

*“Too late and inadequate:” The Southern African Development
Community’s Response to the Conflict in Cabo Delgado Province,
Mozambique*

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Introduction

Since its independence in 1975, achieved after a long-armed struggle between nationalists and colonial Portugal, Mozambique has been facing violent conflicts. This began with the conflict between the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) government and the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) rebel group from 1977 to 1992. This civil war claimed not less than one million lives and displaced around 1.5 million people.² Its effects on the civilian population both in Mozambique and neighbouring countries, especially Zimbabwe’s eastern province of Manicaland, were

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² Albert K. Domson-Lindsay, “Mozambique’s Security Challenges: Routinised Response or Broader Approach?” *African Security Review* 31, no. 1 (2022): p. 4.

far-reaching.³ The conflict reignited in 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 only to end with the negotiations that began in 2016 until 2019 when the Maputo Peace Agreement was signed.⁴ The latest violent conflict in Mozambique is led by the Ansar al-Sunna (Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jamma) terrorist group. It is locally referred to as al-Shabaab but is different from the terrorist group with the same name in Somalia.⁵ The conflict began on 5 October 2017 when some armed individuals attacked three police stations in Mocimboa da Praia town.⁶ Until late 2021, the conflict has been confined to the country's northern province of Cabo Delgado, especially in the districts of Ibo, Macomia, Metuge, Mueda, Muidumbe, Nangade, Palma and Quissanga. The conflict later spilled over into other adjacent provinces such as Nampula and Niassa.⁷ By December 2022, the conflict had resulted in a total of 1533 instances of violence and the death of 4497 people.⁸

The far-reaching implications of this conflict in Southern Africa drew the attention of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which is obliged to assist its member states in the event of a conflict or disaster. Initially, the Mozambican government was reluctant to invite a SADC intervention and have foreign forces on its territory for reasons ranging from the sanctity of that country's sovereignty to the need to shield Cabo Delgado's illegal political economy from curious eyes.⁹ A number of SADC meetings were held but ended without any tangible course of action

³ Nicholas Nyachega and Wesley Mwatwara, "On Renamo 'War', Entrepreneurial Synergies and Everyday Life in the Honde Valley Borderlands, c.1980s-2020," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 47, no. 6 (2021): pp. 973-991.

⁴ Jokin Alberdi and Manuel Barroso, "Broadening the Analysis of Peace in Mozambique: Exploring Emerging Violence in Times of Transnational Extractivism in Cabo Delgado," *Global Society* 35, no. 2 (2021): p. 230.

⁵ Marko Svcevic, "Collective Self-defence or Regional Enforcement Action: The Legality of a SADC Intervention in Cabo Delgado and the Question of Mozambican Consent," *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law* 9, no. 1 (2022): p. 141.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁷ Mauro Tiago Njelezi, "Insurgency and subversion: An Analysis of the Modes of Operation for Understanding the Attacks in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique," *African Security Review* (2022): p. 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2022.2054719>

⁸ Armed Conflict Location and Event Database (ACLED), Zitamar News and Media Fax, "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 November - 4 December 2022," *Cabo Ligado*, 6 December 2022, <https://www.caboligado.com/reports/cabo-ligado-weekly-28-november-4-december-2022>.

⁹ See, Borges Nhamire, *Will Foreign Intervention End Terrorism in Cabo Delgado?* Policy Brief (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2021), p. 6; International Crisis Group (ICG), *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Delgado*, *Africa Report No. 303* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2021), pp. 29-30.

to have the regional economic community (REC) intervene.¹⁰ The SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) was eventually deployed in August 2021. It came after all efforts by the Mozambican government to handle the conflict alone, including its hiring of private military companies such as the Wagner Group from Russia and Dyck Advisory Group from South Africa, had proved ineffective.¹¹ It is noteworthy that SAMIM's deployment occurred soon after Rwanda deployed a military contingent of over 1000 troops in July 2021.¹² This demonstrates that Mozambique was not only unclear about how best to handle the insurgent threat but also hesitant to have SADC forces on its soil.

The Mozambican government took time to call the terrorist threat in Cabo Delgado as such. It chose to simply describe the terrorist violence as "homegrown dissidence," "violent extremism," "banditry" and related terms. This was, though presumably, designed to avoid scaring away investors and the government being put under pressure by the REC and other international players to get involved and unravel the hard governance concerns in Cabo Delgado.¹³ The African Union (AU) was conspicuously silent on the issue, possibly because of the principle of subsidiarity in which it waits to be advised by SADC. It first made reference to the conflict in northern Mozambique in February 2020 during the AU Assembly plenary consideration of the

¹⁰ See, for example, Southern African Development Community (SADC), "Communiqué of the 40th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government," 17 August 2020, www.sadc.int/files/8115/9767/2537/Communique_of_the_40th_SADC_Summit_August_2020_-_ENGLISH.pdf; SADC, "Communiqué of the Extraordinary Organ Troika Summit Plus Force Intervention Brigade – Troop Contributing Countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Mozambique," 27 November 2020, www.sadc.int/files/5116/0649/0216/English-Communique_for_the_Extraordinary_OTs_Plus_Summit_27_Nov_2020.pdf; SADC, "Communiqué of the Double Troika Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community," 27 May 2021, www.sadc.int/files/5616/2214/1566/Communique_of_the_SADC_Double_Troika_Summit_27_May_2021_-_English.pdf.

¹¹ Theo Neethling, "Conflict Dynamics in Mozambique's Delgado Province: The Consequences of Limited Statehood," *Conflict Trends*, no. 3 (2021): p. 26.

¹² Domson-Lindsay, "Mozambique's Security Challenges," p. 10.

¹³ See, for example, Svivevic, "Collective Self-defence or Regional Enforcement Action," pp. 140-141; Makaita Noel Mutasa and Cyprian Muchemwa, "Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique: Is It the Boko Haram of Southern Africa?," *Journal of Applied Security Research* 17, no. 2 (2021): pp. 338-339; Samuel Kehinde Okunade, Olumuyiwa Temitope Faluyi and Emmanuel Matambo, "Evolving Patterns of Insurgency in Southern and West Africa: Refocusing the Boko Haram lens on Mozambique," *African Security Review* 30, no. 4 (2021): p. 441; Tom van Rentergem, *Al-Shabab in Mozambique: Taking stock of an insurgency under cover*, Policy Brief No. 281 (Brussels: EGMONT- Royal Institute for International Relations, 2022), p. 3.

state of peace and security in Africa report put together by the former Peace and Security Department, which is now known as the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department.¹⁴ The AU also issued a statement in March 2021 through its Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, to the effect that it was condemning the terrorist acts in Mozambique.¹⁵ The AU Peace and Security Council endorsed the deployment of SAMIM as concomitant to the African Standby Force framework at its 1062nd meeting held on 31 January 2022.¹⁶ Other international players such as the European Union, the United States of America and the former colonial power, Portugal, have given Mozambique various forms of assistance to fight the terrorist threat. This ranged from sending military trainers to financial and military hardware assistance.¹⁷

Studies on the ongoing conflict in northern Mozambique, especially the Cabo Delgado province, have largely focused on its causes, dynamics, the challenges and prospects facing the government in fighting against the Ansar al-Sunna terrorist group and the regional implications.¹⁸ Other scholars have focused on the legality of SADC's

¹⁴ Liesl Louw-Vaudran, *Coordination: Key to the African solutions for Mozambique*, Policy Brief No. 172 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2022), p. 3.

