

Prospects for a Sustainable Elite Bargain in Mozambique

Third Time Lucky?



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Summary

- A newly agreed deal could end 42 years of armed contest between the Mozambique Liberation Front-led government (FRELIMO) and the armed opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). The agreement, due to be signed in August, is the third attempt and if it is to last, it will require political good will, compromise and an acceptance of more inclusive national politics by both parties.
- The forthcoming 15 October 2019 elections and their conduct could make or break this new elite bargain. International monitoring of these elections and support for national oversight efforts are critical to this process.
- A lasting agreement is in the national interest. It would mean that a new Mozambican government formed after the national elections can focus on gas industry development, improving services, poverty reduction and combating new security challenges, such as growing violent Islamic radicalism in Cabo Delgado.
- The new elite bargain requires continued international and domestic engagement. It attempts to encourage alternative peaceful livelihood opportunities through training of RENAMO's past and current armed militia. This should help RENAMO to gradually disarm its militant wing if post-election confidence grows.
- The newly created post of Personal Envoy for Mozambique by the UN Secretary-General is an important development to provide support, coordination and leadership for international peace partnerships.

1. Introduction

The emergence of a new agreement designed to end civil conflict in Mozambique – due to be signed in August 2019 by the Mozambique Liberation Front-led government (FRELIMO) and the armed opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) – is an important development. Twice before both parties have reached definitive agreements, in Rome (1992) and Maputo (2014), which have failed to stem the bloodshed. Will this third agreement finally end 42 years of violent competition between these two parties?

The sustainability of this deal is in the hands of Mozambicans and depends on the conduct of credible elections in October 2019. This paper, which draws on the author's previous published work,¹ charts domestic and international support efforts for ending violent clashes since 1992. After the 1977–92 civil war, Mozambique was heralded as a textbook post-conflict success story and much of the country has since remained at peace. RENAMO's return to targeted armed conflict in 2013 was a reminder of the fragility of peace and that Mozambican politics needs to be more inclusive.

Violent Islamic extremism has exacerbated the security situation in northern Mozambique since October 2017. The worsening situation demonstrates the urgency of sustainably settling the long FRELIMO–RENAMO conflict through non-violent electoral politics. The country needs peace for development to progress and resolving the emerging violence in northern Mozambique requires national politicians to focus on a common purpose. This new elite bargain can work, but it obligates both parties to take part in peaceful and fair elections and requires significant political will from FRELIMO and RENAMO. This paper examines how this deal was achieved and highlights some of the potential risks in the run-up to the October 2019 elections and beyond.

Background

Mozambique's history is intertwined with complex regional politics and failures in nation-building on the African continent. For much of the colonial period up to 1942, Mozambique was divided into separate administrative zones, which fragmented the colony and prevented the emergence of a common system of law and administration – divisions between the centre and the peripheries of the country still exist. The location of the capital in the far south of the country, and the proximity of South Africa, have resulted in a concentration of resources and modern economic sectors in that region, while much of the rest of the country continues to be relatively marginalized.² The 1977–92 civil war accentuated regional differences, with RENAMO's activities concentrated in the centre of the country.³

The 1992 Rome General Peace Accord (GPA) stood for over 20 years. It was followed by an aid bonanza that rapidly transformed the FRELIMO elite into a patrimonial political class that became increasingly determined to hang on to power at all costs. Recently, gas and coal reserves have heightened the stakes

¹ Vines, A. (2017), 'Afonso Dhlakama and RENAMO's return to armed conflict since 2013: the politics of reintegration in Mozambique', in Themnér, A. (ed) (2017), *Warlord Democrats in Africa: Ex-military Leaders and Electoral Politics*, London: Zed Books.

² Newitt, M. (2017), *A Short History of Mozambique*, Hurst & Co, p. 22.

