AGENCY FOR PEACEBUILDING

KUJENGA AMANI program
building the peace together

CONFLICT ANALYSIS OF CABO DELGADO PROVINCE IN MOZAMBIQUE

Research report

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All the views expressed in this report are those of its authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CEFA or any of its partners.

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Cover photo description: Play conducted at a women-friendly space in Cabo Delgado (Credit: UNFPA, 2023).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS ____ 5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ____ 6
PROJECT BACKGROUND ____ 10
METHODOLOGY ____ 11
CONFLICT ANALYSIS: MOZAMBIQUE ____ 12
CABO DELGADO ____ 14
THE ROLE OF SWAHILI CULTURE IN CABO DELGADO ____ 27
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ____ 28

ABBREVIATIONS

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ADIN	Agency for Integrated Development in the North
AP	Agency for Peacebuilding
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama
CISLAMO	Islamic Council of Mozambique
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
IDP	Internally Displaced Person (or People)
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRDC	Plano de Reconstrução de Cabo Delgado (Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan)
PREDIN	Plano de Resiliência e Desenvolvimento do Norte (Resilience and Development Plan for the North)
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistence)
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Kujenga Amani: Building peace on the Swahili Coast" is a project funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by a consortium of civil society organisations (CSOs) led by CEFA Onlus. The project's vision is of an enhanced role for youth networks and grassroots organisations in mobilising young people living in selected coastal areas of Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania, so that they can become agents of positive change within their communities. The project adopts a community-led approach that recognises that grassroots efforts are crucial for supporting lasting peace and the importance of empowering individuals, families, and community members to be stakeholders in peacebuilding efforts. The overall objective of the project is to mobilise young women and men living in the target locations to act as peacebuilders and agents of positive change. The specific objective is for formal and informal youth networks and organisations to actively practise and disseminate learnings on building peace, preventing conflicts and promoting inclusion.

The conflict analysis was conducted to assess the conflict and peacebuilding dynamics in the districts of Ancuabe, Chiure and Mecufi, and the city of Pemba in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province[1]. Specifically, the analysis aimed to identify barriers and factors that hinder and undermine social cohesion, especially those affecting the rights and participation of young women and men, and the full and harmonious development of their personality. In addition, the analysis focused on identifying entry points and opportunities to promote peacebuilding in the province. Research activities included an extensive desk review, key informant interviews, and a quantitative survey with a total of 172 respondents.

Throughout the data collection and analysis, a set of meaningful peace and conflict issues emerged across project locations in Cabo Delgado.

Cabo Delgado is currently the epicentre of violent conflict in Mozambique. The province became the site of a brutal insurgency starting in 2017, and this has already claimed thousands of lives, left entire towns and villages in ruins, and produced more than one million internally displaced people (IDPs). The insurgency is being led by Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama (ASWJ) or, as it is more commonly known, Al-Shabaab (which means "the youth" in Arabic and is a group unrelated to Al-Shabaab in Somalia). Al-Shabaab has been responsible for the vast majority of these attacks. However, Mozambican military and police forces have also been charged with operations that have targeted civilians. This has fed a sense of frustration on the part of communities across the province, and the frustration—coupled with

[1] Chiure, Mecufi and Pemba are the locations to be targeted under the Kujenga Amani project. The analysis also covers Ancuabe, which is a location targeted by a different peacebuilding project, which is being implemented by a consortium led by the international NGO WeWorld. The two projects have similar scopes, and for this reason the consortia responsible for them are working closely together.

a history of perceived marginalisation by the central government—has driven support for the insurgents.

Overall, people in all locations confirm feeling deeply insecure. Asked if the number of violent incidents where they lived has increased in recent years, 88% of respondents of both genders said yes. The perception was particularly extreme in Ancuabe and Chiure, where 94% of respondents said yes. Additionally, a total of 66% of survey respondents said that they do not feel safe walking around in their neighbourhood or village, with a noteworthy difference between women (74% saying they do not feel secure) and men (57%). Here, too, the difference between project locations can be stark: 95% of respondents in Mecufi, 94% Chiure and 88% in Ancuabe indicated not feeling safe.

Sources of insecurity vary and reflect a fluid situation. Clearly, most insecurity is driven by confrontations between Al-Shabaab and Mozambican security forces. Military operations, initially concentrated in the Northern part of the province, have shifted further South and closer to the city of Pemba. This has altered the security outlook of districts, such as Ancuabe, which had remained relatively safe in the initial years of the insurgency. This said, the role of security incidents is not what most people talked about, probably on account of the risk often associated with discussing such sensitive issues. Instead, the survey data collected points to domestic violence and banditry as the most common types of violence mentioned by respondents. Additionally, several informants mentioned the growingly tense relationships between host communities and IDPs as a source of conflict.

Looking at connectors, music, drama, sports and games are important elements that can be used in the promotion of community dialogue. These activities are indeed capable of bringing people together, mainly thanks to their playful component, and they can also be frameworks that can be used to transfer important information as well as to raise awareness on specific topics. Informants were able to indicate several examples of cultural festivals that served as moments of gathering and celebration, and contributors to building social cohesion.

On the other side, unemployment and the competition that exists for livelihood opportunities are clearly the main dividers. Cabo Delgado is home to thousands of unemployed young people, who have few income options and often engage in criminality because of this. Furthermore, ethnicity can also be a divider, one intertwined with economic status. Regional inequality, particularly between the South and the North, has always been an important vector for determining political stability in Mozambique, including in Cabo Delgado. Ethnicity also has a dividing role in the context of conflicts between IPDs and host communities.

Community-state relations in Cabo Delgado, historically tense, have further deteriorated since the start of the violent conflict in 2017. The government's militarised approach to the recent conflict has not improved the situation. Local communities are generally frustrated with central authorities, who are perceived as having exploited local resources. In Ancuabe, for example, people complained that not only do international mining companies and national elites partner directly, thus excluding local communities from benefits, but that they are also ready to expropriate land by resorting to violent means. Local media report news of illegitimate land expropriation executed without prior consultation with affected communities. The survey confirms this view, and also brings up some challenges related to bias and, possibly, self-censorship. In particular, survey respondents show lack of trust on the one side, while also indicating the central responsibility of authorities in resolving conflict. This contradiction in the collected data should be investigated and provides grounds for further study.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are positively seen, but in a more limited capacity. For instance, 65% of survey respondents are convinced that it is the responsibility of CSOs to resolve conflict between communities or groups. All sources confirm the central role of CSOs in addressing the multi-faceted needs created by the conflict. They also highlight, however, various challenges faced by CSOs working in Mozambique, including the lack of resources.

In the province, many young people exist in a socio-economic status of "waithood" and are excluded from political voice and opportunities to earn an income, to have an education, for social mobility and self-improvement, and to have a voice in politics. The limited alternatives for unemployed youth leave them vulnerable to recruitment by insurgents. For instance, unemployed young men are frustrated because they cannot pay the bride wealth required for marriage, and consequently, cannot make the traditional transition to adulthood. Yet, youth in the province are far from being a monolithic bloc, and attention should therefore be paid to how conflict, displacement and other social forces affect each group. Young women, for instance, face considerably more challenges than their male peers to access opportunities to participate in society.