¹⁵ African Union, "Statement of H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, on the Terrorist Attacks in Mozambique," 31 March 2021, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20210331/statement-chairperson-terrorist-attacks-mozambique>.

¹⁶ African Union, "Communiqué of the 1062nd meeting of the PSC on 31 January on the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)," 31 January 2022, <http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1062nd-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-31-january-2022-on-the-deployment-of-the-southern-african-development-community-mission-in-mozambique-samim>.

¹⁷ Domson-Lindsay, "Mozambique's Security Challenges," p. 10.

¹⁸ See, for example, Alberdi and Barroso, "Broadening the Analysis of Peace in Mozambique,"; Njelezi, "Insurgency and subversion," Mutasa and Muchemwa, "Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique"; Thomas Heyen-Dubé and Richard Rands, "Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi: Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 33, no. 3 (2022): pp. 437-466; Okunade, Faluyi and Matambo, "Evolving Patterns of Insurgency in Southern and West Africa"; Rich Mashimbye, "Terrorism, Insurgency, and Regional Stability: The Case of Mozambique," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 17, no. 1 (2022): pp. 60-77; Tinashe Sithole, "The Political Economy of Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Insurgency and its impact on Southern Africa's Regional Security," *POLITIKON: The IAPSS Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2021): pp. 4-29; Eric Morier-Genoud, "The Jihadi Insurgency in Mozambique: Origins, Nature and Beginning," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 14, no. 3 (2020): pp. 396-412; Blessed Mangena and Mokete Pherudi. "Disentangling Violent Extremism in Cabo Dlegado Province, Northern Mozambique: Challenges and Prospects," in *Extremisms in Africa Vol. 3*, eds, Alain Tschudin, Craig Moffat, Stephen Buchanan-Clarke, Susan Russell, and Lloyd Coutts (Johannesburg: Bookstorm, 2020), pp. 348-365; Neethling, "Conflict Dynamics in Mozambique's Delgado

intervention in Mozambique giving prominence to the need for that country's consent first.¹⁹ Little is known about what the SAMIM has achieved or not since its deployment in August 2021 and what it needs to do to establish lasting peace and security in that country's conflict-ridden areas. This article addresses this lacuna in the academic literature and helps to inform policymakers in Mozambique, SADC and beyond on how best the REC can assist its member states to navigate the complex security situation in Cabo Delgado. Its central argument is that though SADC delayed its response to the conflict in Cabo Delgado, its intervention brought some improvements to the situation, which are yet to be consolidated for sustainable peace to be realized. The article concludes that SADC's military response to the conflict in Cabo Delgado will only register temporary success if it is not augmented with comprehensive measures that seek to address the root causes of the conflict.

The analysis in this article is the outcome of data gathered mainly from a review of accessible documentary sources. These include but are not limited to media articles, reports by non-governmental organizations including SADC, journal articles and books on the violent conflict in Mozambique and related developments. While we cannot rule out some loopholes in these sources, there is no doubt that they enabled a logical analysis of the topic under discussion. The article now proceeds to discuss the causes and drivers of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado province. After that, the discussion turns to focus on the challenges and prospects of SADC's response before ending with a conclusion and way forward.

Causes of Conflict in Cabo Delgado

The causes and drivers of the conflict in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province are diverse. The history of Cabo Delgado validates scholarly views identifying a combination of poverty, economic deprivation and marginalization for being at the center of causing local social discontent that resulted in the resort to violent extremism by the affected groups of people. Although the Cabo Delgado province has experienced

Province"; Felix Makonye, "The Cabo Delgado Insurgency in Mozambique: Origin, Ideology, Recruitment Strategies and Social, Political and Economic Implications for Natural Gas and Oil Exploration," *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research* 1, no. 3 (2020): pp. 59-72.

¹⁹ For example, see, Svicevic, "Collective Self-Defence or Regional Enforcement Action."

an upsurge in industrialization arising from mining operations and recent discoveries of natural gas by transnational corporations with links to Mozambique's political and economic elite, it is among the poorest regions in the country.²⁰ This makes unmet expectations, local poverty, unemployment, a feeling of marginalization and inequality among the youth central concerns to the ongoing conflict. The mining activities, the discovery of gas and the development of related infrastructure in Cabo Delgado resulted in local people losing their land and sources of livelihood.²¹ Within Mozambique, the province's poverty rate is only surpassed by Zambezia province.²² The domination of Mozambique's government by southerners has ensured that the socio-economic development of the country revolves around the capital of Maputo leaving behind the northerners.²³ Though Filipe Nyusi who hails from Cabo Delgado province became the president of Mozambique in 2014, the area's marginalization was not reversed. Meek and Nene argue that adverse climatic conditions in the form of a series of cyclones, floods and health crises before and after the discovery of gas also contributed to generating a conducive environment for conflict in Cabo Delgado. The destruction of infrastructure and food insecurity degraded the quality of life of the inhabitants, which has been exploited by the insurgents.²⁴

Adding to the mix of causes of the conflict are religion and ethnicity. Historically, the Mwani were the dominant ethnic group in this part of Mozambique until they lost their influence as a result of Portuguese colonial occupation. The Portuguese suppressed the Mwami out of fear that their Muslim religion would mobilize and unify

²⁰ Joseph Hanlon, "Mozambique's Insurgency: A New Boko Haram or Youth Demanding an End to Marginalisation?" *Blog LSE*, 19 June 2018, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2018/06/19/mozambiques-insurgency-a-new-boko-haram-or-youth-demanding-an-end-to-marginalisation>. See also, Alberdi and Barroso, "Broadening the Analysis of Peace in Mozambique."

