

CABO DELGADO: INSURGENTS, JIHADISTS OR TERRORISTS?

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The violent conflict in Cabo Delgado is not a civil war or a popular revolt. It is a war against the state and the population, mostly Muslims, carried on by a terrorist sect, wrongly branded as “Jihadists” or “Islam extremists” – in reality, the overwhelming Sunni community, Mozambican and international, consider them as apostates and terrorists. This sect is composed mostly by radicalised Mozambicans joined by fellow Tanzanians and, from 2019 onwards, also by Ugandans, Congolese, Somalis, Sudanese and other Africans, including South Africans.

The war is being fought in an opaque and “conflict friendly” environment, characterised by a plethora of elements, with a particular relevance for three of them: one, the persistence of government malpractices and institutional fragility; two, the existence of unemployment opportunities for the youth as well as of suffering and resentment in the population, caused by local and Maputo business and political elites, who raped the benefits of mineral resources exploration, besides benefiting from drug and other traffic rents; three, the bad relationship between Mozambique and Tanzania, that compete for being part of the fossil fuels’ community, and are not collaborating in good faith to end the war.

1. PALMA, A CHANGE IN THE COURSE OF WAR?

On March 24th, 2021, the sectarian group claiming Islam and Jihad to terrorise, destroy and murder those who do not follow its dictates, calling itself Ansar-Al-Sunna (Followers of Tradition), but known

throughout Mozambique as “*mashababos*” (popular designation for the plural of Al-Shabaab - youth in Arabic), attacked and partially occupied for some days the capital of the district of Palma, which borders the northeast of Mozambique with Tanzania, having robbed supplies and severely damaged business and administrative facilities. In the attack, an undetermined number of military and civilians were killed, including non-Mozambican workers who lived and worked in the Afungi complex, the natural gas exploration project led by TOTAL. The attack was carried out with tactical precision, led by experienced combatants, and the Mozambican security and defence forces were unable to prepare, prevent and effectively confront the attackers.

This war event had a strong impact. True, it was not the largest attack – for example, the one perpetrated in August 2020 against Mocímboa da Praia involved more fighters. However, by attacking Palma, the *mashababos* achieved **three important strategic goals**.

First, they paralysed the TOTAL project, which may have unwanted consequences - the French government controls TOTAL through its 30% Golden Share in the company, but private shareholders may begin to dislike the continuity of the project, despite losses in investments and contracts already signed, notwithstanding the fact that the final investment decision (FID) points to confirmed purchases of liquid natural gas in the future.

Second, the population’s suffering and frustration increased because they could not be protected by the government armed forces

against the group’s lethal attack, fuelling the idea that the Mozambican state is unable to exercise sovereignty and protect its citizens, not even in a very symbolic Province, where Frelimo started the national liberation struggle against Portuguese colonialism and where the current President of the Republic was born.

Third, the attack allowed the Islamic State (DAESH) to claim the conquest of yet another district capital by its local affiliates (which, in fact, did not happen – the attack was not followed by occupation).

Taking into account thousands of civilian and military deaths (numbers are not certain), more than 700 thousand internally displaced

persons, with serious health problems, including pandemics and endemic diseases and situations of hunger and malnutrition, considering the threat that the evolution of the conflict poses to the calendars and the very continuity of the gas projects, the absence of the President of Mozambique in Cabo Delgado has a political meaning. This is even more noticeable in view of what happened in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai in March 2019, when the President moved with several ministers to Beira to personally command rescue and reconstruction. Security concerns or whatever the reason may be, his absence leaves a stain on him and on Frelimo and does harm to the moral of the armed forces or the civilians.

2. ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT IN CABO DELGADO

Figure 1: Map of Mozambique and Cabo Delgado



Source: Financial Times

Let us begin by saying that this is not a war triggered by conflicts between Frelimo and Renamo - violence that continues to happen episodically in central Mozambique are caused by a military dissent of Renamo and has nothing to do with the war in Cabo Delgado.

The designation of the *mashababos* as a radical (or Islamic) jihadist group by most security agencies, many analysts and journalists, is a qualification strongly denied by the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Mozambique (including by the Islamic Wahabi association). It should be added that joining terms such as “radical” or “terrorist” to adjectivise Islam or Jihad and for characterising such brand of insurgency is also very controversial and not accepted by the majority of the international Sunni Islamic community, including by the governments of countries that have Islam as a state religion - Saudi Arabia itself, of official Wahabi rite, considers Al Qaeda and DAESH as “satanic” enemies (and vice-versa). Most Sunni theologians define Jihad as a personal war to transcend unwanted behaviours and not as a war against others or aiming to forced imposition of behavioural precepts. After all, the main victims of terrorism from these pro-Salafi sects are Muslims, civilians, women and children – in Mozambique and all over the world. This type of conflict, that exists today in several African and Middle Eastern countries, does not also typify a war between Christians and Muslims –some analysts argue, not without controversy, that it could even be branded as a civil war within Sunni Islam.

It is true that the protagonists of the war in Cabo Delgado are mostly radicalised Mozambicans, supported by foreign fighters, all of them inspired by the DAESH ideology, seeking to impose by terror, force or persuasion literalist interpretations of Islam to people that are alien to them. The

incorporation of new followers, mostly youngsters with no job expectations or looking for economic survival, is not, *per se*, a signal that the war is a popular revolt – as a matter of fact, this type of recruitment has been used in several geographies and in many wars throughout history.

Many analysts look at the war as being mostly originated by the accumulation of resentments and frustration on the part of the population, as natural riches and land are being exploited (and taken) without evident benefits to locals. Therefore, according to this interpretation, the conflict should be characterised as a popular revolt against government authorities – the participation of foreigners or foreign ideologies being real but secondary to these domestic causes. It is true that the war takes place in an environment in which there are resentments towards the predatory actions of authorities, greedy merchants and new landlords, and no one, except perhaps some members of the government, denies that, and this behaviour is a major element to take into account, to typify as well as to address the conflict. However, this is hardly sufficient to fully explain two questions. One, why these facts and feelings were translated into war in Cabo Delgado and not also in several other parts of the country, where similar situations exist? Two, how can the war be named as a popular revolt, when the victims are mostly local civilians, mostly Muslims and from various ethnicities? Bad governance, including hostility against the media and the civil society not aligned with Frelimo, however conflictive it may be, cannot fully explain what is happening. In other words, it is not accurate to call this violent conflict as a civil war or a popular revolt.

In Cabo Delgado, **the nature of the war is very much ideological and civilisational, using mostly terrorist methods, and should**

be branded as a war against the state and the way of life of the overwhelming majority of the population, particularly composed by Muslims. The ideological motivations of its protagonists are based on sectarian religious convictions inspired by Salafi interpretations meaning the following: when in peace, other religious creeds are allowed, as long as they are subordinate, pay a fee and their followers do not, in the public space, behave as non-Islamic; when in war, the death of captives by decapitation or not, or their enslavement and the use of women for sexual purposes, among other savage practices, are allowed, including for Muslims they call apostates, meaning those who do not follow their precepts or commands.

Manifestations of revolt and violence date back, according to some narratives, to 2007, in the northwest part of the Province and were carried out by Mozambicans radicalised in madrasas and mosques in Saudi Arabia, who did not find in Mozambique - and in Cabo Delgado - favourable ground for the acceptance of their religious credos and correlative social behaviours, being rejected by local Muslim leaders and followers.