Lastly, working on Swahili culture as a basis for promoting social cohesion represents a conflict sensitivity risk in Cabo Delgado, where the emphasis on Swahili culture and language could contribute to ethno-religious tensions. Cabo Delgado is ethnically diverse, with major groups including the Makonde, Makua and Mwani, who are spread across the province. The Swahili culture and Kiswahili language are largely found in the Mwani ethnic group, which occupies the coastal areas of Cabo Delgado. In today's context, the Mwanis are often associated with the insurgents in the Northern districts of the province, while constituting most of the IDPs in the Southern part of Cabo Delgado.

Based on the findings from the conflict analysis, the following recommendations are made to guide peacebuilding efforts in Cabo Delgado:

- Exercise conflict-sensitivity and build trust with local communities. Given the perspectives that people in the province have of authorities and insurgents, it is natural to assume that local communities will be hesitant to trust external actors. Involving highly regarded civil society groups and leaders can be a way to increase community's trust. It is also of the utmost importance by context sensitive when using the term Swahili.
- Strengthen trust and enhancing dialogue between local communities and state representatives. The deficit in trust is a significant barrier to dialogue and peace. As such, the creation of a space for facilitated dialogue between citizens and state representatives is important, especially between youth and security forces.
- Establish links to livelihoods programming. Given the sources of tensions in the province, it would be important to ensure that peacebuilding efforts are clearly linked with initiatives that are working to improve employability and the income prospects of individuals living in target locations.
- Target women and girls specifically, including from marginalised groups. Sustaining peace in Cabo Delgado will require specific opportunities to be created for women and girls, who are affected by violence more than their male counterparts. Specific attention should be paid to engaging women IPDs and women who are trying to integrate back in their community following displacement or violence.
- Promote inclusivity across ethnic, religious and status. Activities will need to include representatives from all these groups, including IDPs, given the existing conflict among them and the risks of further escalation. Additionally, the project could create safe spaces for cultural exchange as a key connector.
- Engage with the government strategically. Government at local, provincial and national level remains important to young men and women in Cabo Delgado. For this reason, it is important to find the right entry points by assessing the needs of government representatives and by being ready to address potential gaps.
- Strengthen local capacities for conflict prevention and conflict mediation as well as for resilience to violent extremism. Train and enhance the capacities of youth and women as peacebuilders, and enhance the possibilities of conflict transformation through engaging local communities.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

"Kujenga Amani: Building peace on the Swahili Coast" is a project funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by a consortium of civil society organizations (CSOs) led by CEFA Onlus. The project's vision is of an enhanced role for youth networks and grassroots organizations in mobilizing young people living in selected coastal areas of Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania so that they can become agents of positive change within their communities. The project adopts a community-led approach that recognises that grassroots efforts are crucial for supporting lasting peace and the importance of empowering individuals, families, and community members to be stakeholders in peacebuilding efforts.

The action wants to support the creation of new opportunities for young women and men to engage in dialogue initiatives with community members and relevant decision-makers on security, conflict prevention and gender equality. In parallel, the action places a strong emphasis on identifying positive, peace-centred cultural traits of Swahili culture and on promoting these traits to prevent and minimize conflict dynamics and, eventually, revitalize traditional bonds of solidarity. Collaborative arts, cultural and sports activities will bring together different community members, artists and peace activists to reinvent and reimagine a contemporary culture that celebrates peace, gender equality and social cohesion.

The overall objective of the project is to mobilise young women and men living in target locations to act as peacebuilders and agents of positive change. The specific objective is for formal and informal youth networks and organizations to actively practice and disseminate learnings on building peace, preventing conflicts and promoting inclusion.

The project has four components:

- Developing knowledge and awareness for grassroot CSOs and youth to play an active role in building a more peaceful society;
- Strengthening capacities of youth to become agents of positive change within their communities;
- Practicing peacebuilding by creating new community-led opportunities of dialogues that contribute to peace; and
- Celebrating and advocating for peace, gender equality and social cohesion.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of the conflict analysis was to assess the conflict and peacebuilding dynamics in Cabo Delgado province, with a specific focus on the districts of Ancuabe, Chiure, Mecufi and Pemba. The analysis aimed to identify barriers and factors that hinder and undermine social cohesion, especially those affecting the rights and participation of young women and men, and the full and harmonious development of their personality. In addition, the analysis focused on identifying entry points and opportunities to promote peacebuilding in each location.

The methodology for the analysis was comparative and reliant on mixed-methods. The activity sought to adopt an empowerment approach, which aimed to give prominence to undervalued knowledge, including that held by marginalised groups. It was also designed with a focus on identifying dynamics at county and sub-county level. This approach was chosen to reflect the overall objective of the project, which is to promote change at local level, and also in recognition of the fact that this level of analysis tends often to be undervalued, or even missing, in similar analyses. The empowerment approach was only partially realised, however, and more could be done in future research efforts.

Research activities included an extensive desk review, key informant interviews, and a quantitative survey. The desk review included more than 20 documents including previous conflict analyses, research studies and reports, academic articles, official statistics, and grey literature produced by relevant actors, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research centres. Key informant interviews were held with key experts and stakeholders from local government agencies, civil society and local communities (including religious actors). Lastly, a survey was conducted in all districts, totalling 172 respondents, 96% of whom were under the age of 35 years old. Of all respondents, 20% were based in Ancuabe, 27% in Chiure, 24% in Mecufi and 29% in Pemba. The female respondents to the survey were 90 (52%), whereas the male respondents were 81 (47%). The survey captured information concerning many of the research questions identified for project indicators, and it allowed the disaggregation of data based on location, gender and employment status.

Several challenges were encountered during the research. The main limitation was seen in the survey data, which did not provide the expected level of nuance and detail that had been expected. This might be due to a number of reasons, including the appropriateness of the tool itself in a context such as Cabo Delgado's. The qualitative data made up in part for what the survey data lacked. Here, too, however, some limitations were encountered, and some stakeholders remain underrepresented. In general, the findings described in the report remain valid and useful. At the same time, future research activities should be designed with particular care to the challenges described later in the report.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS: MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique is not new to violent conflict. After its independence from Portugal in 1975, a brutal civil war was fought between the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) causing almost one million deaths and the displacement of five million people[2]. In 1992, an agreement between the two parties was reached, which brought peace to the country, and the opportunity for development. Long considered an example of successful peacebuilding, Mozambique has, however, been recently engulfed in a new cycle of civil strife.

Despite its natural resources, its potential for economic growth and the positive improvements occurred toward peace and democracy following the end of the civil war, Mozambique has today one of the world's lowest Human Development Index[3] and 60% of its population lives in poverty[4]. Violence has never fully abandoned the country, which has been continued to be plagued by an unequal distribution of power, corruption and competition over natural resource, and it has regularly flared up, in particular around elections[5].