²¹ Liesl Louw-Vaudran, "New Field Research in Cabo Delgado Sheds Light on one of Africa's Least Understood Violent Conflicts," *Institute for Security Studies*, 8 September 2022, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-many-roots-of-mozambiques-deadly-insurgency>.

²² Chris Alden and Sergio Chichava, *Cabo Delgado and the Rise of Militant Islam: Another Delta in the Making?*, Policy Briefing No. 221 (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2020), pp. 4-5.

²³ Alex Vines, "As Conflict in Cabo Delgado Increases, Will Frelimo Learn From its Mistakes?," *Mail and Guardian*, 24 June 2020, <https://mg.co.za/africa/2020-06-24-as-conflict-incabo-delgado-increases-will-frelimo-learn-from-its-mistakes>.

²⁴ Stephanie Meek and Minenhle Nene, *Exploring Resource and Climate Drivers of Conflict in Northern Mozambique*, Policy Briefing No. 245 (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2021).

people against the colonial administration.²⁵ However, the outbreak of the anti-colonial struggle in the 1960s forced colonial intelligence agents to court the support of the Swahili Muslims including the Mwami to counteract the influence of FRELIMO in Cabo Delgado. This resulted in the Mwami backing the Portuguese colonial regime against FRELIMO. The Mwami were encouraged by the colonial administration's anti-communist propaganda that FRELIMO was going to impose an atheist authoritarian government. At independence, the FRELIMO government's Marxist-Leninist leanings prompted its suppression of the Muslims in Cabo Delgado in general who happened to be the Mwami, who were seen as undeserving to be included in the new government's development programmes because they had collaborated with the enemy.²⁶

Akin to the Portuguese regime before it, the FRELIMO government only changed its stance for fear that the Muslims would support RENAMO during the country's civil war from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. The formation of the Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO) by urban-based Muslims, an elitist and pro-government grouping, resulted in the Muslims based in the northern parts of the country being left out as they were perceived as "less literate, and too traditional".²⁷ In response, those excluded formed their own organization, the Islamic Congress of Mozambique, which was marginalized and ostracized.²⁸ The Mwami's anti-FRELIMO government posture has not been hidden because they have been known as supporters of the RENAMO opposition party from the time the country held the first multi-party elections in 1994.²⁹

The marginalization and isolation of the Mwami is the stark opposite of how the government treats the Makonde, a largely Christian ethnic group in northern Mozambique. It was at the centre of FRELIMO's anti-colonial struggle and some of its people went on to occupy key positions in both local and central government. The current president, Nyusi, is a Makonde. Enjoying the protection of the FRELIMO government and control of political life in the province, the Makonde, especially the

²⁵ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, "Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi," p. 446.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Mutasa and Muchemwa, "Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique," p. 343.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Morier-Genoud, "The Jihad Insurgency in Mozambique," p. 405.

elite, dominate both the legal and illegal trade networks in Cabo Delgado.³⁰ The fact that Nyusi oversaw the implementation of unpopular campaigns that disproportionately affected the Mwani to pave the way for energy and mining multinational companies further infuriated them. This has made it easy for insurgents to come up with a carefully thought out message of seeking to reverse the political exclusion and economic marginalization of the Mwani and other equally disgruntled ethnic groups such as the Makua.³¹ This also explains why the Ansar al-Sunna insurgents' attacks on civilians have not been haphazard but tactically and strategically directed at those who either collaborate with the government or are historically known to be closely linked to FRELIMO.³²

The existence of an illicit political economy coupled with the feeling of marginalization is, according to Neethling, some of the indicators of limited statehood, which has resulted in Cabo Delgado ranking the lowest in almost every social index. Thus, unemployment and the lack of education among the youth resulted in them being a ready recruitment base for Ansar al-Sunna.³³ The presence of weak state institutions, including the security forces, has compounded the absence of strong and effective governance in Cabo Delgado which has encouraged the rise of insurgents.³⁴ Indeed, Cabo Delgado has long been notorious for many illicit activities including but not limited to human, arms, drug, timber and ruby smuggling and these easily became some of the sources of finance for the insurgency.³⁵ A combination of illegal economic activities and porous borders, especially with Tanzania which is adjacent to Cabo Delgado, encouraged the influx of foreigners. The latter increased unemployment and poverty levels, which became key in the insurgents' mobilization and recruitment drives.³⁶

³⁰ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, "Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi," pp. 446-447. See also, Francisco Almeida dos Santos, "War in Resource-rich Northern Mozambique - Six Scenarios," *CMI Insight No. 2*, 2020, <https://www.cmi.no/publications/7231-war-in-resource-rich-northern-mozambique-six-scenarios>.

³¹ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, "Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi," p. 447.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 450.

³³ Neethling, "Conflict Dynamics in Mozambique's Delgado Province," p. 25.

³⁴ David M. Matsinhe and Estacio Valoi, *The Genesis of Insurgency in Northern Mozambique* (Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2019), pp. 15-16.

³⁵ Louw-Vaudran, "New Field Research in Cabo Delgado."

³⁶ For details, see, Alden and Chichava, "Cabo Delgado and the Rise of Militant Islam"; Martin Ewi et al., *Violent Extremism in Mozambique: Drivers and Links to Transnational Crime* (Pretoria: Institute for Security

Against the above backdrop, Ansar al-Sunna is believed to have begun as a nonviolent movement. It turned to militarization to challenge the established order and provoke a change in the socio-economic, political and religious representation of Cabo Delgado. This makes Ansar al-Sunna divorced from the global Salafi-Jihad movement and its links with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) remain feeble.³⁷ The link between Ansar al-Sunna and Islamic State remains unclear given that in July 2019 the former declared allegiance to ISIS which then claimed responsibility for many attacks in Mozambique.³⁸ To some observers, this was a clear indication that Ansar al-Sunna wanted to establish a caliphate affiliated with the Islamic State. However, Heyen-Dube and Rands argue that it is difficult to talk about the existence of a strong international link between Ansar al-Sunna and ISIS because it might not be formal but the work of a few individuals.³⁹ Still, what cannot be disputed is the fact that the insurgents are influenced by the religion of Islam in which they seek to realize “a Sharia-based political order.”⁴⁰

The deplorable situation in Cabo Delgado has been instrumentalized by the insurgents. They have developed an attractive narrative combining socio-economic issues and religious and ethnic concerns mainly targeting the male youth:

by expertly playing on socio-economic deprivations, ethnic resentment, and generational clashes, presenting these complex issues as the product of ‘degenerate’ and unIslamic governance. Their resiliency and capacity for rapid expansion can also be explained by the low opportunity cost of engaging in violence, combined with the enticements of financial reward and spoils of conflict. The political, economic, religious, ethnic, and geographical isolation of CD [Cabo Delgado] vis-à-vis the rest of the country has created ideal circumstances for the flourishing of an insurgency.⁴¹

Studies, 2022); Julia Stanyard et al., *Insurgency, Illicit Markets and Corruption: The Cabo Delgado Conflict and its Regional Implications* (Geneva: The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, 2022).