After sporadic episodes of violence against their preaching centres perpetrated by Muslim believers (not by state authorities), they ended up strengthening their contacts with supporters in southern Tanzania and, according to some reports, being also joined by “illegal” ruby miners, concentrated their actions in the district of Mocímboa da Praia, where their first violent and very much publicised action took place, involving the beheading of people in 2017. DAESH accepted the allegiance of Ansar-al-Sunna only by the end of 2019, soon after experienced fighters coming from the northeast of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) through the southeast of Tanzania joined the group. It is necessary to say that these combatants fled

from DRC due to a well succeeded offensive by the Congolese army against the military base of the recently decreed Islamic State Central Africa Province.

The joining of these experienced foreign fighters represented a turning point: the violent conflict transformed into a war of aggression against the state and local population. The effectiveness of the terrorists’ acts exposed the fragility of the Mozambican defence forces, despite reinforcements of military personnel and riot police units coming from other parts of the country, mostly from the south. The government’s ineffective response was evident when the *mashababos* took over the capital of the district of Mocímboa da Praia in August 2020 and set-up deadly attacks in several locations, including Nangade, Muidumbe and Mueda, districts of Maconde majority, always considered bastions of Frelimo.

The weak response of the Mozambican armed forces is partially explained by the way they were disregarded by Frelimo since the signature of the Roma peace agreement with Renamo in 1992. In this agreement, the integration of Renamo personnel was foreseen only in the armed forces - and not in the police or security apparatus. Thus, the successive Frelimo governments reinforced security agencies and the police to the detriment of the army, which, at the date of the beginning of the violent actions in 2017, was smaller than the riot police. The neglect of the army explains its operational and logistical weaknesses and the lack or ineffectiveness of special forces prepared for a guerrilla war theatre, such as commandos or marines. Only after normalising relations with Renamo in 2014 (at a time where Filipe Nyusi was the Minister of Defence) and particularly after the 2nd Peace Agreement of August 2019, did the Frelimo government gave more

importance to staffing the armed forces and only in December 2020 Nyusi felt comfortable to pass the operational command in Cabo Delgado from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Defence.

Summing up, the insurgents are made up of radicalised Mozambicans, who have been joined by other locals resentful of abuses, work conditions and feeling they had no better future. Since the beginning of their actions they were joined by Tanzanians and, by the end of 2019, by experienced fighters from other origins – mostly Ugandan, Congolese, Sudanese and Somali.

By forcing the population to take positions against their beliefs and traditions, by disrupting trade and destroying facilities, Ansar-al-Sunna could not find any significant local support, as it has been reported by people fleeing or being liberated from captivity. This explains why the group is

assuming increasingly violent and terrorist indiscriminate attitudes against military, public officials and against civilians, mostly Muslims, Muanis and Macuas, but also Macondes, causing a huge number of internally displaced people. As a matter of fact, 700 thousand plus people seeking for refuge are more than 80% of the population (characterised in the next figures) of the districts affected by the war, evidencing that the mashababos do not conform with a popular uprising.

3. NUMBERS MATTER: DEMOGRAPHIC AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISATION

Taking a closer look at the demographics of Mozambique and Cabo Delgado and applying the population growth rate of 2.8% to the data in Figure 2, Mozambique should have today more than 30 million inhabitants, 2.5 million of which in Cabo Delgado Province.

Figure 2: Population Distribution by Provinces

PROVINCES	POPULATION	%
Nampula	5 758 920	20,6
Zambézia	5 164 732	18,5
Tete	2 648 941	9,5
Cabo Delgado	2 320 261	8,3
Sofala	2 259 248	8,1
Maputo (province)	1 968 906	7,1
Manica	1 945 994	7,0
Niassa	1 810 794	6,5
Inhambane	1 488 676	5,3

Gaza	1 422 460	5,1
Maputo (city)	1 120 867	4,0
TOTAL	27 909 798	100,0

Source: Population Census of 2017

From figure 2 one can infer that the Macuas are around 30% of the country's population, mostly concentrated in Zambézia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado -, but also very much scattered in several other provinces, particularly in Maputo.

In terms of religion, figure 3 reveals that today about 60% of the population are Christians (mostly Catholics), and less than 20% are Muslims.

This is a controversial result of the Census, as many defend (e.g. the Islamic Council of

Mozambique) that Muslims should be around 30% of the total population, as about half of the 20% who said they had "another" or "no religion", could be in fact Muslims, afraid or not eager to display their creed.

Although lacking a factual prove, this is not only a credible, but also a very much probable scenario.

Figure 3. Religious Characterisation of the Population

DECLARED RELIGION	%
Catholic	27,2 + (diminishing)
Zion	15,6 +
Evangelical	15,3 + (strong increase since 2007)
Anglican	1,7 +
Christian	= 59,8
Islam	18,9
No religion	13,9
Other & NK.	7,3

Source: Population Census of 2017

Let's now look at ethnicity and religion in Cabo Delgado, knowing that ethnical distribution can be extrapolated from the linguistics' one.

Starting with ethnicity and looking at figure 4, knowing that part of those who declared Portuguese as their first language are not Portuguese nationals and roughly distributing the percentage of the item "unknown" among

the existent ethnic groups, one may make some estimations.

The first one is that the Macua speakers are more than 70% of the Province inhabitants, making them the more important group in Cabo Delgado.

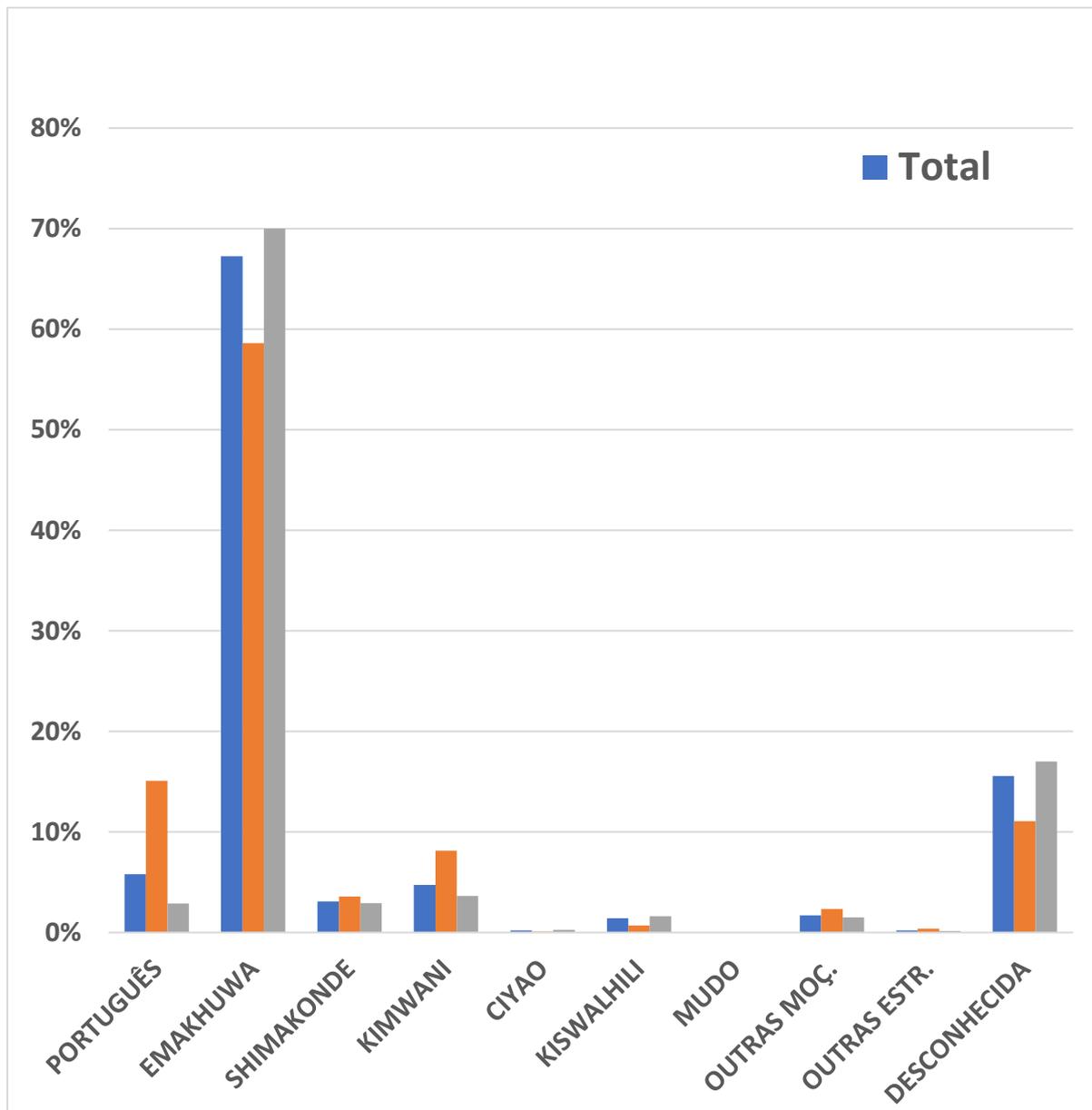
The second one is that the Muani and the Swahili speakers might reach more than 10%,