³ It can be argued that the civil war started in 1976, not by RENAMO but by the Partido Revolucionário de Moçambique (PRM) in Zambézia. See, Chichava, S. (2018), 'The Anti-Frelimo Movements & the War in Zambézia', in Morier-Genoud, E. and Do Rosário, D. (eds), *The War Within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique 1976-1992*, James Currey & Boydell & Brewer Ltd.

further, dividing the FRELIMO elite over who has access to the spoils and triggering RENAMO's return to armed violence in 2013 to push for a new elite bargain with the government. Back in 2007, Sumich and Honwana warned of the fragility of the Rome GPA elite bargain in their assessment of FRELIMO and its disinclination to share power. They concluded that:

Since independence power has primarily been located in the Frelimo party, not in supposedly neutral state structures that could be inherited in a reasonably intact manner by another political force. Thus the very success of the party in rebuilding their hegemony and their disinclination to share power with social forces outside of their control could intensify the divisions and inequalities that helped to fuel the civil war in the first place.⁴

Until 2013, Mozambique was regarded as having passed through a successful post-conflict transition. However, in April 2013, limited armed conflict began between RENAMO fighters and Mozambican government forces. A new agreement in September 2014 ended regular armed skirmishes in central Mozambique, but violence once more resumed in 2015 and persisted until late December 2016, focusing primarily on disrupting commercial links and public services. Since that time a truce has prevailed.

Mozambique's peace processes and the root causes of its conflicts differ significantly from those of other African countries. For example, RENAMO differs from Angola's UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), which became a semi-conventional armed force. RENAMO never expected to capture the Mozambican state, but always sought a military or political stalemate through which it could extract elite bargains from FRELIMO.⁵

⁴ Sumich, J. and Honwana, J. (2007), 'Strong Party, Weak State? Frelimo and State Survival through the Mozambican Civil War: An Analytical Narrative on State-Making', Crisis States Research Centre, Working Paper, no. 23, December, p. 22 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08bf4e5274a31e0000ece/wp23.2.pdf> (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

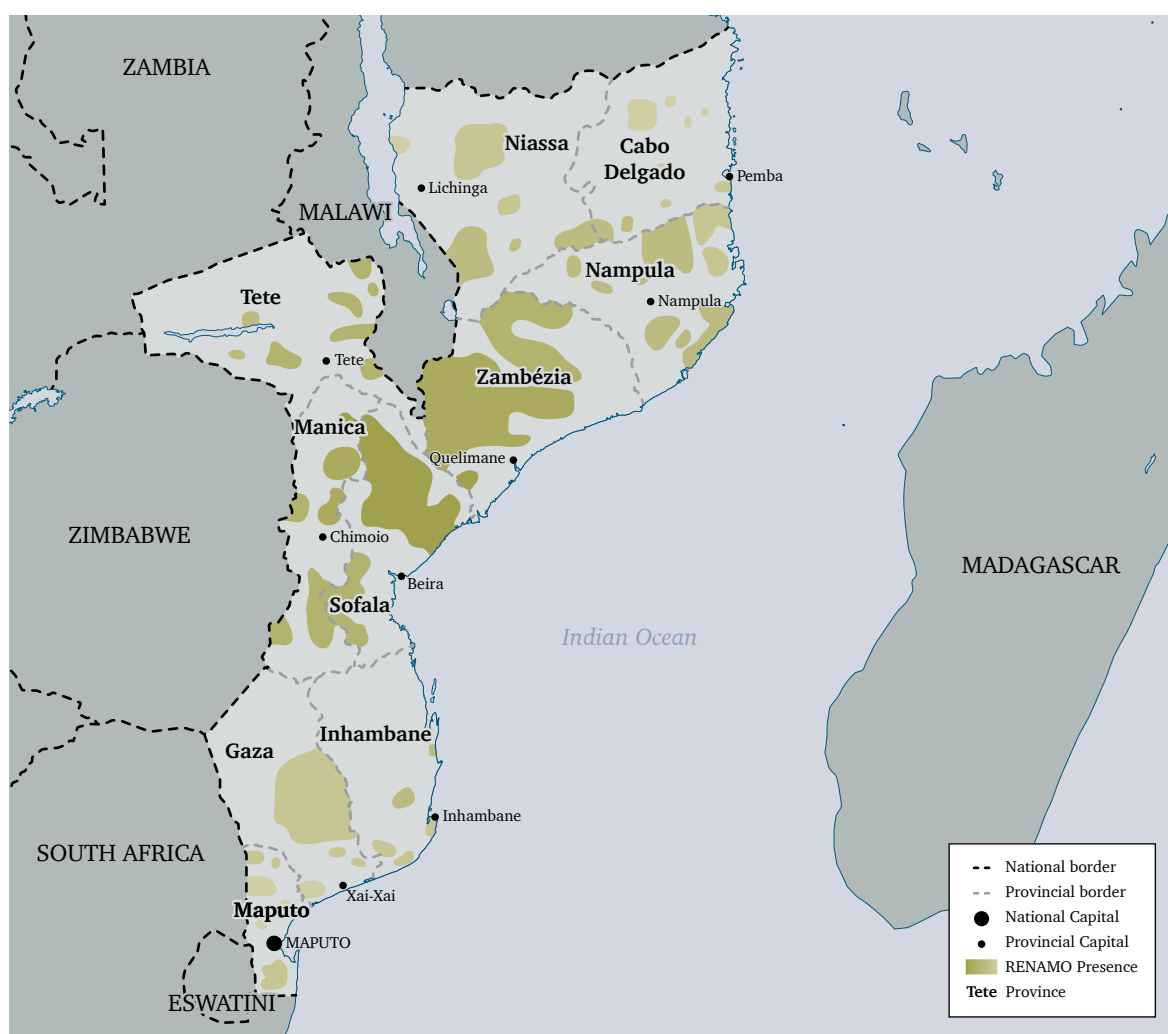
⁵ This paper benefits from field work in Mozambique in February and November 2018 and February 2019 and draws on commissioned research by the UK Stabilisation Unit, see, Vines, A. (2018), *Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Mozambique Case Study*, UK Stabilisation Unit, February, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766037/Mozambique_case_study.pdf (accessed 6 Jul. 2019). It also draws upon previously published research such as Vines (2017), 'Afonso Dhlakama and Renamo's return to armed conflict since 2013; the politics of reintegration in Mozambique'.