³⁷ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, “Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi.”

³⁸ Morier-Genoud, “The Jihad Insurgency in Mozambique,” p. 396.

³⁹ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, “Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi,” pp. 455-456.

⁴⁰ Morier-Genoud, “The Jihad Insurgency in Mozambique,” p. 400.

⁴¹ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, “Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi,” p. 438.

Before its shift to militarization, the Ansar al-Sunna group operated as a religious sect, which denotes a grouping that separates from the parent religion and society on account of disagreements on certain aspects of beliefs and practices.⁴² According to Morier-Genoud, by 2016, the Islamic sect existed in the districts of Mocimboa da Praia, Montepuez, Nangade and Palma in Cabo Delgado. Before 2016, it had been ejected in the districts of Ancuabe, Balama and Chiure in the same province.⁴³ Noteworthy is the fact that the sect did not reach the different districts at once. For instance, it was in the Balama district in 2007 while in the Nangade district, it had emerged as early as 1989-90. In Chiure, the sect began in 2013 or 2014 and in Mocimboa da Praia, it was building a second mosque in the Nanduadua community in 2016.⁴⁴ The practices of the sect included refusing their children to go to school, denunciation of every existing social, religious and political order as corrupt and those who participate in these activities as infidels.⁴⁵ The mainstream Islamic establishments and Christians viewed the sect as a danger to society and requested the government to put an end to its activities, which it did and in most cases using violent means such as arrests, imprisonment and expulsion of the leaders.⁴⁶ Revealing an ethnic dimension, some of the key figures at the centre of propagating the sect's practices were of Makua ethnicity. For instance, a young Makua man, Sualehe Rafayel, spent some years in Tanzania only to return and start teaching a radical version of Islam in Nhacole. Another Makua man called Abdul Carimo founded the sect in Chiure after being influenced by a Sheik in Mocimboa da Praia.⁴⁷

A roughshod government response to the sect is also blamed for contributing to its morphing into an insurgency in Cabo Delgado. Government repression of the insurgents with related collateral damage to civilians intensified distrust by the local people and allegedly enhanced their support for and recruitment by the insurgents.⁴⁸ A combination of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces' (FADM) indiscriminate violence and failure to pay attention to the security needs of the ordinary people of

⁴² Mutasa and Muchemwa, "Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique," p. 343.

⁴³ Morier-Genoud, "The Jihad Insurgency in Mozambique," p. 403.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 400-403.

⁴⁵ Mutasa and Muchemwa, "Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique," p. 343; Morier-Genoud, "The jihad insurgency in Mozambique," p. 399.

⁴⁶ Morier-Genoud, "The Jihad Insurgency in Mozambique," pp. 401-402.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Neethling, "Conflict Dynamics in Mozambique's Delgado Province," pp. 22-23.

Cabo Delgado serves to promote the survival and growth of the insurgency.⁴⁹ Scholars agree that the formerly nonviolent Ansar al-Sunna turned to militarization owing to the government's violent response to its initiatives that culminated in the violent insurgent attacks on state establishments in late 2017. For Morier-Genoud, "the sect shifted its overall strategy after being at the receiving end of increased opposition and repression by mainstream Muslim organizations and the state."⁵⁰ On their part, Heyen-Dube and Rands note that the resort to violent extremism by Ansar al-Sunna was a result of a combination of "government repression and mismanagement."⁵¹

For the sect, militarization became the only way to ensure its survival. The sect's remaining Mocambio da Praia branch was facing impending repression as had happened to the branches in other districts where both religious and governmental authorities had arrested its followers and ejected them making it impossible for the sect to establish a counter-society.⁵² Another possible reason for the sect's turn to violence is that the organization was encouraged by the increase in its recruits, especially those who joined it from Montepuez consisting of former artisanal miners and informal traders. A combination of the new recruits' own grievances, lack of opportunities, low opportunity costs and extensive links to the illicit trade networks in which some of them had worked as low-level facilitators made militarization a viable choice. The existence of stable finances and strong support among the residents of Mocambio da Praia who included informal traders and business elites in Cabo Delgado made militarization an apparent option.⁵³

In addition, the government prioritized a security response to the uprising in Cabo Delgado with far-reaching negative consequences. Though re-establishing security was necessary, the Mozambican government and its partners also required a carefully thought plan to begin redressing the grievances that had encouraged a local revolt to quickly grow into a national challenge.⁵⁴ The overreliance on violence by the FADM has been largely attributed to a lack of or poor intelligence, which the

⁴⁹ Stig Jarle Hansen, "Forever Wars'? Patterns of Diffusion and Consolidation of Jihadism in Africa," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 33, no. 3 (2022): p. 427.

⁵⁰ Morier-Genoud, "The Jihad Insurgency in Mozambique," p. 404.

⁵¹ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, "Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi," p. 444.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Delgado*, p. iii.

government of Mozambique and its partners has been encouraged to improve in order to have a good grasp of the situation in Cabo Delgado.⁵⁵ The futility of the security response by the Mozambican government rests is rooted in the fact that it essentially used “terrorism to suppress terrorism.”⁵⁶ Indeed, there have been reports of gross human rights abuses by the FADM and intelligence and police services during the course of their counterinsurgency operations in Cabo Delgado. These included “arbitrary arrests, abductions, torture of detainees, excessive force against unarmed civilians, intimidation and extrajudicial killings.”⁵⁷ The government’s engagement of private military companies such as Russia’s Wagner Group and the South African-based Dyck Advisory Group further worsened the violation of human rights. They were accused of indiscriminately attacking and killing civilians, as well as harassing humanitarian workers and journalists.⁵⁸ These government excesses resulted in the violent extremists proving to “be resilient, adaptable, and capable of rapid expansion – within specific geographical boundaries - by tapping into widespread disenfranchisement with the central government, among the local youth.”⁵⁹ The foregoing analysis points to the centrality of responses beyond security measures, which the following section discusses, with special reference to SAMIM.