being mostly located in Mocímboa da Praia, Palma and a number of islands along the coast.

The third one is that the Maconde in Cabo Delgado, mostly living in the districts of

Mueda, Muidumbe and Nangade, would barely surpass 5% of the Province population, even though being heavily represented in leading governmental and business positions in that Province.

Figure 4: Spoken Languages in Cabo Delgado



Source: Population Census of 2017

The religious distribution revealed in the next figure reverses the country situation previously revealed in figure 3, as in Cabo Delgado, 60% of the population is made up of Muslims, with Christians (Catholics, including

most of the Maconde) reaching just over a third of the total.

Although the 2017 Population Census did not publish the distribution of religious creeds by

districts, this information can be extrapolated from the data of the previous Census - the percentages may have changed but not to revert the general situation revealed in the next figure.

As it is evident in this figure, from the point of view of religious composition, the war unfolds in areas populated mainly by Muslims, who have been the main victims of the action of the *mashababos*.

Figure 5: Religion by Districts in Cabo Delgado

	catolica	anglicana	islamica	ziona/ siao	evangelica/ pentecostal	sem religiao	outra	sem informação	
Pemba	23,3%	0,3%	72,0%	0,3%	0,8%	2,3%	0,5%	0,5%	100,0%
Ancuabe	35,7%	0,3%	60,3%	0,4%	0,8%	1,8%	0,2%	0,4%	100,0%
Balama	34,1%	0,2%	63,7%	0,1%	0,6%	0,7%	0,0%	0,4%	100,0%
Chiure	41,7%	0,8%	43,9%	1,0%	2,2%	9,4%	0,6%	0,5%	100,0%
Ibo	3,1%	0,2%	96,0%	0,0%	0,1%	0,3%	0,0%	0,3%	100,0%
Macomia	16,4%	0,2%	64,0%	0,1%	0,3%	18,4%	0,2%	0,4%	100,0%
Mecufi	2,8%	0,2%	94,6%	0,3%	0,5%	0,8%	0,2%	0,7%	100,0%
Meluco	6,6%	0,2%	91,0%	0,1%	0,1%	1,4%	0,0%	0,5%	100,0%
Mocimboa	27,5%	0,4%	56,1%	0,1%	0,9%	14,2%	0,3%	0,6%	100,0%
Montepuez	35,8%	0,3%	61,2%	0,2%	1,0%	0,9%	0,2%	0,4%	100,0%
Mueda	53,5%	0,4%	20,1%	0,1%	2,4%	22,6%	0,2%	0,6%	100,0%
Muidumbe	66,6%	0,2%	4,8%	0,3%	1,9%	25,1%	0,5%	0,6%	100,0%
Namuno	61,0%	0,3%	33,9%	0,1%	0,3%	4,0%	0,1%	0,4%	100,0%
Nangade	41,5%	0,4%	35,8%	0,2%	1,6%	19,7%	0,3%	0,5%	100,0%
Palma	16,8%	0,3%	80,9%	0,1%	0,4%	0,9%	0,2%	0,5%	100,0%
Pemba- metuge	16,9%	0,5%	77,2%	0,6%	1,9%	1,8%	0,4%	0,7%	100,0%
Quissanga	3,9%	0,1%	93,8%	0,1%	0,2%	1,2%	0,0%	0,7%	100,0%
Total	36,1%	0,4%	53,8%	0,3%	1,1%	7,6%	0,3%	0,5%	100,0%

Source: Population Census of 2017

Summing up, and as it can be seen in figure 6, the war is happening in districts with different ethnic groups.

The district of Mocímboa da Praia is mostly populated by Muani, the districts of Nangade and of Muidumbe are mostly populated by Maconde and Macua and the population of the districts of Macomia, of Quissanga and of Palma is mostly composed by Macua and Muani speakers.