Presently, violent conflict is concentrated in the country's North—in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and, to a lesser extent, of Nampula and Niassa—and it is linked to the emergence of the terrorist group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama (ASWJ), or Al-Shabaab. The response of the Mozambican government to this new threat has been based on a hard security approach disconnected from development and human rights objectives[6]. For instance, the country's current counter terrorism legislation, adopted in 2018, prosecutes anyone committing, planning, preparing, or participating in terrorist acts. Law enforcement agencies lack the training, equipment, and overall capacity to proactively detect, deter, or prevent acts of terrorism. The result is a response that has, so far, failed to address the root causes of the conflict and contributed to a rise in human rights violations and impunity.

Recently, the Mozambican government appears to have recognised the importance of moving beyond a fully militarised approach[7], taking political and institutional actions to address some of the main development and security issues affecting the North. In 2020, the government thus created the Agency for Integrated Development in the North (ADIN), with the mandate to work across departments to promote and coordinate the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty and promoting sustainable economic growth in Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula[8]. Other formal

[2] Institute for Peace and Security Studies, "Peace and Security Report: Mozambique Conflict", *Insight*, Vol. 1, 2020.
[3] Mozambique's Human Development Index value for 2021 was 0,446. This put the country in the low human development category, positioning it at 185 out of 191 countries and territories (source: UNDP, 2022).
[4] UNDP, "Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023: Briefing note for countries on the 2023 Multidimensional Poverty Index – Mozambique", 2023.
[5] Institute for Peace and Security Studies, "Peace and Security Report: Mozambique Conflict, Insight, Vol. 1, 2020, p. 11.
[6] Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, "Conflict in Cabo Delgado: From the Frying Pan into the Fire?", 2021, p.11
[7] Ibid., p.10.
[8] Accord, "Dialogue as a conflict transformation tool in Cabo Delgado", 2023.

measures specifically targeting the development of the region include the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan (*Plano de Reconstrução de Cabo Delgado*, or PRCD) and the Resilience and Development Plan for the North (*Plano de Resiliência e Desenvolvimento do Norte*, or PREDIN[9]).
The creation of ADIN represents an informal acknowledgement of the need for a holistic response to terrorist and insurgent violence, which includes community engagement in addition to hard security-centred efforts. For example, ADIN's mandate aims to support long-term development priorities and, in this way, address the long-standing grievances that are fuelling support for violent extremism[10]. ADIN also features a specific focus on the needs of young people.

An additional national policy relevant for peace and security efforts in the country is the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, the country's first, which was adopted in 2018. The NAP, which was developed in partnership with UN Women and the governments of Iceland and Norway, includes priority actions on women's participation in conflict management and resolution, assistance for displaced and refugee women, and the prevention of violence and sexual abuse. The NAP commits to maintain a gender perspective in all relevant actions and strategies and has a budget allocated[11] to support specific actions. However, the NAP was meant to last until 2022 and there are no indications about a follow-up plan.

When it comes to youth engagement on peace and security, the country does not have a NAP on Youth, Peace and Security. In 2021, however, the Mozambique Ministry of Defence signed a Memorandum of Understanding[12] with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to put the protection of children affected by armed conflict at the heart of the peace and security efforts in the country. And the newly created ADIN has a focus on youth, as already mentioned. This said, while some commitments have been made[13], in practice the strategies for youth participation and empowerment appear to be underdeveloped and weak.

[9] Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), "Response to Violent Extremism in Cabo Delgado from a Triple Nexus Perspective: Humanitarian, Development and Peace", 2022, p. 8.
[10] US Department of State-Country Reports on Terrorism 2020: Mozambique
[11] Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), "Operationalising the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Agenda in Mozambique", 2022.
[12] UNICEF, "Building A Children, Peace and Security Agenda in Mozambique", 2022.
[13] COMESA, Six-Point Shared Vision for Youth Agenda in Regional Peace and Security, July 2022

CABO DELGADO

Types of conflict and patterns of violence

Cabo Delgado is currently the epicentre of violent conflict in Mozambique. The province became the site of a brutal insurgency starting in 2017, and this has already claimed thousands of lives, left entire towns and villages in ruins, and produced more than one million internally displaced people (IDPs). The insurgency is being led by ASWJ or, as it is more commonly known, Al-Shabaab (which means "the youth" in Arabic and is a group unrelated to Al-Shabaab in Somalia). In October 2017, the group attacked the northern port town of Mocímboa da Praia, causing a first wave of widespread destruction, death and mass displacement. The conflict has now evolved into a full-scale civil war, which has been characterised by gross human rights violations against civilians and has caused significant damage to infrastructure, disrupted critical service delivery, and negatively impacted economic activity[14]. Since July 2021, Rwandan and southern African troops have also been deployed to the province, working with Mozambique's army to fight the insurgency.

Available data shows the magnitude of violence, as well as its distribution. The table below, for instance, shows recorded incidents of violence in Ancuabe, Chiure, Mecufi and Pemba over the last four years.

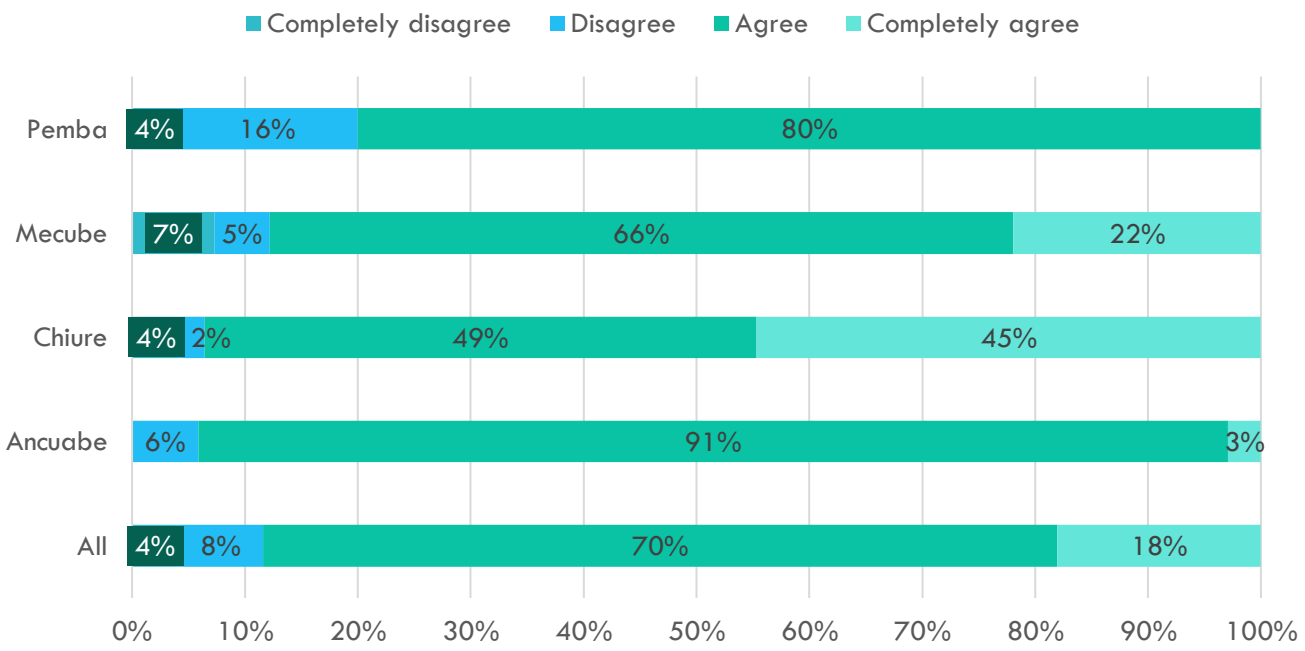
Table 1. Incidents of violence in target locations under the project[15]