SADC Response: Challenges and Prospects

The deployment of SAMIM was approved by SADC on 23 June 2021.⁶⁰ It was principally guided by the regional bloc’s security framework as stipulated in the

⁵⁵ Neyma Mildred Mahomed Ali, “The Correlation between the Failure of Intelligence Structures and Conflict: The Cabo Delgado Case in Mozambique,” International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (University of Glasgow, Dublin University and Charles University, 2021), <https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/150380/120403842.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>; Luis Nhachote, *Humanizing Security in Cabo Delgado: A CSO Report on the Drivers of Conflict and its Impact on Civilians* (The Investigative Journalism Centre, Mozambique, 2021), p. 21.

⁵⁶ Mutasa and Muchemwa, “Ansar Al-Sunna Mozambique,” p. 347.

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2021: Events of 2020* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2021), pp. 470-471. See, also, Amnesty International, “*What I saw is death: War Crimes in Mozambique’s Forgotten Cape* (London: Amnesty International, 2021).

⁵⁸ Van Rentergem, *Al-Shabab in Mozambique*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Heyen-Dubé and Rands, “Evolving Doctrine and Modus Operandi,” p. 438.

⁶⁰ “Southern African Nations Agree to Deploy Forces to Mozambique,” *Al Jazeera*, 23 June 2021, www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/23/southern-african-nations-agree-to-deploy-forces-to-mozambique.

Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation of 2001 and the Mutual Defence Pact of 2003, which permit “SADC’s use of force in a state party, at least within the existing rules of international law on the *jus ad bellum*.”⁶¹ SADC relied on the Protocol rather than the Pact to deploy SAMIM partly because of Mozambique’s delay and unwillingness to make a formal request.⁶² Indeed, the SADC Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, which approved the deployment of the SADC Standby Force to Cabo Delgado, noted that it:

endorsed the recommendations of the Report of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and approved the Mandate for the SADC Standby Force Mission to the Republic of Mozambique, to be deployed under the SADC Standby Force in support of Mozambique to combat terrorism and acts of violent extremism in Mozambique.⁶³

On its initial deployment, SAMIM was intended to last for three months but has been extended several times as each extension lapses.⁶⁴ SAMIM was envisaged to be made up of 3000 troops from SADC member states, namely Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana, Angola, Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Malawi. In practice, the bulk of the force comprises contingents from South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania and Lesotho. Among the tasks of its mandate include backing Mozambique to fight terrorism, re-establish law and order in Cabo Delgado, provision of military logistics and training to FADM and provision of humanitarian relief to the affected people.⁶⁵ SAMIM’s deployment was preceded by a technical assessment team in April 2021, which recommended the deployment of 3000 troops from the regional bloc.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Svicevic, “Collective Self-defence or Regional Enforcement Action,” p. 139.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁶³ SADC, “Communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government,” 23 June 2021,

www.sadc.int/files/3916/2446/8466/Communique_of_the_Extraordinary_SADC_Summit_of_Heads_of_State_and_Government_23_June_2021_-ENGLISH.pdf.

⁶⁴ Nhamire, *Will Foreign Intervention End Terrorism in Cabo Delgado?*, p. 7.

⁶⁵ SADC, “SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) in Brief,” SADC, 10 November 2021, <https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/sadc-mission-mozambique-samim-brief/>.

⁶⁶ Carien du Plessis, “SADC Pushes for Deployment of 3000-strong Military Force in Mozambique,” *News24*, 27 April 2021, www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/sadc-pushes-for-deployment-of-3000-strong-military-force-in-northern-mozambique-20210427.

As indicated in the introduction, the delay in having SADC intervene was caused by Mozambique's reluctance to have foreign forces on its soil. The Mozambican government only officially brought the issue to the regional group's attention in May 2020 after more than two years of underestimating the terrorist threat and trying to fix it alone.⁶⁷ This was regardless of the fact that SADC member states were eager to quickly act fearing the spill-over consequences of the insurgency into their territories.⁶⁸ Again, before the Troika Summit of the Heads of State and Government held on 8 April 2021 in Maputo, Mozambique, which directed the deployment of the technical assessment team that paved way for the deployment of SAMIM, most of the SADC meetings held since May 2020 were mere talk shows.⁶⁹ For instance, the 40th SADC Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government was the first to note that Mozambique had brought the situation in its territory to the REC. It simply applauded the country for its "continued efforts in combating terrorism and violent attacks."⁷⁰ An extraordinary Troika Summit was held on 27 November 2020. It resulted in SADC leaders instructing that an all-inclusive regional plan be developed for discussion at the Summit.⁷¹ Moreover, the SADC meeting on 27 May 2021 only acknowledged "the proposed regional response."⁷²

⁶⁷ Stephen Buchanan-Clarke and Amanda Lucey, *National and Regional Responses to the Cabo Delgado Crisis: Failures and Opportunities for Change*, Policy Brief No. 34 (Cape Town: The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2021), p. 3.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Matthew Hill and S'thembile Cele, "Mozambique's Response to Insurgency Perplexes Neighbors," *Bloomberg*, 19 May 2021, www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-19/mozambique-response-to-insurgency-perplexes-neighbors; ICG, *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Delgado*, p. 29.

⁶⁹ Apart from directing the deployment of a technical assessment team, this Double Troika Summit "condemned the terrorist attacks in strongest terms; and affirmed that such heinous attacks cannot be allowed to continue without a proportionate regional response." See, SADC, "Communiqué of the Extraordinary Double Troika Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community, Maputo, Republic of Mozambique," 8 April 2021, <https://www.sadc.int/latest-news/communique-extraordinary-double-troika-summit-heads-of-state-and-government-southern>.

⁷⁰ SADC, "Communiqué of the 40th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government," 17 August 2020, www.sadc.int/files/8115/9767/2537/Communique_of_the_40th_SADC_Summit_August_2020_ENGLISH.pdf.

⁷¹ SADC, "Communiqué of the Extraordinary Organ Troika Summit Plus Force Intervention Brigade – Troop Contributing Countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Mozambique," 27 November 2020, www.sadc.int/files/5116/0649/0216/English-Communique_for_the_Extraordinary_OTs_Plus_Summit_27_Nov_2020.pdf.