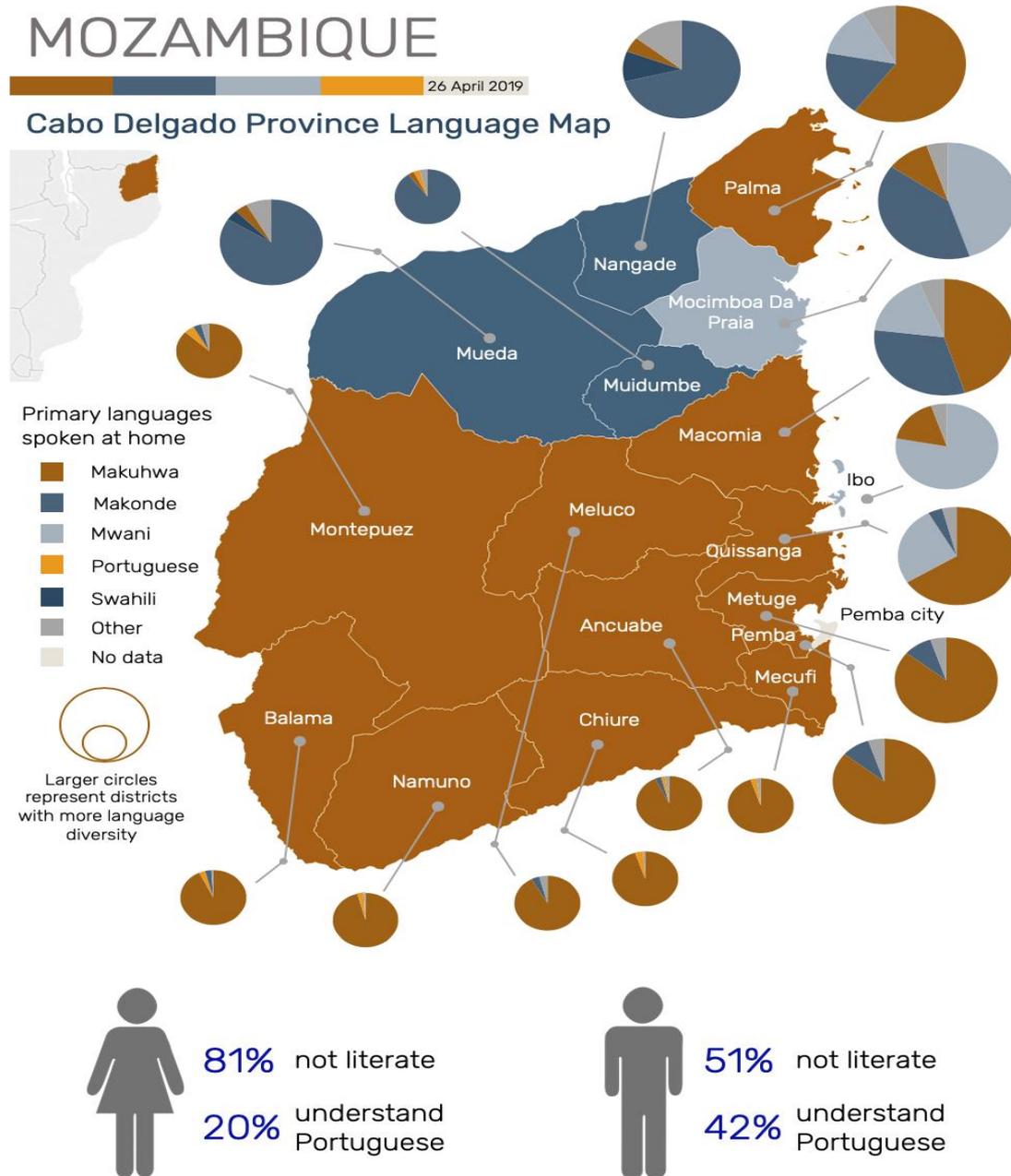
In other words, the *mashababos* do not look at ethnic or religious distinctions, which is one

more indicator that the war they are carrying out is of an ideological and civilisational nature, with the objective of forcing Macua, Maconde, Muani, Swahili, Portuguese or people speaking other languages, as well as Muslims, Catholics or people with other credo to obey the norms and precepts of life and behaviour which they profess or defend and - as it was already argued -, which are contrary to the existing culture and ways of life in the overall country.

In fact, the violent submission of women, the practice of slavery to non-Muslims or “apostates” and beheadings as a way of example or punishment are not part of

current Islamic or of any other religious practices – for sure not in Mozambique and in the lands of Cabo Delgado.

Figure 6: Language Distribution by Districts in Cabo Delgado



TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

data: Mozambique Ministry of State Administration, 2014 District Profiles
more information and maps: <https://bit.ly/2Wd2vBb>
questions: mozambique@translatorswithoutborders.org

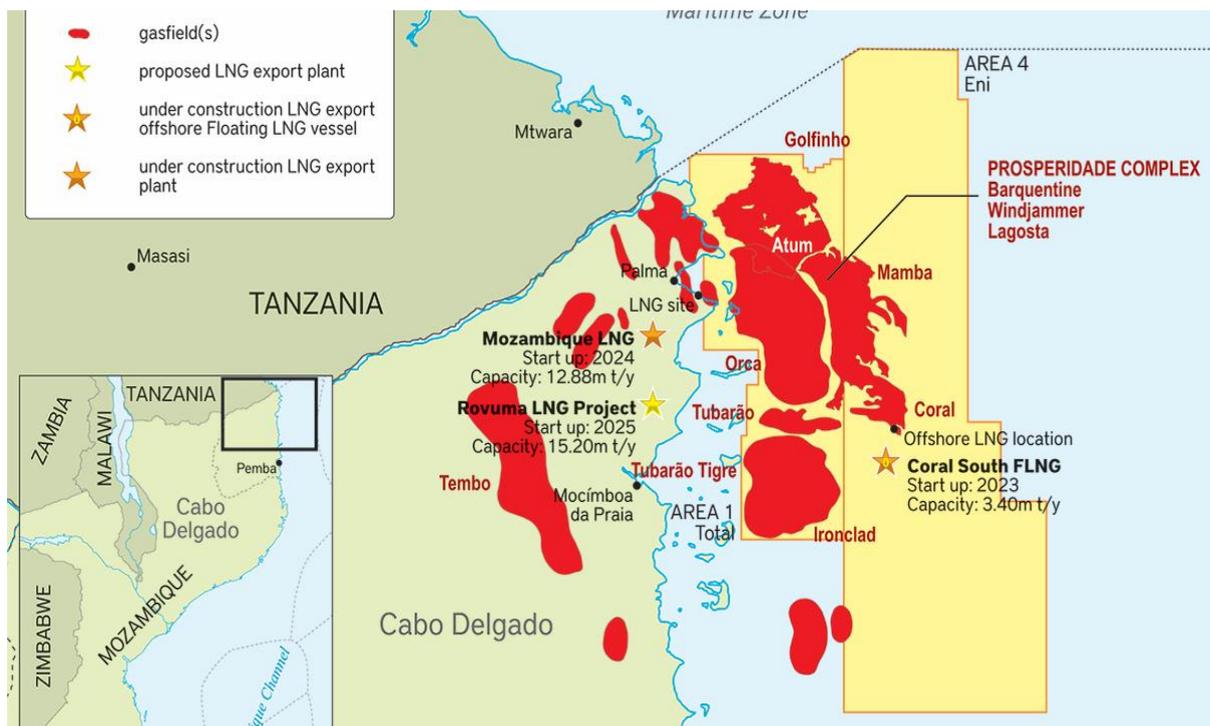
Source: Translators without Borders

4. ABOUT GAS, TRANSNATIONALS AND THEIR FLAG STATES

Figure 7 shows the location of the gas reserves and the three natural liquefied gas projects

(LNG). In fact, despite the discovery of gas preceding the outbreak of the war, the size of the reserves and the presence of a significant number of transnationals, some of them already involved in pre-exploration work, gives international visibility to the region and to the war.

Figure 7: The 3 Gas projects: Mozambique LNG; Rovuma LNG, Coral South FLNG



Source: banktrack.org

In addition to the Mozambican governmental Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos (ENH), there are nine transnational corporations involved in the concessions of Liquefied Natural Gas in Cabo Delgado.

The list, which is provided below, includes an indication of the governmental or private nature of the corporations as well as their respective flag states – meaning the jurisdiction under whose laws the company is registered or licensed:

TOTAL – France, state-led;

ONGC - Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (Oil India), India, state-led;

BPRL - a subsidiary of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, India, state-led;

BREM - a consortium between BPRL and ONGC, India, state-led;

PTTEP - PTT Exploration and Production, Thailand, state-led;

CNPC - China National Petroleum Corporation, China, state-led;

KOGAS - Korea Gas Corporation, South Korea, state-led;

Eni –Italy (controlled by the Government through a 30% golden share, the other 70% are private), in other words, state-led;

Exxon Mobil – USA, private;

Mitsui & Company, Japan, private;

Galp - Galp Energia, Portugal, (7.5% governmental, not golden, shares), private.

In Area 1, the Mozambique Liquefied Natural Gas project is led by TOTAL, with a share of 26.5%. TOTAL made its Final Investment Decision and committed US\$ 20B to the work in the Afungi peninsula, being accompanied by the following partners: the Japanese Mitsui & Company, with a share of 20%; the Chinese ONGC, with 10 %; the Mozambican ENH, with 15%; the Thai PTTEP, with 8.5%; The Indian Bharat Petroleum, with 10%; and the Indian Beas Rovuma Energy Company, with a share of 10%.