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ancuabe	5	0	35	2
Chiure	0	1	17	0
Mecufi	0	0	3	0
Pemba	4	5	2	0

The table shows how the city of Pemba and the district of Mecufi have seen less violence compared to Ancuabe and Chiure. Here, too, however, levels of violence have not been steady, peaking in 2022 and dropping in 2023. The distribution of incidents mirrors the evolution of the conflict, with Al-Shabaab initially organising attacks mainly on the Northern parts of Cabo Delgado, and eventually moving down towards Pemba. This trend is well reflected in the data from the survey: 88% of all respondents agreed that the number of violent incidents where they lived has increased in the last years, including 94% of respondents in Ancuabe.

[14] Accord, Dialogue as a conflict transformation tool in Cabo Delgado, March 2023
[15] Data comes from the databased of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

Graph 1. People who say that violent incidents where they live have increased in recent years



Al-Shabaab has been responsible for the vast majority of these attacks—75% of all recorded incidents in Cabo Delgado from 2020 to 2023, to be exact. However, Mozambican military and police forces have also been charged with operations that have targeted civilians: a total of 19%, in Cabo Delgado, in the same time span. This has fed a sense of frustration on the part of communities across the province, whose trust in the state (and security forces) can be low[16].

Analysts agree that Al-Shabaab is able to recruit new soldiers from the province's population by exploiting this very sense of exclusion and frustration. Cabo Delgado is, in fact, a historically deprived and marginalised area, the poorest in the country and the one with the highest rate of youth unemployment[17]. This is in stark contrast with the natural wealth of the land, which has natural gas fields worth up to an estimated $150 billion, rich deposits of graphite, gold, and timber[18], and is also the world's largest ruby source. The concentration of natural resources has served to raise the expectations of people living in the province that they were due for greater prosperity, especially in the post-civil war period, and the exceptions grew still with the discovery of major gas deposits. To date, however, these expectations have been disappointed, with very few reported positive outcomes from the gas operations for local communities[19].

The continued exclusion and marginalisation of the province has allowed Al-Shabaab to effectively recruit disaffected youth and offer them a sense of purpose and belonging. This, in turn, has allowed

[16] See, for example: "Mozambique: The State Has Lost Trust and Remains Unaccountable", Corinna Jentzsch, *The Elephant*, 2022.
[17] Berkeley Political Review, "Mozambique's Resource Curse", 2019.
[18] Acaps, "Impact of the five-year conflict in Cabo Delgado", Thematic report, July 2023, p. 3.
[19] Ibid.

the group to gain capacities and even exercise control in some areas of the country[20]. Indeed, what is known about the angry young men who decide to join the extremist group is that they often do so out of resentment against the abuses perpetrated by security forces and the government monopoly over local resources. The majority of militants are known to be poor fishermen, small traders, former farmers and unemployed young men[21]. Their motivations for joining A-Shabaab are less shaped by ideology than by desire to assert power locally and to obtain material benefits[22]. Some of them are abducted and forced to sign up, or join lured in by recruiters either offering cash or promising future wealth. They stay loyal to the group so long as they are paid[23]. The group's religious militancy can also be looked at as an ethnic rebellion of primarily Mwani and Makua youth in a province with a Muslim majority against local Sufi religious leaders and an organisation, the Islamic Council of Mozambique (Cislamo), which they see as one of the Frelimo state's closest allies[24].

Al-Shabaab's insurgency and the Mozambican army's response have resulted in widespread destruction and the displacement of over one million IDPs. This has led to a humanitarian crisis, which is affecting all people living in the province. in 2022, for instance, at least 1.5 million people needed life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian assistance and protection in northern Mozambique due to the continued impact of the armed conflict and violence[25]. The humanitarian needs are straining relations between IDPs and host communities, the latter witnessing a drastic reduction of basic services and access to livelihoods, and therefore leading to new challenges to social cohesion.

The presence of IDPs in the province in general and in key target districts is significant. The data are summarised in the table below. What stands out is the number of IDPs in the city of Pemba, which, at nearly 138.000, represent an increase of the resident population of almost 70%.

Table 2. Number of IDPs in target locations under the project[26]

	2021	2022	2023
Ancuabe	58.448	82.496	44.551
Chiure	42.749	50.456	25.691
Mecufi	4.908	7.817	3.676
Pemba	150.712	138.566	137.726

[20] Ibid.
[21] International Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado", June 2021.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Generally speaking, Cabo Delgado is seen as home to three main ethnic groups: Makuas, Macondes and Mwanis. The Mwanis (who speak kimuani) are predominant along the coast North of Pemba, and are Muslim.
[25] OCHA, "Humanitarian Action, Analysis need and resources", 2022.
[26] Data comes from databases of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The overall outlook is a province where people feel deeply insecure. This is clear in the perception of violence shared by young women and men surveyed for the analysis. Asked if the number of violent incidents where they lived has increased in recent years, 88% of respondents of both genders said yes. The perception was particularly extreme in Ancuabe and Chiure, where 94% of respondents said yes. A total of 66% of survey respondents said that they do not feel safe walking around in their neighbourhood or village, with a noteworthy difference between women (74% saying they do not feel secure) and men (57%). Here, too, the difference between project locations can be stark: 95% of respondents in Mecufi, 94% Chiure and 88% in Ancuabe indicated not feeling safe.

Answers from IDPs specifically confirm this trend, but only in part. IDP respondents, for example, agree that violent incidents have been on the rise (86% of them agreed with that statement). However, they appear to have a different sense of security: 77% of them agreed that they felt safe walking around in their neighbourhood. It is not immediate or easy to understand these answers, especially considering that there are secondary sources indicating that IDPs face increased security risks for IDPs, in particular women and girls. This is an issue worth investigating further in future research efforts.

According to survey data collected, the most common types of violence mentioned by respondents are domestic violence and banditry. Domestic violence is mentioned by 58% of women and 73% of men, especially in Pemba (86%) and in Ancuabe (76%). Banditry is the most common type of violence for 63% of female respondents and 57% of male respondents and regional differences: 88% of respondents from Ancuabe indicated it as common, but only 20% in Pemba. In Pemba, instead, 58% of survey respondents considered terrorist incidents to be common.