⁷² SADC, "Communiqué of the Double Troika Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community," 27 May 2021,

Since its deployment, SAMIM registered some commendable successes. Among others, it has been noted that SAMIM destroyed insurgents' bases, seized their equipment and rescued abducted civilians in Macomia, Mueda and Nangade districts and on the Indian Ocean.⁷³ For instance, in November 2022, SAMIM noted that it seized a large number of the insurgents' weapons, ammunition and equipment in an engagement in which it lost two soldiers, one from Botswana and another from Tanzania, but killed 30 insurgents in retaliation.⁷⁴ Noteworthy is that the Rwandan contingent has also contributed immensely in assisting the Mozambican forces to regain control of Mocimboa da Praia town and Palma, as well as dislodging insurgents from their key bases in these areas.⁷⁵ At that point, the town of Mocimboa da Praia had been under insurgent control for nearly a year.⁷⁶ While the terms of SAMIM's presence in Mozambique is a matter of public record, the agreement between Maputo and Kigali to allow Rwandan forces to operate within Mozambique remains unknown as is the source of funding for the Rwandan presence. While President Paul Kagame insists that Rwanda is paying for the operation itself, some observers have speculated that France is providing funding given the role of French energy company Total in the area. Indeed, during the campaign in Cabo Delgado, Rwandan forces have focused on securing sites for the extraction of natural resources such as gas, rubies and graphite.⁷⁷

During the first few months of the operation in 2021, a combination of SADC and Rwandan forces "dismantled all the insurgents' major bases and seized important territory they once held. Rwandan forces...secured the Afungi peninsula, where the French company Total has invested in a multi-billion-dollar gas project, and recaptured the strategic port of Mocimboa da Praia."⁷⁸ The success of the Rwandan and SAMIM

www.sadc.int/files/5616/2214/1566/Communique_of_the_SADC_Double_Troika_Summit_27_May_2021_-_English.pdf.

⁷³ Nhamire, *Will Foreign Intervention End Terrorism in Cabo Delgado?*, p. 8.

⁷⁴ ACLED, Zitamar News and Media Fax, "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 November - 4 December 2022," p. 1.

⁷⁵ Nhamire, *Will Foreign Intervention End Terrorism in Cabo Delgado?*, p. 8.

⁷⁶ Nhachote, *Humanizing Security in Cabo Delgado*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Borges Nhamirre, "Rwanda Expands its Protection to Mozambique's Natural Resources," *Institute for Security Studies*, 1 February 2023, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/rwanda-expands-its-protection-of-mozambiques-natural-resources>; Vijay Prashad, "Rwanda's Military is the French Proxy on African Soil," *Mail and Guardian*, 12 September 2021, <https://mg.co.za/africa/2021-09-12-rwandas-military-is-the-french-proxy-on-african-soil/>.

⁷⁸ ICG, *Winning Peace in Mozambique's embattled North*, *Africa Report Briefing No. 178* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2022), p. 2.

forces has been attributed to “their better discipline, leadership and understanding that local support is critical in counterinsurgency operations.”⁷⁹ As indicated earlier, a lack of trust between the Mozambican security forces and local people resulted in the former’s failure to effectively handle the insurgency.

Regardless of the above achievements by SAMIM and Rwandan forces, they are yet to permanently get rid of the insurgents in Cabo Delgado. While the dislodging of the insurgents from some of their strongholds was quickly achieved, fully securing the areas has proved to be a huge challenge.⁸⁰ A key strategy driving the resilience and adaptation of the insurgents has been their scattering into tiny groups and incursion into the southern districts where security forces’ presence is very low. There have been reports of resurgent terrorist attacks in districts such as Macomia, Nangade, Mueda, Meluco and Quissanga.⁸¹ To the International Crisis Group, “many fighters have simply blended into the civilian population, waiting for the right time to remobilise. Small groups continue to stage attacks in central, coastal, and northern parts of the province.”⁸²

In addition, the Ansar al-Sunna terrorist attacks have now spread to other districts in provinces outside Cabo Delgado. For example, in late 2022, insurgents were not only reported to be back and operational in districts such as Macomia, Muidumbe, Pemba, Namuno and Chiure in Cabo Delgado, but also operating in some districts such as Mecula in Niassa province and Nacala, Erati and Memba in Nampula province.⁸³ This is part of the insurgents’ deliberate strategy hinged on guerrilla tactics and is designed to overstretch the SAMIM, Rwanda and Mozambican forces.⁸⁴ Additionally, the insurgents’ tactical innovation has involved “using small drones to surveil potential

⁷⁹ Stanyard et al., *Insurgency, Illicit Markets and Corruption*, p. 68.

⁸⁰ ICG, *Winning Peace in Mozambique’s Embattled North*, p. 2.

⁸¹ Nhamire, *Will Foreign Intervention End Terrorism in Cabo Delgado?*, p. 8.

⁸² ICG, *Winning Peace in Mozambique’s Embattled North*, p. 2.

⁸³ ACLED, Zitamar News and Media Fax, “Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 November-4 December 2022,” 1-2; Ewi et al., *Violent Extremism in Mozambique*, 9; Charles Mangwiro, “Mozambique struggling to contain violence in troubled northern regions,” *VOA*, 7 September 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/mozambique-struggling-to-contain-violence-in-troubled-northern-regions/6735287.html>.

⁸⁴ Ewi et al., *Violent Extremism in Mozambique*, p. 9.

targets and the movements of counterinsurgency forces.”⁸⁵ As a result, though military engagements are still occurring in the area, civilians are now the primary targets of the insurgents.⁸⁶

The SAMIM and Rwandan forces’ successful dispersal of the insurgents pushing them further west and south of the province has also resulted in the displacement of more civilians in those areas.⁸⁷ The resurgence in insurgent attacks has led to an increase in the departure movements of civilians. For instance, between 7 and 13 December 2022 departure movements were high in Montepuez with 1041, Nangade with 415, Macomia with 393, Mueda with 254, Metuge with 181, Mueda with 159 and Ibo with 122 persons.⁸⁸ Civilians in areas such as Nangade near the Tanzania border have complained about SAMIM forces’ ineffectiveness to mitigate the insurgent threat in their district.⁸⁹ Again, the Mozambican, Rwandan and SAMIM forces remain facing the problem of waging “an uneasy and relatively uncoordinated [counterinsurgency] campaign.”⁹⁰ On their part, the Rwandan forces have been accused of “conducting their operations like ‘mercenaries,’ with little or no command from the Mozambican military.”⁹¹ Thus, failure to address these weaknesses in the counterinsurgency operations in northern Mozambique will strengthen the position of the insurgents.

From the foregoing, it is doubtless that leaders and decision-makers in Mozambique, SADC and beyond have been reminded that destroying a terrorist insurgency that had been operational for more than three years and whose causes and drivers are deep-seated requires more time than they had envisaged. In this regard, one can say that SAMIM’s efforts have been effective in simply displacing and not stopping

⁸⁵ Austin Doctor, *After Palma: Assessing the Islamic State’s Position in Northern Mozambique* (Washington DC: George Washington University, 2022), p. 11.