In Area 4, there are two projects, the Rovuma LNG, led by the US based ExxonMobil (FID postponed) and the Coral South Floating LNG, led by the Italian Eni (FID not declared, but work in progress).

In Area 4, 70% of the extraction and exploration rights belong to the Mozambique Rovuma Venture, which is composed by the following companies: ExxonMobil with 40%, plus Eni with other 40%, plus CNPC with the remaining 20%.

The other 30% extraction and exploration rights belong to the Portuguese flag company Galp with 10%, plus the South Korean KOGAS with 10%, plus the Mozambican ENH with the remaining 10%.

In summary, there are 9 transnationals, 6 of them state-led, 3 of them private, in addition to the non-transnational but state-led Mozambican ENH.

These 10 companies are based in 10 flag states (France, Italy, India, China, South Korea, Thailand, USA, Portugal, Japan, Mozambique).

However, notwithstanding the fact that gas discovery or exploration did not originate the violent conflict, it is related with it.

As a matter of fact, the operation of the companies is being affected by the war, in terms of working conditions, time schedules and even viability of at least the two land projects, as it became evident after the recent attack on Palma with the “temporary” suspension decided by TOTAL.

This is of strategic importance for the future of Mozambique, as the expectations of the Gas Eldorado are vanishing or, at least, moving away into the future.

The TOTAL Mozambique LNG project was initially supposed to produce around 13M tons per year, the Rovuma LNG project 15M tons and the Coral South project around 3M tons.

Now, the only project that seems to be on course is the Eni led one, which lowers the expectations to 10% of the expected production and rent.

5. THE MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL AND FOREIGN STRATEGIC PROTAGONISTS

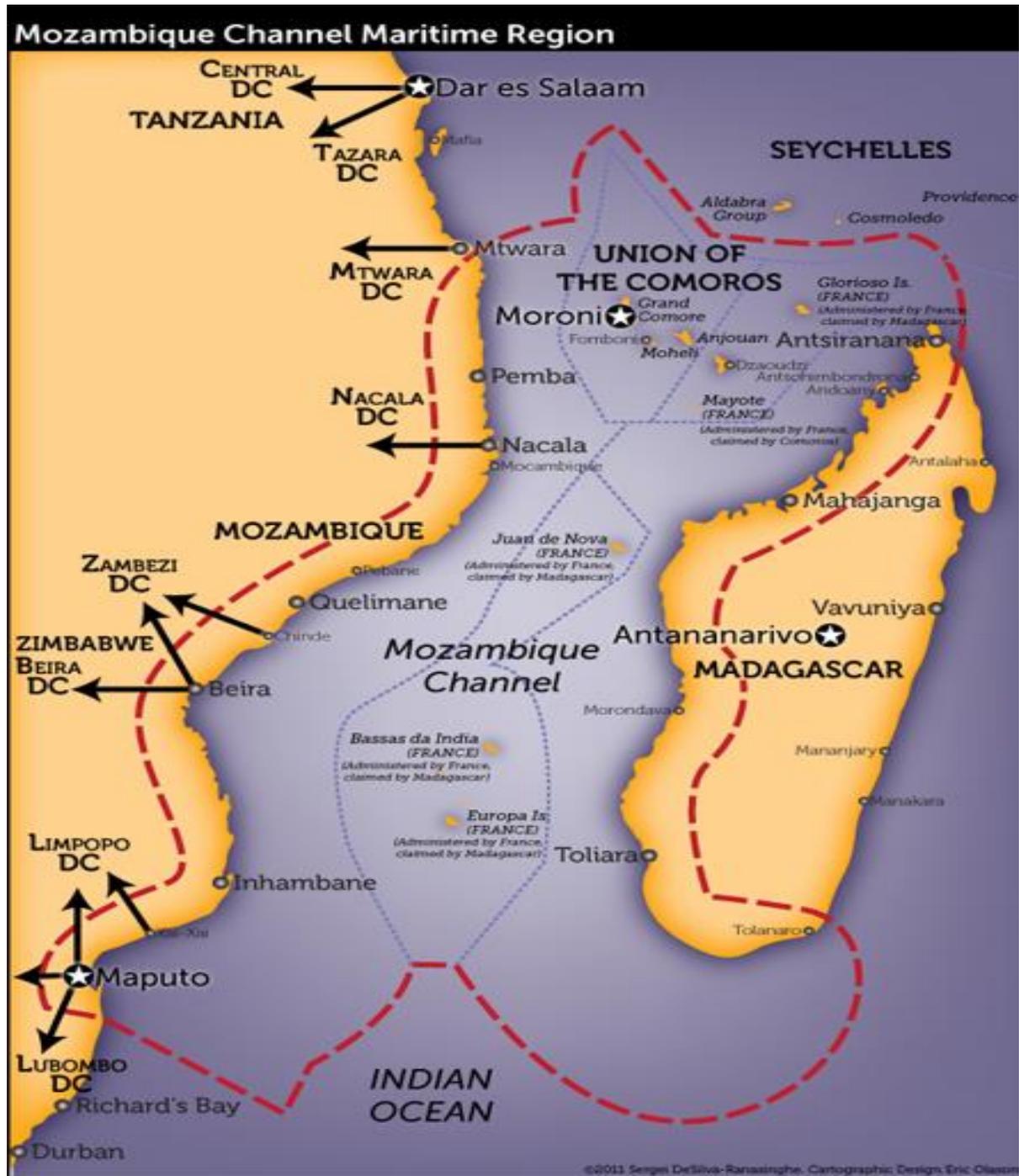
Cabo Delgado – as well as Niassa, the other northern Province of Mozambique – has just one land neighbour, Tanzania, and also borders east the Indian Ocean, as it can be seen in Figure 8.

From this regional location and along history, a relationship between the two countries (and namely between Cabo Delgado and the

Mtwara Region in Tanzania) was created, giving place to a long interchange of relations and with a share of common languages and traditions. This helps to better understand the play of interests, as well as possible alliances or external interventions.

Starting with the main countries involved or with the greatest potential for involvement in the war, either in its continuity or in supporting its resolution, it will be important to better characterise the links between Cabo Delgado (and Mozambique), the Indian Ocean and Tanzania.

Figure 8: The Channel of Mozambique and Borders



Source: cimsec.org

The map shows the channel of Mozambique and the presence of islands belonging to France (Europa, Bassas da Índia, João da Nova), in addition to the Precious (Glorious) and, more importantly, the Mayotte island, where the French have a military base, about 500 km from Pemba. As a result, France is the major global military power with the immediate capacity to intervene in the region, even though the concentration of the bulk of French foreign military capabilities in Djibouti (a strategic point at the entrance to the Red Sea) as well as in Sahelian and western Africa countries.

In addition to France, South Africa, a member of SADC, also has the means to intervene militarily at sea (and air) in the Cabo Delgado region. However, its government seems bound to intervene only to defend nationals or in the context of a multilateral operation – and even so, this possibility is not consensual in various South African political circles, who believe that President Cyril Ramaphosa should concentrate on solving domestic problems.

The USA and mainly Portugal, with whom Mozambique has maintained a cooperative relationship in the areas of defence and security since independence, are the other countries that can give logistical, advisory and training support to the Mozambican armed forces. It is likely that South Africa might join this effort, particularly after the attack on Palma, which involved South African terrorist fighters and also targeted nationals of that country.