2. Key Features of Past Elite Bargains

The success and shortcomings of the 1992 GPA and post-conflict peace-building are reviewed in a longer paper published in early 2018.⁶ This paper is an update, focusing on resumed targeted armed conflict between RENAMO and the Mozambique government and highlighting what is necessary to make a new elite bargain stick.

The UN oversaw the Rome GPA and, through Security Council Resolution 797, set up United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) to perform a series of peacekeeping tasks including monitoring and verifying the implementation of the ceasefire.

Map 1: RENAMO presence 1993



Source: Updated from Vines, A. (1996), *Renamo: From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?* James Currey, p. 2.

⁶ Vines (2018), *Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Mozambique Case Study*.

In order to fulfil its mandate, ONUMOZ was comprised of both civilian and military departments. It was tasked with monitoring the cantonment, disarmament and demobilization of nearly 110,000 combatants from both sides, as well as the creation of a new army and the resettlement of 5–6 million refugees and displaced people. The cost was estimated at \$331 million (\$1 million per day) until 30 November 1993.⁷ ONUMOZ was also mandated to support and observe Mozambique's first multiparty elections in October 1994.

This approach was initially successful. By 1996, 87 per cent of demobilized soldiers had been integrated into society, and most had secured a food supply or small guaranteed income. The total reintegration budget was \$94.4 million, of which \$35.5 million was allocated to support cash for registered ex-combatants for a period of two years and \$33.7 million went directly to demobilized soldiers. In all, some 92,000 soldiers benefited, including about 71,000 from government forces and 21,000 from RENAMO.⁸

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However, RENAMO combatants complained that they had been excluded from full reintegration benefits, namely pensions: contributions to their pensions were not deducted from their salaries like government troops, as most were not paid salaries during the conflict up to 1992.⁹

RENAMO proposed extending pension benefits to its soldiers, but FRELIMO opposed the move and used the pension debate to demonstrate its political strength. This issue resurfaced in the 2003 municipal elections and in the 2004 national elections, with little impact on government policy.¹⁰ However, it became one of the drivers of renewed armed conflict by RENAMO in 2013.

Disarmament

When conflict between RENAMO and the government resumed in 2013, many observers were surprised at how easily RENAMO managed to re-arm. According to the Mozambican Force for Crime Investigation and Social Reinsertion (FOMICRES), between three and four million weapons were in circulation at the end of the war in 1992.¹¹ During the 1992–94 peace process, the priority of ONUMOZ was to help RENAMO transform itself into a political party and contest national elections. The UN priority was to dismantle RENAMO's command and control structures, and also disperse ex-combatants through reintegration initiatives, such as the pay-and-scatter programme. Disarmament was not a priority, and the UN's Special Representative Aldo Ajello has since admitted that at the time he was concerned that forceful disarmament would undermine the peace process.¹²

⁷ Synge, R. (1997), *Mozambique: UN Peace-keeping in Action, 1992-1994*, United States Institute of Peace.