The perception regarding the predominant types of violence resonates also in the words of interviewees who consider petty crimes such as theft of cattle, motorbikes, house robbery, land disputes and domestic violence as the most frequent violent incidents. It is, however, important to highlight the various labels that have been applied to the situation in Cabo Delgado, without consistency[27]. In 2017, for example, the Mozambican media referred to the violent conflict as an "Islamist uprising", while the government called it "banditry". Afterwards, the media referred to the violence as "Islamic fundamentalism" and "Islamist insurrection", whereas the government of Mozambique called it "insurgency" and only later began to call it "terrorism". This confusion is likely to have affected the data from the survey and it is possible that, in the minds of many respondents, the terms "terrorism" and "banditry" are similar if not the same.

[27] Institute for Security Studies (ISS), "Violent extremism in Mozambique-Drivers and links to transnational organised crime", Southern Africa Report 51, 2022, p. 7.

In the key informant interviews another conflict dynamic that clearly stands out is the growingly tense relationships between host communities and internally displaced people (IDP). Such conflict was reported by all interviewees and, as noted above, the displacement problem remains severe[28]. Despite the fact that some civilians are now returning to their homes, hundreds of thousands of people are still displaced in Cabo Delgado alone, with 65% of the IDPs living in host communities and 35% in close to a hundred displacement sites set up across the province. In June 2022, there were 869,603 IDPs in Cabo Delgado[29] - of whom, 55% were children and 24% women. Many of them were forced to flee multiple times and are still in dire need of support. Meanwhile also the people in host communities, in the face of increasingly stretched resources and services, are struggling. Their coping capacities have been exhausted following three years of opening their homes to people fleeing the violence in growing numbers[30]. In this context of extreme poverty, a critical issue that has emerged in Cabo Delgado is, therefore, the unequal distribution of aid between IDPs and host communities[31]. In fact, while addressing the urgent needs of IDPs, humanitarian support has tended to neglect the host communities, which were also in dire need of help creating in this way feelings of resentment and worsening existing tensions.

Lastly, gender-based violence represents an extremely worrying trend, with a shocking one-third of Mozambican women aged 15 to 49 years old having reportedly experienced physical violence. Furthermore, GBV in the country has been clearly linked to violent conflict: there have been widespread reports of Mozambican government soldiers raping and sexually assaulting women and girls, while hundreds of women and girls who were formerly held captive by insurgents are known to have suffered sexual abuses. Violence is also known to be very high among IDPs, which, as stated above, are a group overwhelmingly made up by women. Sexual exploitation and abuse of women in exchange for humanitarian aid has been reported, indicating what looks like opportunistic sexual violence by exploiting women who are already vulnerable and in dire need of assistance[32].

Connectors and dividers

According to the key interviewees, music, drama, sports and games are important elements that can be used in the promotion of community dialogue. These activities are indeed capable of bringing people together and thanks, mainly, to their playful component, and they can also be frameworks that can be used to transfer important information as well as to raise awareness on specific topics. In this regard, a local government representative in Chiure stressed the importance of arts as a way to mobilise people, adding, "Once you use culture to mobilise people then you can train them and

[28] International Crisis Group, "Winning Peace in Mozambique's Embattled North", Briefing N°178, 2022.
[29] Acaps, "Impact of the five-year conflict in Cabo Delgado", Thematic report, 2023, p. 1.
[30] OCHA, "Humanitarian Action, Analysis need and resources", 2022.
[31] Peaceful Change Initiative, "Why we need conflict sensitivity in Northern Mozambique", 2023.
[32] The Gender Security project, "CRSV: Cabo Delgado (Mozambique)", 2022.

disseminate information[33]". The same person pointed to the importance of festivals like the National Culture Festival[34], where groups from different parts of the district participate and singers perform. The festival is promoted by the Government, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Its main objectives are to preserve and develop the arts, culture and traditions of different Mozambican communities, and to create a platform for interaction and exchange and dissemination of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the country[35]. Such spaces for intercultural conviviality (both generational and inter-ethnic) aim to strengthen national unity and foundations for the preservation of the spirit of peace, harmony and stability. They can be opportunities to promote peacebuilding and social cohesion.

On the other side, unemployment and the competition that exists for livelihood opportunities are clearly the main dividers. Cabo Delgado is home to thousands of unemployed young people, who have few livelihood options and often engage in criminality because of this[36]. Furthermore, ethnicity can also be a divider, and one intertwined with economic status. Regional inequality, particularly between the South and the North, has always been an important vector for determining political stability in Mozambique[37]. So, even if grievances in Cabo Delgado[38] are mainly economic, ethnicity still matters given the history of the settlements in the province. Namely, some researchers point to the role of historical tensions, dated to the colonial era, between the Mwani and Makua communities, on one hand, and the Makonde community, in influencing current dynamics of conflict[39] . Nevertheless, they emphasise that these tensions are primarily socio- political rather than inherently tribal. A significant number of Mwani individuals, feeling marginalised due to the post-independence Makonde elites' dominance, have maintained sympathy towards RENAMO. Alongside a considerable Makua population, Mwani have emerged as a significant pool of recruits for the ongoing insurgency. This while the Makonde are blamed for having leadership position, more structural power and for their alleged nepotism and internal corruption in managing such power[40].

Ethnicity also has a dividing role in the context of conflicts between IPDs and host communities. With the humanitarian crisis and displacements resulting from violence, ethnic identities have been mobilised in the dispute over scarce resources. A local government representative argues, for example, that while at the beginning IDPs arriving in Chiure were well received, when humanitarian aid was given to IDPs to support them the relationship became much more tense:

[33] Interview with local government representative, Chiure, Mozambique, September 2023.
[34] Club of Mozambique, "Mozambique NGO questions allocation of land in Palma without hearing communities", 2022.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Deutsche Welle (DW), "Mozambique: The controversial Local Force to combat terrorism", 2023, p. 14.
[37] Ibid.
[38] "Accord, "Conflict and Resilience Monitor: An overview of the conflict in Cabo Delgado: narratives, causes and strategies on the way forward", 2021, p. 4.
[39] International Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado", 2021.
[40] Institute for Security Studies (ISS), "Violent extremism in Mozambique: Drivers and links to transnational organised crime", Southern Africa Report 51, 2022, p. 16.

> *"Once humanitarian aid arrived, it generated conflicts as a result of competition for aid kits and food. The main issue was that, initially, IDPs received food and host communities did not. Later, interventions began to consider giving 50% of goods to IDPs and the other 50% to host communities but even that, sometimes was not sufficient because the number of IDPs was not proportional to the residents in host communities[41]".*

Many other stakeholders interviewed agree that the violence now is, many times, a protest against socio-economic asymmetries and inequalities between IDPs and host community members[42]. In a context where socio-economic vulnerability and violence are intertwined, it is indeed challenging and potentially harmful to try and integrate IDPs in already deprived areas, and for this reason conflict sensitivity in managing humanitarian aid and development initiatives is of the utmost importance.