On land, the major foreign player in the Cabo Delgado conundrum is Tanzania. The porosity of Mozambican maritime and land borders with this neighbour is ancestral, with regular flows of people and goods from one side of the border to the other – a situation that characterises the Indian Ocean African coast. However, these movements may also facilitate terrorist movements, reason why

the normalisation of relations between the two countries is essential. Their relationship has not been the best since the discovery of gas deposits in waters bordering the Indian Ocean.

Tanzania is suffering from the action of terrorist groups since 2012, with violent actions erupting from time to time. Security agencies (and this is for sure known by the Tanzanian security services) are also pointing to recruitment actions that are unfolding throughout the territory, mostly on the coast, from Kibiti to Mtwara – whose region has also been recently object of terrorist attacks. This is a *raison de force* for the Tanzanian government to strengthen military and security cooperation with Mozambique to effectively combat the terrorist groups operating in both countries.

6. SOME LINKS BETWEEN WAR, DRUG TRAFFIC AND SMUGGLING

In the literature and in the analyses that have been made to the Mozambican case, the connection between war and natural resources is recurrent. In addition to the gas issue, in order to better understand this aspect, it will be important to consider the exploitation of other natural resources as well as different types of illicit trafficking that are unfolding in parallel with the war.

The East African coast has, throughout history, been the subject of diverse trafficking networks that encompassed the coast of Mozambique until the Sofala area.

Likewise, informal cross-border trade between Cabo Delgado (and Niassa) and Tanzania is also quite old. To give an example, logging, transport and sale of firewood and timber as well as other kind of informal trade with Tanzania is an old business, which was

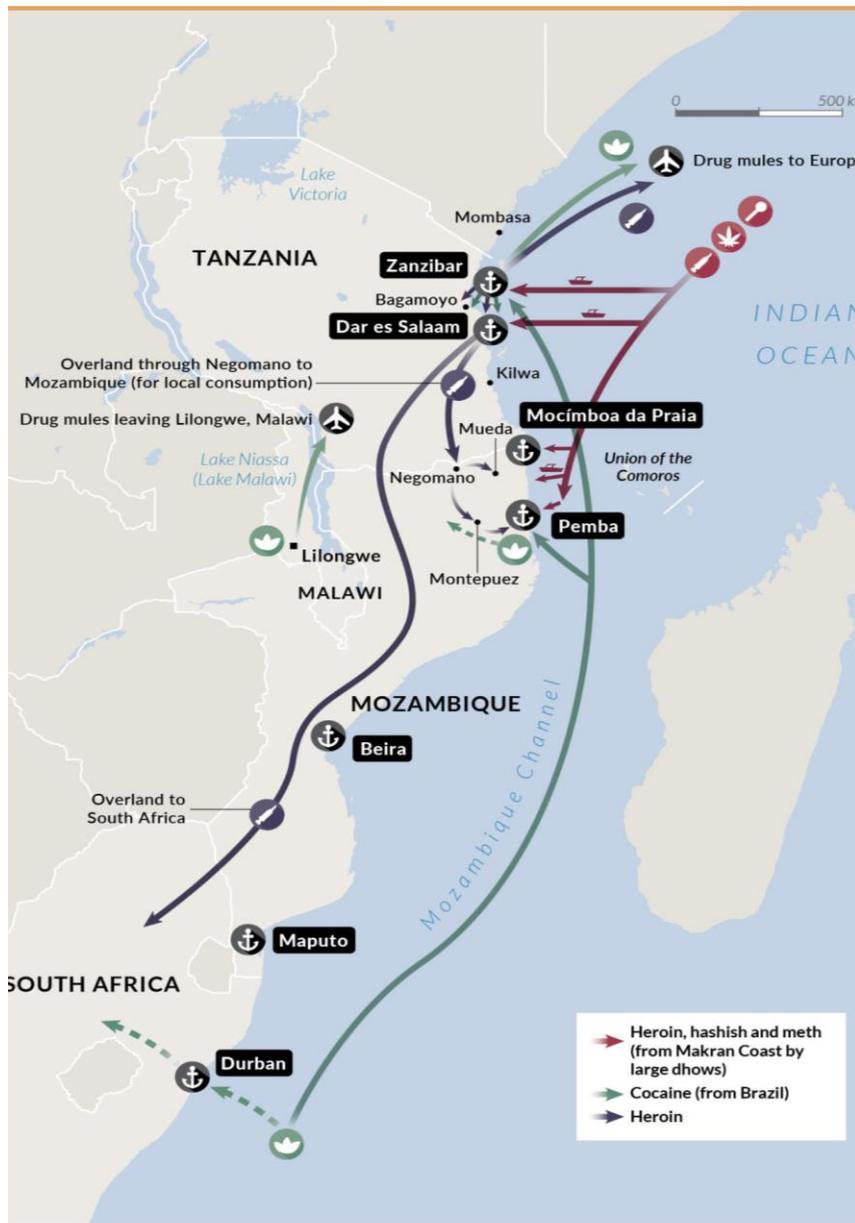
prior and apparently had nothing to do with the outbreak of the conflict.

More recently, with local complicity, new traffic flows have been created as it is the case of ivory and precious woods to Asia, mostly controlled by Chinese and Vietnamese mafias. The recent discovery and exploitation of rubies in Montepuez has also led to trafficking flows, apparently from unauthorised mining - recent apprehension of

illegal shipments of rubies in Brazil are an evidence of that.

Along the Mozambique channel and across Mozambican, Malawian and Tanzanian territory, heavy drug trafficking also pre-existed to the outbreak of the war in Cabo Delgado, with the involvement of international mafias and the complicity of local antennas - and “commission agents”. In the case of heroin (also opium) and cocaine, these routes appear in figure 9.

Figure 9. Routes of heroin and cocaine traffic



Source: dailymaverick.co.za

The trafficking represented on the map does not deal with local productions but with contraband networks that make the drugs pass through Mozambican territory. Heroin (also opium) trafficking begins in Afghanistan, via Baluchistan (in Pakistan) and descends in dhows along the Indian coast, passing through ports on the north coast of Mozambique then on to South Africa and Europe. Pemba (as well as Nacala and Palma) is appointed by agencies combating international crime as being a transit point for the product, involving estimated annual flows of 10 to 40 tons since 1995, leaving around \$US 100M / year in local hands (not only in the Cabo Delgado Province but also in other places, including in Maputo). Cocaine trafficking began in the past decade by air from Brazil to Durban and Maputo, then going overland to Pemba, Zanzibar and Dar-Es-Salam and then to Europe. It should also be mentioned the growing preponderance of the traffic of methamphetamines all along East Africa, according to the Interpol and police sources of Eastern Indian Ocean countries, mostly from Kenya.

The trafficking of lootable resources or drugs is not at the origin of the war in Cabo Delgado, even though it is argued that the rent coming from it has washed hands and enriched a number of merchants and members of the ruling elite – therefore contributing to the existence of mal-practices and bad government. However, the framework in which it is occurring has changed. Actually, its existence may either fuel or be harmed by the war, as reality unfolds, as demonstrated by the experience of other violent conflicts whose financing arises from the plunder of lootable goods. The prolongation of the war in Cabo Delgado can evolve into banditry financed by the plundering of resources and/or through direct involvement of traffickers or with the bandits

carging fees to the traffickers themselves, as is happening in other geographies.