⁸⁶ Sierra Ballard and Emilia Columbo, “Enhancing Humanitarian Aid and Security in Northern Mozambique,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies Commentary*, 28 September 2022, [csis.org/analysis/enhancing-humanitarian-aid-and-security-northern-mozambique](https://www.csis.org/analysis/enhancing-humanitarian-aid-and-security-northern-mozambique).

⁸⁷ Peter Fabricius, “SADC and Rwandan Troops Disperse Mozambique Insurgents - but Displace More Civilians,” *Daily Maverick*, 31 July 2022, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-07-31-sadc-and-rwandan-troops-disperse-mozambique-insurgents-but-displace-more-civilians/>.

⁸⁸ The International Organization for Migration, *Displacement Tracking Matrix*, December 2022, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/mozambique-%E2%80%94-emergency-tracking-tool-report-%E2%80%94-07-13-december-2022>.

⁸⁹ Doctor, *After Palma*, p. 12.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁹¹ Nhachote, *Humanizing Security in Cabo Delgado*, p. 7.

the terrorist group's advance. This is inadequate given that "counter-insurgency is a slog, requiring months and years of stabilize, build, and hold operations to not only displace insurgents but deny them access to the population and interdict their supply chains."⁹²

SAMIM's deployment on the condition that Mozambique was to lead and coordinate the intervention, a decision that was strategically sound to ensure continuity and minimal tempering with the state's sovereignty, had a number of inherent shortcomings.⁹³ Among them is that the Mozambican government can interfere with the implementation of SAMIM's mandate where it appears unpalatable with its interests. The Mozambican authorities had failed to address the conflict since 2017. Their "silence for the greater duration of the conflict as well as a refusal to acknowledge the nature and scale of the conflict" had negative effects on SADC's military intervention effort. It not only prevented SADC to develop a comprehensive response strategy but also gathered the resources needed to successfully implement it.⁹⁴ For Jentzsch, "the (Mozambique) government has not only obscured the origins of but also the response to the Cabo Delgado insurgency."⁹⁵ This resulted in SAMIM's efforts being dominated by a military response at the expense of proper and strategic interventions seeking to address the grievances at the centre of the insurgency. As Khadiagala warned, instituting a regional military intervention devoid of sufficient understanding of northern Mozambique's political dynamics was ill-conceived. It is likely to not end well as previous SADC military interventions in countries such as Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of Congo have shown.⁹⁶

As indicated above, the initial extremely short-term duration of three months given to SAMIM, which has already been extended several times, is one indicator of the

⁹² Darren Olivier, "The Prospects for a Successful SADC Mission in Mozambique," *ACCORD*, 1 September 2021, <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/the-prospects-for-a-successful-sadc-mission-in-mozambique/>.

⁹³ ICG, *Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Delgado*, p. 30.

⁹⁴ Svicevic, "Collective Self-defence or Regional Enforcement Action," p. 140.

⁹⁵ Corinna Jentzsch, "Ignorance, Denial and Insurgency in Mozambique," *CETRI*, 4 Janvier (January) 2022, <https://www.cetri.be/ignorance-denial-and-insurgency-in?lang=fr>.

⁹⁶ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, "Regional Military intervention in Mozambique is a Bad Idea. Here's why," *The Conversation*, 27 May 2021, <https://theconversation.com/regional-military-intervention-in-mozambique-is-a-bad-idea-heres-why-161549>.

lack of adequate formulation of a regional response strategy. A lack of adequate resources including logistical, human, materiel and financial for SAMIM has already been observed.⁹⁷ The SAMIM troops were originally supposed to comprise 3000 but only a few hundred special forces were actually deployed when the mission started. This left the deployed SAMIM forces suffering from a lack of infantry and related naval and air support, which has not changed regardless of an increase in the troop deployments in February 2022.⁹⁸ Though securing or “rehabilitating” the state for it to perform its critical conventional functions is important, it is insufficient for SADC to prioritize the state at the expense of “the critical domestic sociopolitical and economic sources of insecurity.”⁹⁹

Some observers have noted that an appropriate SADC response was needed to “take into account the complexity of a security crisis that has its roots in a social and economic dimension, and which is having an impact primarily on civilian communities.”¹⁰⁰ Other scholars have observed that “tackling insurgency in Mozambique requires a multipronged approach that addresses structural, ideological, and moral issues...SADC...should also offer candid advice and counsel to state actors that have not catered satisfactorily to some of their citizens.”¹⁰¹ These incisive perspectives are likely to bear fruits when given the attention they deserve. However, SADC is hamstrung by its cautious approach to security crises affecting its member states, especially those requiring intervention in their internal issues. This is attributed

⁹⁷ ICG, *Winning Peace in Mozambique's Embattled North*, p. 6.

⁹⁸ Peter Fabricius, “Wars Can’t be Fought on the Cheap: Experts and Special Forces call for more Infantry and Equipment in Mozambique,” *Daily Maverick*, 11 January 2022, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-01-11-wars-cant-be-fought-on-the-cheap-experts-and-special-forces-call-for-more-infantry-and-equipment-in-mozambique/>; Vicky Stark, “South Africa Sending Fresh Troops to Mozambique to Fight Islamist Insurgents,” *VOA*, 22 February 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/south-africa-sending-fresh-troops-to-mozambique-to-fight-islamist-insurgents-/6454195.html>; Eunice Stoltz, “Islamic Extremists Cannot be ‘Left to Linger’ in Mozambique,” *Mail and Guardian*, 30 October 2022, <https://mg.co.za/news/2022-10-30-islamic-extremists-cannot-be-left-to-linger-in-mozambique/>.

⁹⁹ Domson-Lindsay, “Mozambique’s Security Challenges,” p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Camillo Casola, “The “Faceless Evildoers” of Cabo Delgado: An Islamist Insurgency in Mozambique?,” *Italian Institute for International Political Studies*, 3 August 2020, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/print/pubblicazione/faceless-evildoers-cabo-delgado-islamist-insurgency-mozambique-27154>.

¹⁰¹ Okunade, Faluyi and Matambo, “Evolving Patterns of Insurgency in Southern and West Africa,” pp. 444-445.

to the REC's continued bias towards "the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and non-interference [which] remain very strong."¹⁰² In this light, it is imperative that an effective regional response to the terrorist threat not only focus on hard security responses but also the human security dimension, which has the capacity to address the root causes of the insurgency.¹⁰³

The central argument in this article is that SAMIM's military-dominated intervention efforts in northern Mozambique began late and will remain inadequate and misguided unless they are consolidated by comprehensive measures tackling the root causes of the insurgency. The development of the "Program for Resilience and Integrated Development in the North" (now dubbed the Cabo Delgado Recovery Plan and spearheaded by the Integrated Development Agency for the North) by the Mozambican government with assistance from international donors was a step in the right direction. However, it has already been castigated for its liberal peacebuilding bias. It solely focuses on seeking to strengthen state capacity without developing "provisions to directly empower local populations and build resiliency against enduring challenges."¹⁰⁴ The sincerity on the part of the Mozambican government and the availability of the needed resources also remain key concerns.¹⁰⁵ Mozambican authorities are known for corruption and neglecting the pursuit of equitable development. These are some of the reasons why RENAMO periodically resorted to violence after the end of the civil war.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Mashimbye, "Terrorism, Insurgency, and Regional Stability," p. 69.