CONNECTORS	DIVIDERS
Music	Poverty and unemployment
Drama	Regional inequalities (North vs. South)
Sports	Ethnicity
Games	Aid recipient status (IDPs vs. host communities)
Festivals	

Stakeholder mapping and engagement

A stakeholder mapping exercise was conducted as part of the conflict analysis to identify the main actors currently playing a role in conflict and peace dynamics in Cabo Delgado. This section provides a description of each of the main groups identified, including additional information, where this could be found, on the attitudes and practices.

Government authorities

Community-state relations in Cabo Delgado have deteriorated since the start of the violent conflict in 2017. In Cabo Delgado, one can differentiate between security forces (law enforcement and the military), national government agencies and representatives, local (i.e., district and provincial) government agencies and representatives and, lastly, local militias.

[41] KII with local government representative, Chiure, Mozambique, September 2023.

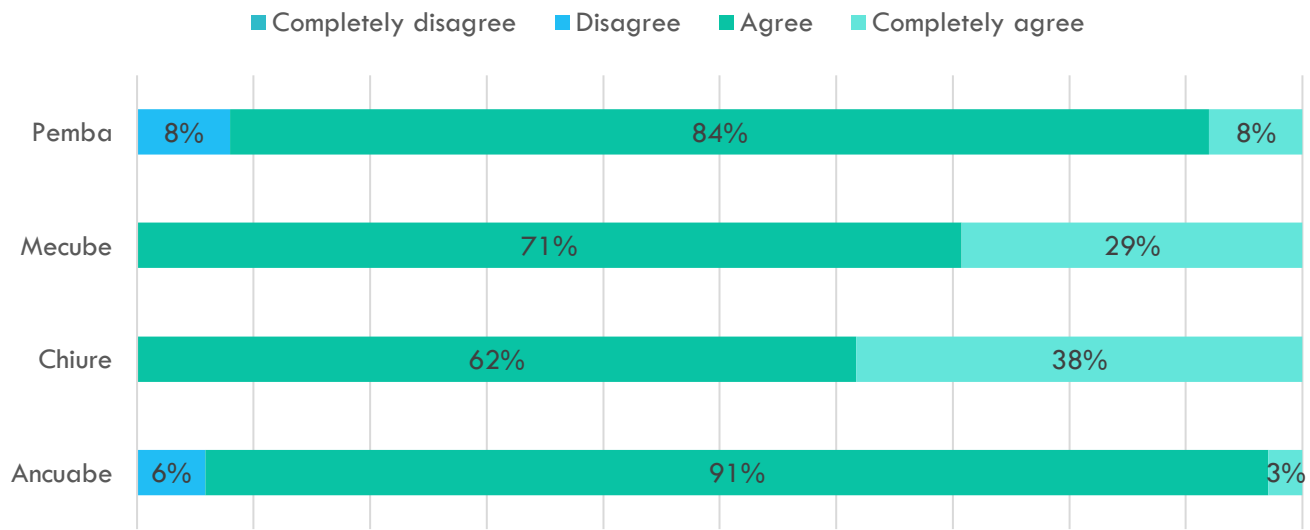
[42] International Crisis Group, Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado, June 2021

Relations between communities and security forces have been historically tense, and the government's militarised approach to the recent conflict has not improved the situation. Local communities are generally frustrated with the central authorities, who are perceived as having exploited local resources. For example, an interviewee from Ancuabe highlights that not only do international mining companies and national elites partner directly, thus excluding local communities from benefits, but that they are also ready to expropriate land by resorting to violent means[43]. Local media report news of illegitimate land expropriation executed without prior consultation with affected communities[44].

The survey confirms this view, and also brings up some challenges related to bias and, possibly, self-censorship. To begin with, 100% of respondents surveyed believe that it is the responsibility of the government to resolve conflict between communities or groups. This view is often shared by key interviewees, who are convinced that national authorities have to play a crucial role in responding to conflicts.

Answers differ when asked about specific efforts or attitudes on the side of local authorities. For example, asked whether local authorities are doing enough to improve the situation and well-being of young people, 74% of respondents agreed overall, and 25% disagreed. The rate of those who disagreed is highest in Ancuabe (38%), followed by Chiure and Mecufi (34%). In Pemba, it is zero percent. The answers, however, are not wholly positive: in fact, most respondents answered "somewhat agree" (64% overall), and only 15% of them chose "completely agree". In Pemba this number is 6%, with 94% of respondents from that location answering "somewhat agree".

Graph 2. People who say that local authorities are responsive to the challenges faced by youth



[43] Interview with key stakeholder, Ancuabe, September 2023.
[44] Club of Mozambique, "Mozambique NGO questions allocation of land in Palma without hearing communities", 2022.

So, while the data might lead to an apparent contradiction - with central authorities being perceived as both corrupted and uninterested in the development of Cabo Delgado, but still responsible for resolving conflicts - the distribution of answers could be indicative of self-censorship on the part of respondents, which would be entirely justifiable given people's security and safety concerns.

At the same time, the fact remains that key interviewees stressed that local authorities play a crucial role in the mobilisation for community dialogues and the settlement of everyday conflicts, especially at the neighbourhood and village levels. This is ascribed to the fact that people perceive local authorities to be closer to them. "Communities trust local authorities, they live with them", argued a key stakeholder interviewed as part of the analysis, "and local authorities know the people and the issues in their communities[45]". Local authorities also fulfil an important function in disseminating peace messages. This said, according to several key interviewees, key information related to peace and conflict are mostly broadcasted by the local media in a context in which community radios are the main channels to get such information. And at the moment, it appears that local government in Cabo Delgado are using community radios to spread messages supporting social cohesion, peace and tolerance[46]. At the same time, local authorities are also often perceived as corrupt, especially when it comes to the distribution of services and goods, and these perceptions have been negatively affecting the trust that communities have for them.

The same dynamics identified in the answers to questions about the role of authorities can be seen in relation to the perceptions that people have of security agencies. According to the survey, people's views are positive: 89% of survey respondents (88% of women and 90% of men) agreed that security agencies are accountable, responsive, and respectful of human rights, and in particular of the rights of youth. Yet, analysts and researchers focusing on human rights have also shown how, in order to contrast the attacks by extremist groups, security forces across the country continue to use force and arbitrary detentions. This, again, is an apparent contradiction, with only respondents in Mecufi showing a divergence of options (with 73% agreeing that security agencies are accountable, and 27% disagreeing), which can perhaps be explained by the political culture and, again, by respondents self-censoring their answers.

This notwithstanding, there are some indications of positive engagement by local authorities on issues related to peace and security. An interviewee from the local government mentioned, for example, the positive effect of neighbourhood secretaries and community policing initiatives, which have managed, in his view, to improve the security and to reduce petty crimes. Initiatives such as this one, which are

[45] Interview with local government representative, Chiure, September 2023.
[46] Interview with various stakeholders, Cabo Delgado, 2023.

emerging in the province, should be studied and assessed, to better understand whether they are influencing social cohesion.