The unfolding of this dynamics will depend not only on the evolution of the military situation but also on a change in governance – leading to a gradual satisfaction of expectations of the population of Cabo Delgado, to a fairer distribution of the rent arising from the exploration of natural resources, with a particular emphasis on gas.

7. ON THE CAUSES OF WAR

Given the data and arguments presented, having discussed the nature of the war, now is time to develop a little more its probable causes. Let's refer again some major diverse approaches. One, that attributes the war to a popular revolt against abuses of power and a lack of expectations to improve the lives of the population - in other words, a war against the government. Another approach argues that the war follows the outbreak of an Islamic jihadist revolt with Salafi overtones, led by radicalised Mozambicans in connection with Tanzanian followers of the same religious creed, that initiated violent actions in 2017 and later on, in 2019, already in collusion with DAESH, transformed it into a jihadist war. There is also a third interpretation, one that argues that wars are usually the consequence of economic interests and greed, which seeks to link the causes of war to the discovery of gas (pointing to the long history oil transnationals have on involving in domestic affairs), to the exploration of natural resources, rubies and precious woods, and to the flows of drug trafficking.

It is today very clear that poor or bad governance and underdevelopment were factors conducive to resentment against the government (and those perceived as their followers or agents) and that it can fuel the

recruitment of people, mostly youngsters, who feel they are being marginalised and have no better life expectations. This is happening – but not only in the Province of Cabo Delgado. The same could be and is said about the argument on the relevance of natural resources discovery and exploration. However, the outbreak of the war is, at least for now, less social and economic, and more ideological and civilisational, and this is confirmed by what the protagonists themselves affirm and practice.

It should also be borne in mind that what is happening in Cabo Delgado is similar to what is happening in other parts of Africa, especially since the end of the Libyan State and the defeat of the Arab Springs, that led to the emergence, in some cases an upsurge, of wars in the greater Sahel and in some sub-Saharan African countries, including in the eastern coast of the Indian Ocean and in central Africa. From a theological point of view, there is an approximation between these groups' practices and what Salafism preaches. However, the breaking point between these terrorist groups that reclaim being Salafi and governments (and clerics) that profess Salafism is in the practice of indiscriminate force and violence against the population of all creeds and ages.

In short, the war in Cabo Delgado aims to forcefully impose Salafi-inspired social (and religious) behaviours and has been carried out by radicalised Mozambicans, supported by Tanzanians since its inception. This revolt, which began against traditional, mostly Sufi Islam, in Mozambique, turned into a war against the State and the population which resists the norms defined by the terrorists. This transformation from conflict to war occurs in late 2019, with the movement already affiliated with DAESH, with greater involvement and participation of foreign fighters, Tanzanians, Ugandans, Kenyans,

Somalis, Sudanese and others (in the attack on Palma on March 24th there was also the presence of South Africans and “whites” – probably Arabs). Their operational tactics and weaponry also suggests military training and international support from interests linked to the Islamic State or interested in the destabilisation in the Province. Thus, what could be called initially as a revolt, turned from 2019 onwards into an ideological, civilisational and terrorist war against the state and the population, Muslim or Christian.

This characterisation does not eliminate the government's responsibility in relation to abuses of power, mal-practices in the distribution of land and resettlement of peasants, or the capture of mineral wealth, or its rent, by elites, as well as the behaviour of government authorities against independent journalists or the inaction (by some considered complicity) against some type of urban banditry – abductions, for example. But the war that is raging in Cabo Delgado is not against the government or bad governance, it is against the state and, particularly, against the secular state.

8. ROLE OF EXTERNAL ACTORS: WHY TANZANIA IS A MAJOR PLAYER

The evidence shows that the Mozambican state is not in a position to face the war with the forces and means that it currently has, even with, until recently, the support of the private security company Dick Advisory Group. Despite the proclaimed ability of the government to deal with the conflict with some support in terms of training and logistics, the attack on Palma showed the opposite.

However, truth be told, the experience of external involvement from multilateral forces or of France, the USA and regular armies from

allied countries has failed to stop the wars that are raging in Mali, northeastern Nigeria, Somalia, the Central African Republic or northeastern Congo. So far, the only successful military action has been given by the Kenyan army, which repressed in 2012 a similar upheaval - by the way, one of the consequences of this punctual “military victory” was that the ideas (and followers) of the Salafi cleric killed that year, Aboud Rogo Mohammed, are the same who operate in southeast Tanzania and in northeast Mozambique.

In more specific terms, no doubt that the essential part of the fight should be carried on and led by the armed and security forces of the Mozambican state. Just as it is the responsibility of the Mozambican government to stop harassing or ignoring media, civil society, political parties other than Frelimo and to assume that it should work to mobilise the Mozambican community as a whole, to support fellow citizens in Cabo Delgado and to neutralise the spread of terrorist cells to other areas of the territory - for the moment incipient and “dormant”. It is the responsibility of the Government as well to act with partners (SADC), mostly with neighbours (Tanzania) to cut connections between the *mashababos* and their fellows and mentors.

The Mozambican government will only gain from accepting (and asking for) international support in the military field. More specifically, in terms of advisers to military operations, of supplying of armaments and means of surveillance (and people to make them operational), of logistics and of training of specialised units in counterterrorism warfare. Support, on the ground, to Mozambican forces by foreign troops specialised in counterterrorist operations may happen, depending on the evolution of the situation – however tricky this issue may be, as the

country or countries (bilaterally or under, for example, a SADC flag) that could eventually offer those troops will have issues to being under Mozambican command. However, this is an issue that might be handled with proper negotiations, preserving the sovereignty of the Mozambican state (as well as the sovereignty of the states that would accept to send boots to the ground, as they have to respond upon their own national citizens), by creating a joint command and preventing actions against the will of the Mozambican legal authority. This seems to be the only way for Mozambique to cope with the war – which cannot be won with a still feeble army and it would also allow Mozambique to get rid of the dependence upon private military contractors.

Furthermore, the government should seek greater involvement and support from France, South Africa and the USA (among other countries) for aerial (including drones) and maritime surveillance on the Indian Ocean coast to stop supplies to the terrorists. It could also request from the EU (with the help of SADC countries) naval support through the extension until its coast of the operation Atalanta.

What is perhaps the single most important factor is the need for a sound cooperation between Mozambique and Tanzania. Partners of both countries and SADC should make strong diplomatic efforts, so that both countries could effectively control the movement of terrorists between borders – and fight the same enemy. Without such a move, to act only within Mozambican territory will not be enough to stop and win the war. This is not only crucial for Mozambique. It is also crucial for Tanzania because this country is also a target for these sectarian and violent groups, as facts on the ground and credible reports from analysts and specialised agencies state. As it was already

referred, there is recruitment alongside the eastern coast from Tanga to Mtwara, passing through Mazomora and Kibiti – and the security services of Tanzania know that. What is at stake is greater than quarrels or interests that might exist related to the exploration of gas.

To understand better why Tanzania is a crucial player to help end the war in Cabo Delgado, it should be interesting to have a look at the unfolding situation in that country, in what relates to gas (and fuel) projects.

Tanzania is, like Mozambique, in a process of taking advantage of LNG discoveries as well as of the planned construction of a crude oil pipeline (EACOP) from Lake Albert in Uganda to the Chongoleani peninsula in Tanzania.