⁸ Vines, A. (2013), 'Renamo's Rise and Decline: The Politics of Reintegration in Mozambique', *International Peacekeeping* 20 (3), pp. 375–393.

⁹ Schafer, J. (1998), 'A Baby Who Does Not Cry Will Not Be Suckled': AMODEG and the Reintegration of Demobilised Soldiers', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 4 (1), pp. 207–222.

¹⁰ McMullin, J. (2004), 'Reintegration of Combatants: Were the Right Lessons Learned in Mozambique?', *International Peacekeeping* 11 (4), pp. 625–643.

¹¹ Reisman, L. and Lalá, A. (2012), 'Assessment of Crime and Violence in Mozambique & Recommendations for Violence Prevention and Reduction', Open Society Foundations Crime and Violence Prevention Initiative & Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, https://issuu.com/osisa/docs/cvpi_mozambique_report_-_final_engl (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

¹² Author interview with Aldo Ajello, Rome, 17 October 2012. Others consider this as one of the flaws and that this was a lesson learned by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) for future actions; author interview with Owen Greene, University of Bradford, 2 March 2017.

An official mediator in the RENAMO and FRELIMO stand-off, Bishop Dinis Sengulane, concluded that the failure to completely disarm in 1992–94 resulted in many individuals retaining their weapons. However, the fact that arms used in the recent conflict are in much better condition than would be expected after years of disuse, and that some RENAMO fighters are younger than ex-combatants would be, demonstrated that there are new sources of these weapons and that renewed violence is attracting fresh participants.¹³ EU observers also concluded that the 2014 elections were impacted by failed disarmament, which led to the intimidation of some voters.¹⁴

The process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of RENAMO fighters into government forces has returned as a critical issue with allegations from RENAMO that its members are the victims of discrimination. The International Observer Military Team for the Cessation of Military Hostilities (EMOCHM) was established by the September 2014 agreement between President Guebuza and Afonso Dhlakama.¹⁵ It included observers from Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cape Verde, Italy, Portugal, the UK and the US and was led by a brigadier from Botswana. The team was tasked with monitoring the disarmament and demobilization of RENAMO's 'residual forces' through incorporation into Mozambique's military (FADM) and the police, or by assisting their return to civilian life. In October 2014, the government said it was prepared to incorporate 300 men from RENAMO's militia into the armed forces and police (200 and 100, respectively), a figure based on the government's past contacts with Afonso Dhlakama. For its part, RENAMO failed to prepare a list of fighters it wished to see recruited into the FADM and the police. As such, there was little progress.

The team was given 135 days to complete its task, this period expired in February 2015, and a dispute followed over the renewal of EMOCHM's mandate. RENAMO sought an extension of 120 days, but the government insisted on 60. EMOCHM's mandate eventually expired on 15 May 2015, having failed to complete its task. EMOCHM is now generally perceived as merely a political gesture by the government rather than a meaningful concession to RENAMO, which was never intended to be the start of a serious process.¹⁶

For RENAMO's part, its leadership was also reluctant to reintegrate its residual forces and disarm, as targeted violence remains its prime leverage over the government in its continuing effort to extract political concessions. Though there were differing opinions on the RENAMO strategy among its members. RENAMO's combatants that were assisted by EMOCHM signalled to international observers that they wanted a lasting deal and were fatigued by having been kept on military standby for over 20 years. They also expressed their anxiety over their own lack of skills and were naïve about the resources available to them for support and retraining.¹⁷

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from RENAMO's strategy since 2013 is that maintaining armed men who are prepared to challenge the government has enhanced the party's political standing in the short term and has resulted in a process to reach a new elite bargain in the long term. In addition, there are two further important lessons from the resumed violence of 2013–14 and subsequent clashes. First, it is clear that DDR efforts were finite, short-term technical processes that did not cover political

¹³ Sengulane, D. (2014), 'Restoring Peace in Mozambique', speech at Chatham House, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/restoring-peace-mozambique> (accessed 6 Jul. 2019). There were not many fresh, young combatants involved in this armed conflict, but small numbers joined RENAMO for training in 2013–16 and more joined in 2019.

¹⁴ The EU Election Observation Mission's final report noted that RENAMO had not disarmed before the elections, which 'bore an influence on the electoral campaign'. See EU Election Observation Mission (2014), 'Mozambique: Final Report – General Elections, 15 October 2014', p. 4.