Lastly, to address the rising violence, the Mozambican government has decided to enlist local militias. These were mentioned by several of the people interviewed, sometimes as a positive development, in the sense that militias are seen as contributors to security. However, the fact that most of its members are from the Makonde ethnic group, linked with the ruling elite and predominantly composed of Christians, has also raised concern for the potential that they actually fuel the conflict along ethnic lines[47]. Civil society also raised their concerns for this governmental decision to arm such groups: they debate about the risk of arbitrary human rights violations and questions whether these armed individuals will serve the State's interest or will be mostly loyal to the FRELIMO party[48].

Civil society organisations

Various local and international CSOs are currently implementing interventions in Cabo Delgado to promote peacebuilding. Such interventions, which also focus on tackling recruitment and radicalization into violent extremism, are increasing. Many of the stakeholders interviewed for the analysis have recognised a positive role for these organisations, albeit one that is linked to (and often limited by) capacity and resources.

International NGOs often work as grant-makers for smaller local organisations and can play a complementary role to the state for the provision of social services directly supporting local communities. They are considered important when it comes to mobilising communities and raising awareness about social issues. Civil society initiatives provide educational and vocational training to at-risk youth, foster interreligious dialogue and social cohesion, and try to facilitate trust building between communities and local governments. All stakeholders, including the government, security sector, civil society, and religious community, acknowledge that sustainable peace in Cabo Delgado requires more than military interventions. Despite this recognition, there has been no dialogue process to date that brings together the government, insurgent groups, and other crucial stakeholders[49].

A very particular and important role is that of the Catholic Church—in Mozambique generally and in Cabo Delgado specifically. The Church was instrumental in mediating the Mozambican peace processes that led to the end of the civil war in 1992. This effort represented the culmination of different actors working within the Church, at grassroots level and also at the international level,

[47] Acaps, "Impact of the five-year conflict in Cabo Delgado", Thematic report, 2023, p. 4.
[48] Institute for Security Studies (ISS), "Violent extremism in Mozambique: Drivers and links to transnational organised crime", Southern Africa Report 51, 2022.
[49] Accord, "Dialogue as a conflict transformation tool in Cabo Delgado", 2023.

through the Community of Sant'Egidio[50]. There continues to be, today, a lot of trust in the Church, which, indeed, also continues to be involved in conflict resolution efforts at national and local levels. There are some indications that Muslim authorities also contribute to social cohesion and peacebuilding, but research on their specific role and efforts remains scant.

Going back to CSOs, these are positively seen, but in a more limited capacity. For instance, a total of 65% of survey respondents are convinced that it is the responsibility of CSOs to resolve conflict between communities or groups. Interestingly all of the Pemba respondents are convinced of this, whereas in other locations the percentage is closer to half (47% in Chiure, 50% in Ancuabe, and 54% in Mecufi).

There are, however, a number of challenges faced by CSOs working in Mozambique. They can lack capacity or resources, for example, and, more generally, they work in an environment that, because of the securitised approach of the government, can hinder the services that they provide to communities. A new draft legislation, introduced in September 2022, might further limit civil society's operating space. The law aim, in fact, to impose a number of new regulations on CSOs[51], including provisions requiring organisations to submit activity reports and allowing for the arbitrary dissolution of non-profit organisations. Mozambican civil society has criticised the proposed legislation as overbroad and excessive, saying it represents an attempt by the government to suppress dissent and silence human rights defenders.

Lastly, Mozambican authorities have adopted a careful stance also towards humanitarian aid. Although there is no formal policy to obstruct assistance, humanitarian organisations have consistently observed a deliberate slowdown in operations, such as the delayed issuance of workers' visas. Some stakeholders argue that this intervention is driven by the ongoing apprehension within national intelligence services, who are concerned that militants could infiltrate humanitarian operations in IDP camps to secure sustenance or that humanitarian workers might engage in negotiations with militants, who could demand payments or divert humanitarian aid[52]. Others see another attempt to restrict the work of CSOs on account of security.

Youth

In Cabo Delgado youth, both from IDP and host communities are facing a dire lack of economic opportunities. Due to the historical marginalisation, the consequences of insurgency and the impact of natural disasters, young people living in Cabo Delgado suffer from social exclusion, unemployment,

[50] Institute for Peace and Security Studies, "Peace and Security Report: Mozambique Conflict", Insight, Vol. 1, 2020, p. 8.
[51] Freedom House, "Country profile: Mozambique", 2023.
[52] International Crisis Group, "Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado", 2021.

poverty and fears about their future. Many of the approximately 400,000 youth in Cabo Delgado have few economic options and, as already discussed, can become easy targets for manipulation and recruitment by extremists, criminal networks or other actors negatively impacting social cohesion and security in the province [53].

Many young people exist in a socioeconomic status of "waithood" and are excluded from political voice and opportunities to earn an income, to have an education, for social mobility and self-improvement, and to have a voice in politics. The limited alternatives for unemployed youth leave them vulnerable to recruitment by insurgents. For instance, unemployed young men are frustrated because they cannot pay the bride wealth required for marriage, and consequently, cannot make the traditional transition to adulthood[54]. This is a dangerous recipe that makes the youth more amenable to using violence to achieve their ends – and this underlines the relevance of targeting the youth and including them in programmes and activities that aim to foster social cohesion[55].

Youth in the province are far from being a monolithic bloc, and attention should therefore be paid to how conflict, displacement and other social forces affect each group. Young women, for instance, face considerably more challenges than their male peers to access opportunities to participate in society. Indeed, in one relevant report, three important challenges are identified as defining a trajectory of vulnerability specific to girls and women: the first is their inability to attend, which could be due to various reasons, including social customs like early marriage; the second is sexual harassment and abuse, which can be common also in schools; and lastly, their lack of financial autonomy, which determines their lack of power vis-a-vis their families or interested partners.[56]

Yet another challenge to understanding the multi-faceted and diverse nature of youth needs can be seen in the survey. Namely, the survey data suggests that a challenge does not, actually, exist: 90% of respondents believe that women have the same opportunities to participate in society as men have, with no difference between female and male respondents. Yet, research has shown that women in Mozambique have lower access to education, skills development opportunities and employment than men, and gender-based violence remains extremely worrying. The specific conditions of women IDPs and of women and girls who were formerly held captive by insurgents and suffered sexual abuses should also be considered. Theirs is a situation of double vulnerability, seen as they would face the stigma of the victims of violence and also of displacement.

[53] USAID, "Youth-Led Action for Peace", 2021.
[54] Berkeley Political Review, "Mozambique's Resource Curse", 2019.
[55] Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), "Operationalising the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Agenda in Mozambique", 2022, p. 14.
[56] USAID, "Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment", 2020, p. 45.

All of this information and data points to an unequal treatment of women, which is at odds with the findings from the survey. It is an issue that should be investigated further, in order to truly understand how women can be effectively and positively engaged in peace and security, and how they can be empowered also beyond those issues. Ultimately, it may likely be that the answers from the survey reflect prevailing cultural norms more than individual attitudes. This could be confirmed by the answer to the question of whether the media devotes enough attention to the priorities and concerns of young women: 83% of respondents of both genders agree, which is a high percentage, but lower than the 90% of respondents who believe that women have the same opportunities to participate in society as men. Notably, the percentage in Pemba is even lower (64%). This suggests that different perspectives exist--one more reason to investigate the issue further.