This is a 1,443km, 3.5 Billion USD investment pipeline, going from Kabaale – Hoima in

Uganda to the Chongoleani peninsula near Tanga port in Tanzania. It is a very much controversial pipeline, for its supposed environmental impact, even though it will be built underground, because it will have to be subjected to an electrically heated process due to the crude oil density. As of now, TOTAL and CNOOC, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, have the crude oil exploitation rights in Uganda. EACOP is supposed to be constructed and operated through a shareholding from the state-led companies Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC), Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC), TOTAL and CNOOC. This project shows that alongside with Mozambique, Tanzania is a potential big party in the fossil fuels projects in East Africa. It shows also bounding relationship with Uganda as well as the relevance of TOTAL in both countries.

Figure 10: East Africa Crude Oil Export Pipeline (EACOP)



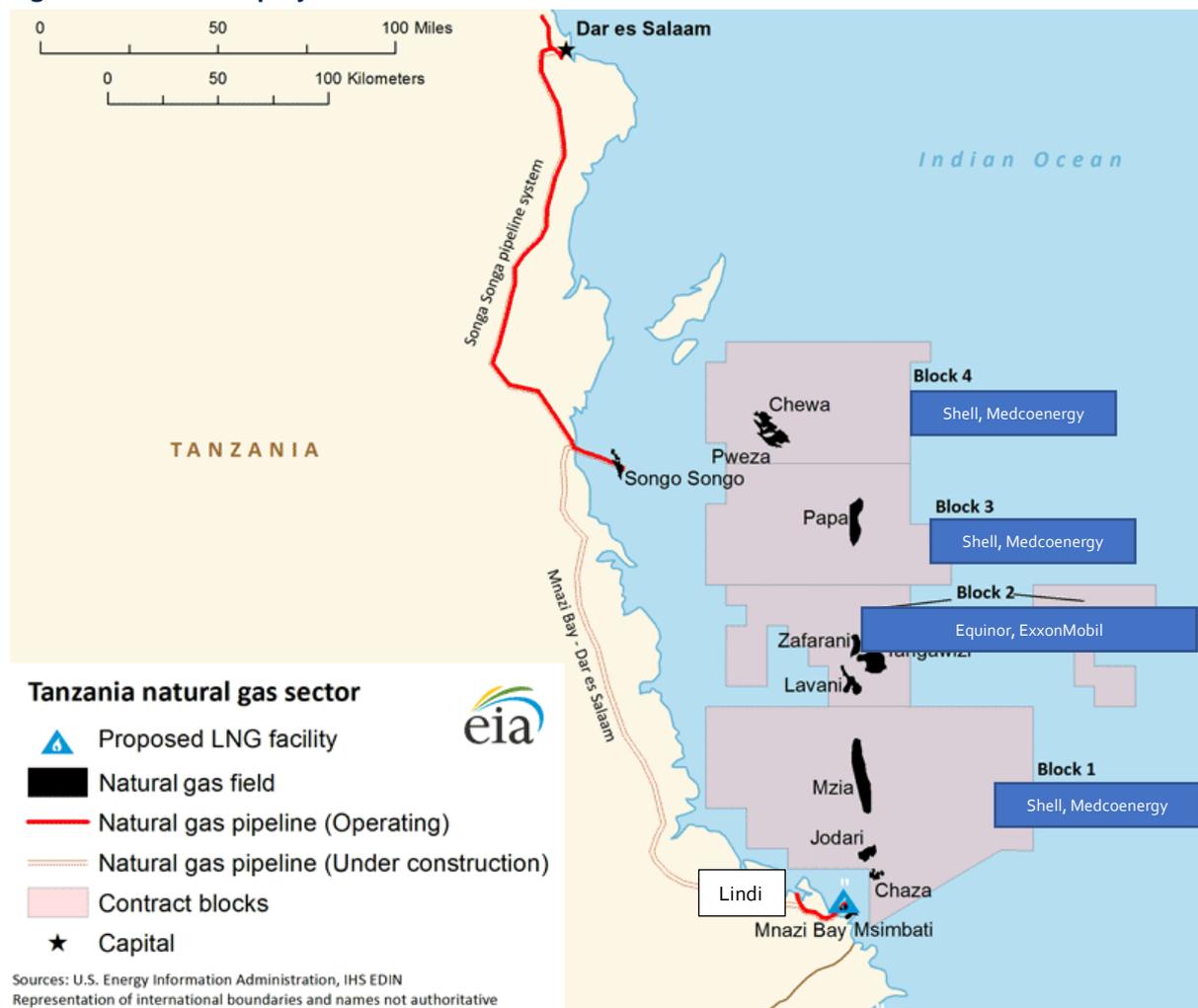
Source: <https://www.total.com/projects/oil-gas/tilenga-and-eacop-acting-transparently>

In the same week when the Prime-Ministers or Chiefs of State of the SADC double-troika met to discuss the war in Cabo Delgado, the new President of Tanzania (absent to that meeting) signed the EACOP agreement with Uganda and announced she was pushing for the accomplishment of the Lindi LNG project, nearby the border with Mozambique.

The Lindi project is a USD 30B investment to build an onshore LNG plant in the Lindi region. It is a shareholding among the state-led Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation and 5 foreign companies – Equinor (state-led Norwegian company)¹, Royal Dutch Shell (Anglo-Dutch multinational oil and gas company headquartered in The

Hague, Netherlands, and incorporated in the United Kingdom as a public limited company), Exxon Mobil, Ophir Energy (acquired by MedcoEnergi, a public Indonesian oil and gas company) and Pavilion Energy (owned by Temasek, a state-led Singaporean company). It is expected to start in 2022 and be concluded in 2028, with a capacity to produce 10 million ton per annum of liquefied natural gas. Like in Mozambique, it is interesting to note that most of these are state-led companies, meaning that governments, more than private companies, have strong roles to play. The location of the Lindi gas project, bordering the Mozambican LNG projects, may be seen in figure 11.

Figure 11: Lindi LNG project location



Source: www.tanzaniainvest.com/energy/lindi-gas-plant

¹ Interestingly Equinor (previously named Statoil) has decided in 29th January 2021 to write down the book value of its

Tanzania LNG project on the company's balance sheet by \$982 million

The Lindi project, due to its proximity to the Palma district, shows how much important is a good understanding between the two neighbours. As a matter of fact, some analysts argue that Tanzania is not interested in the accomplishment of the LNG projects in Mozambique which is one step away from assuming that the country is also not very committed in helping its southern neighbour to quickly solve the war situation. For now,

these are only suppositions, as Tanzania will have nothing to gain from a probable extension of the conflict inside its territory – even if some kind of unproved informal or tactic understanding between Tanzanian security forces and the terrorist sects operating in the region exists, it will not last, due to the ideological and civilizational nature of the conflict. But this is still a very opaque situation, to say the least.

Lisbon, May 20th, 2021

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Notes: this is an updated and enlarged piece adapted from the article published in Observador, on April 5th, 2021. By the time of publication of the original piece, the author decided to only cite documental sources, due to personal security concerns with researchers and practitioners living and working in Mozambique and Cabo Delgado. The same reasoning still applies.

ABOUT IMVF

IMVF is a Portuguese foundation for development and cooperation that started its activity as an NGDO more than 30 years ago. We promote human dignity, comprising equal rights, opportunities, and justice for all. We improve the welfare of the most vulnerable populations by fighting social exclusion. We contribute towards a more sustainable planet, having in mind the future generations' living conditions. We work in partnership to assure the best practices and to empower communities, public entities, and civil society. We comply with values and principles of solidarity, gender equality, sustainability, social justice, accuracy, and transparency.

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