27 Feb 2020 <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>

Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 <https://bit.ly/Moz-492>

Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-496>

A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-498>

Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - 2018 - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>

2001 first article- *Metical* - English and Portuguese <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001>

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng

Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Background reading

Special reports

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

Special report on four poverty surveys: bit.ly/MozPoverty

\$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>

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

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>

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt

2018 Constitution - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Election newsletters are on <http://bit.ly/2H066Kg>

Ten books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)

Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014) is on <https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer>

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Civil War Civil Peace (2006): <https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace>

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000 (2001)

Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)

Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996)

Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991)

Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986) <available shortly>

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013)

Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)

Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)

Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique (free): <http://clubofmozambique.com/>

Zitamar (paywall): <http://zitamar.com/>

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall):

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O País: www.opais.co.mz

@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>

Carta de Moçambique <https://cartamz.com>

Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:

Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP <https://cipmoz.org/>

Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR <https://omrmz.org/>

Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE <https://www.iese.ac.mz/>

Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD <https://cddmoz.org/> (some CDD in English)

Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) <http://www.fmo.org.mz>
and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).

To subscribe to all CDD publications: <http://eepurl.com/gO9I6v> (English or Portuguese).

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