Reflecting instead on the extent to which young people feel that the media devote enough space and attention to their priorities and concerns, 92% of respondents agree that the space and attention are enough with a small discrepancy between women (89%) and men (96%). Concerning the quality of portrayal, 96% of both male and female respondents agree that the media (TV, radio or print) portray young people in a positive light. This is, again, a very high score, especially in Chiure where 100% of respondents agreed, and it suggests that the media can play an important role in expressing the needs of youth.

Also noteworthy is the fact that very few young men and women know about UNSCR 2250: 6% overall, with the highest positive rate in Ancuabe (21%) and the lowest (0%) in Chiure and Mecufi. This aligns with the general lack of awareness about national or local policies, as this has been recounted through interviews, which in turn might be due to the fact that many of these policies, and ADIN itself, have only recently been adopted or created.

THE ROLE OF SWAHILI CULTURE IN CABO DELGADO

Working on Swahili culture as a basis for promoting social cohesion represents a conflict sensitivity risk in Cabo Delgado, where the emphasis on Swahili identity could contribute to ethno-religious tensions. Cabo Delgado is ethnically diverse, with major groups including the Makonde, Makua and Mwani, who are spread across the province[57]. The Swahili culture and Kiswahili language in Cabo Delgado are largely found in the Mwani ethnic group, which occupies the coastal areas of Cabo Delgado. The Mwani have had strong socio-economic ties with Tanzania, crossing the border regularly for commerce and to access services such as hospitals. Nevertheless, the Mwanis are a minority group in Cabo Delgado. The largest ethnic groups in Cabo Delgado are the Makua and the Makonde. While Cabo Delgado is largely composed of Muslims of all ethnicities, especially along the coast, the inland areas are Christian. Historical tensions between the Makonde and the Mwani stem from political differences and socio-economic tensions. While the Mwanis are Muslim and tend to support the opposition party, RENAMO, the Makondes are predominantly Christian and support the ruling party, FRELIMO.

In this context, Swahili culture and the Mwani ethnic group are often associated with the insurgents in the Northern districts of the province, while the Mwani constitutes most of the IDPs in the Southern part of Cabo Delgado. Given the perceived association of Kiswahili and Swahili 'culture' with the insurgent movement, any promotion of Swahili culture (including 'peace culture') can appear as siding with the insurgent movement or the Mwani ethnic group over the other ethnic groups in the region.

Besides that, and turning to the survey data, Swahili Culture defines their way of life for 81% of respondents of both genders. There is, however, an interesting difference to be noted among locations, with most scoring higher (Ancuabe 100%, Pemba, 90% and Chiure 83%), and only Mecufi scoring 54%. Religion plays a more important role than Swahili culture, according to survey data: it is considered to define community life for 89% of women and men respondents, and once again Mecufi scores less than other locations (76%).

Lastly, 94% of survey respondents believe that Swahili culture supports gender equality (92% of women and 96% of men) and only 29% believe that it favours men over women, with the only exception being Chiure, where 64% of people believe so. In line with this, respondents show strong support for religious figures' role, with 62% of survey respondents believing that religious, traditional leaders and elders have the responsibility to resolve conflict between communities or groups. The figure is highest in Pemba, where 90% believe religious figures are the key actors and 100% believe it's the responsibility of traditional leaders or elders.

[57] Feijó J., "Social Asymmetries Clues to Understand the Spread of Islamist Jihadism in Cabo Delgado", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2020.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and patterns described above, the following recommendations are offered in order to guide the implementation of activities under the Kujenga Amani project, and also beyond it:

1. **Exercise conflict-sensitivity and build trust with local communities.** Given the perspectives that people in the province have of authorities and insurgents, it is natural to assume that local communities will be hesitant to trust external actors. In addition, humanitarian organisations have not always been able to ensure inclusivity in responding to the needs of target beneficiaries, and there now is a perception that they privilege IDP needs over host community needs. Conflict sensitivity is thus crucial in fostering social cohesion. Involving highly regarded civil society groups and leaders can be a way to increase community's trust in initiatives like the Kujenga Amani project. It is also of the utmost importance to be context sensitive when using the term Swahili.

2. **Strengthening trust and enhancing dialogue between local communities and government representatives.** The deficit in trust is a significant barrier to dialogue and peace. It would be an asset to begin addressing this issue through the creation of a safe and non-partisan platform for discussion and consultation between critical stakeholders. The creation of a space for facilitated dialogue between citizens and state representatives is important, especially between youth and security forces. At the same time, the dialogue should be sensitive to the governance system of Mozambique, and thus take into account the dynamics within the state structures themselves, which tend to be top-down, with limited autonomy granted to officials at provincial and district levels.

3. **Establish links to livelihoods programming.** Given the sources of tensions in the province, which are caused by poverty and unemployment, it would be important to ensure that peacebuilding efforts are clearly linked with livelihood initiatives—initiatives, in other words, that work on supporting employability and income generation. This will increase the likelihood that efforts to promote dialogue are linked to concrete opportunities, which, for youth in particular, should be seen as one way—perhaps the most important way—to break the vicious cycle fostering violent conflict.

4. **Target women and girls specifically, including from marginalised groups.** Sustaining peace in Cabo Delgado will require specific opportunities to be created for women and girls, who are affected by violence more than their male counterparts. Specific attention should be paid to engaging women IPDs and women who are trying to reintegrate in their communities after displacement or violence.

5. **Promote inclusivity across ethnic, religious and status-based divisions.** Activities will need to include representatives from all different religious and ethnic groups, as well as from IDP communities, given the existing conflict among them and the risks of further escalation. Additionally, the project should create safe spaces for cultural exchange—a key connector, as discussed. There is, for example, a need for dialogue and reconciliation between Muslims and Christians in Cabo Delgado, but also intra-religious dialogue among Muslims. On the other hand, since the tensions between hosting communities and IDPs emerged as potential sources of conflict, it is fundamental to raise awareness and create spaces for facilitating dialogue among the two groups to ensure peaceful coexistence.

6. **Engage with the government strategically.** Government at local, provincial and national level remains important to young men and women in Cabo Delgado. For this reason, it is important to find the right entry points by assessing the needs of government representatives and by being ready to address potential gaps. ADIN, for example, could benefit from a closer association with civil society to develop more inclusive programming. There could also be an opportunity to work nationally on the new NAP on Women, Peace and Security, and see if specific, province-level, efforts could be launched under that policy.

7. **Strengthen local capacities for conflict prevention and conflict mediation, as well as for resilience to violent extremism.** Train and enhance the capacities of youth and women for peacebuilding and conflict transformation and engage local communities in raising awareness initiatives on themes such as gender-based violence, or transformative dialogue. Also, local government representatives and police forces should be trained in order to reach a greater impact and to ensure project sustainability.

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