¹⁰³ Faith Maberera and Sanusha Naidu, *Entering into the fray? The Extremist threat in Cabo Delgado: Strategic Policy choices for South African and SADC*, Global Insight, Issue 137 (Pretoria: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2020), pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Cheatham, Amanda Long and Thomas P. Sheehy, "Regional Security Support: A Vital First Step for Peace in Mozambique," *United States Institute of Peace*, 23 June 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/regional-security-support-vital-first-step-peace-mozambique#>; Center for Preventive Action, "Stabilizing Mozambique," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 29 August 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/report/stabilizing-mozambique>.

¹⁰⁵ SADC, "SADC begins peace building support programme in northern Mozambique," 24 June 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/sadc-begins-peace-building-support-programme-northern-mozambique>.

¹⁰⁶ Domson-Lindsay, "Mozambique's Security Challenges," pp. 7-8.

Conclusion and Way Forward

This article discusses the challenges and prospects facing SAMIM. It augments extant studies on the conflict in northern Mozambique, which had hitherto mainly focused on its causes, dynamics, the challenges and prospects facing the government in fighting against the Ansar al-Sunna terrorist group and the regional implications. The main argument is that though SADC delayed intervening in the conflict in Cabo Delgado, its intervention brought some improvements to the situation, which are yet to be consolidated for sustainable peace to be realized. It is doubtless that SADC's predominantly military response to the conflict in Cabo Delgado will only achieve temporary success if it is not augmented with comprehensive measures that seek to address the root causes of the conflict. The fact that the Ansar al-Sunna terrorist attacks are still being experienced in some Cabo Delgado districts and have now spread beyond Cabo Delgado indicates that a combination of efforts by the Mozambican government, Rwanda and SAMIM have been effective in simply displacing and not stopping the terrorist group's activities. This article proffers the following non-military policy measures to complement the security response, which also still needs to be strengthened.

The inadequacies of the predominantly military response to the terrorist threat in Mozambique suggest that SADC needs to prioritize a human security vision in which it gives prominence to the voices of the aggrieved people. Though thorny given the state-centric nature of the intergovernmental regional grouping, a dialogue process in which the grassroots people are engaged and allowed to communicate their grievances and vision of security as represented by community-based organizations is likely to provide SADC with the opportunity to bring lasting peace to northern Mozambique. The Islamic element of the conflict can be addressed by a combination of the Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO), local Muslim elders and opinion leaders with the aim of helping reinterpret the Muslim faith and its doctrinal aspects. It is the only way SADC can break the current cycle of short-term successes registered by a predominantly military response, which has hitherto failed to go beyond just focusing on seeking to accommodate elite interests and vision of security.

The foregoing perspective points to the fact that while SAMIM was necessary to stop the damage to property and loss of civilian life, other organs of SADC with

expertise in mediation, conflict resolution and reconciliation such as the Panel of Elders and Mediation Reference Group need to be well resourced and deployed. After all, it has been observed that faith-based organizations are likely to form the bedrock of peacebuilding work in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province and beyond.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, the SADC Peacebuilding Support Programme, which was introduced in June 2022 as part of SAMIM's multidimensional peacekeeping efforts needs to be implemented. Among other issues and capacity-building initiatives, it involves civilians undertaking confidence-building measures "addressing mistrust within the communities."¹⁰⁸ It can also initiate dialogue at various levels such as religious, community and generational, which can go a long way in building social cohesion and a common vision of security among the local people.

The root causes of the current conflict in northern Mozambique rest in poor governance. This means that the SADC intervention efforts in Mozambique should speak to issues such as corruption, illegal migration, porous borders, unequal development, and social, political and economic exclusion at the center of the conflict for durable peace to be attained. The recurrent resort to violent action by RENAMO has been driven by governance issues including but not limited to marginalization, inequality and poverty among those regions (regardless of some of them such as Cabo Delgado being rich in resources) not supporting the FRELIMO government. More so, the lack of investment in the security forces has resulted in them lacking discipline and capacity to execute complex operations such as those needed to handle insurgency.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, there is a need for Mozambique to develop a deliberate strategy to rid itself of the bad governance practices that engendered a conducive environment for insurgency to thrive. The maritime domain remains one of the key areas requiring Mozambique, SADC and their partners' attention given the thriving of illicit maritime

¹⁰⁷ Gwinyayi Albert Dzinesa, "Mozambique's Forever Wars: Can the Military Affairs Commission, Christian Council, and Islamic Council Be Key Players in Building a National Peace Architecture?," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 17, no. 2 (2022), pp. 169-190.

¹⁰⁸ SADC, "Conflict in Cabo Delgado not a problem for SADC alone," SADC, 16 September 2022, <https://www.sadc.int/latest-news/conflict-cabo-delgado-not-problem-mozambique-and-sadc-alone>.

¹⁰⁹ Alden and Chichava, "Cabo Delgado and the rise of Militant Islam," p. 8.

trade from Mozambique, which is partly used to finance the insurgents.¹¹⁰ It is difficult to achieve a solution to the conflict in Cabo Delgado without addressing its genuine causes and drivers.

Lastly, the Ansar al-Sunna insurgent group's emergence within a specific conducive setting in the form of ethnic groups, Makua and Mwani, who strongly felt marginalized socially, politically, economically and religiously points to the centrality of the role of the youth in peace and security in Mozambique, SADC and Africa in general. Poverty alleviation and employment creation programmes and opportunities coupled with requisite education and training among the youth are promising solutions to the insurgency in Mozambique. This is likely to tilt the balance of incentives for the youth in favour of peace thus starving the insurgents' recruitment base.

¹¹⁰ For details on the SADC maritime concerns and what needs to be done, especially in Mozambique, see, Enock Ndawana, "Non-South African SADC Navies and Maritime Security in the Post-Cold War Era: Angola and Mozambique," in *African Navies: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed., Timothy Stapleton (London: Routledge, 2022), pp. 168-182.