¹⁵ EMOCHM (2014), 'Termos de Referência da Equipa Militar de Observação Da Cessaçao Das Hostilidades Militares', <http://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/files/Renamo%20dialogo%20acordos.pdf> (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

¹⁶ Author interview with Jamie Martin, ex-EMOCHM – Beira observer, Salisbury, 24 February 2017.

¹⁷ Ibid.

inclusion. This meant that after a decade of ostensible peace international donors mistakenly concluded that Mozambique had undergone a successful post-conflict transition and that support for NGO efforts in this field was no longer a priority.

Second, disarmament should not have been neglected, and this was a missed opportunity. After ONUMOZ withdrew in December 1994, the opportunity to disarm diminished and subsequently only a small percentage of weapons were given up through official and NGO efforts. As a result, RENAMO has maintained armed men and weapons stockpiles for over 20 years. In 2012, the NGO FOMICRES,¹⁸ located large arms caches in five districts in Sofala province, including heavy weapons, but for political reasons it was not able to confiscate or destroy them.¹⁹ Furthermore, in January 2014, RENAMO official Rahil Khan warned that the group had arms caches across the country that it could draw upon.²⁰ While RENAMO would never have handed over all weapons to ONUMOZ, more effort during its mandate could have reduced stockpiles, especially if international partners had continued to support disarmament and assist ex-combatants in central Mozambique to find alternative livelihoods.

In January 1998, worried about losing authority over these men, Dhlakama categorically refused to allow his bodyguards to be incorporated into the police.

RENAMO's armed militia is also the result of a provision in the Rome GPA, which stipulated that the former rebels could maintain bodyguards (who would enjoy police status) as a 'transitional guarantee' until elections in 1994. The objective then was for the police to take over these responsibilities, while, Dhlakama's bodyguards could receive police training if RENAMO named them on a list. Although a list was eventually provided, the government insisted that once trained, these men must obey police orders. In January 1998, worried about losing authority over these men, Dhlakama categorically refused to allow his bodyguards to be incorporated into the police. It seems that a mixture of fear of losing his prime asset (armed men) and concern over his own security drove this decision.

Consequently, from 1994 to 2013, the Mozambican government reluctantly accepted the de facto presence of several hundred-armed RENAMO personnel resident in the Maringué and Cheringoma districts of Sofala province, who occasionally paraded with weapons and intimidated local FRELIMO activists.²¹ A small group of them also escorted Dhlakama and provided security for his house in Nampula as his 'presidential guard'. They were dressed in ill-fitting and worn uniforms, with shoes falling off and brandished old weapons.²² The government wanted to disarm this 'presidential guard' completely and offered to integrate it in the national police force, but this offer was rejected. A further opening to reintegrate some RENAMO militia fighters emerged from the September 2014 agreement, which temporarily halted hostilities, but RENAMO had to list fighters to take part and participants had to meet fitness standards. That list never appeared. In 2016, integration of RENAMO members and the career progression of those who were integrated after the GPA were key agenda items in talks between the government and RENAMO.

¹⁸ Littlejohn, G. (2015), 'Secret Stockpiles, Arms Caches and Disarmament Efforts in Mozambique', A Working Paper of the Small Arms Survey, 21 September 2015, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/F-Working-papers/SAS-WP21-Secret-Stockpiles.pdf> (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

¹⁹ FOMICRES is led by ex-RENAMO members and was able to access areas of central Mozambique other NGOs could not. Over the last decade FOMICRES suffered from funding difficulties due to international attention shifting from post-conflict assistance. Author interview with Gary Littlejohn, Harrogate, 2 March 2017.

²⁰ Agência Lusa (2014), 'Assessor da Renamo Garante Que Homens do Partido Têm Armas em Tudo o País', 10 January 2014, http://noticias.sapo.pt/internacional/artigo/assessor-da-renamo-garante-que-homens-do-partido-tem-armas-em-todo-o-pais_17143831.html (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

²¹ AllAfrica (2005), 'Mozambique: Dhlakama Refuses to Disband His Guard', 6 October 2005, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200510060517.html> (accessed 16 Jul. 2019).

²² Author witnessed them line up as guard of honour after his meeting with Afonso Dhlakama, Nampula, 23 September 2010.

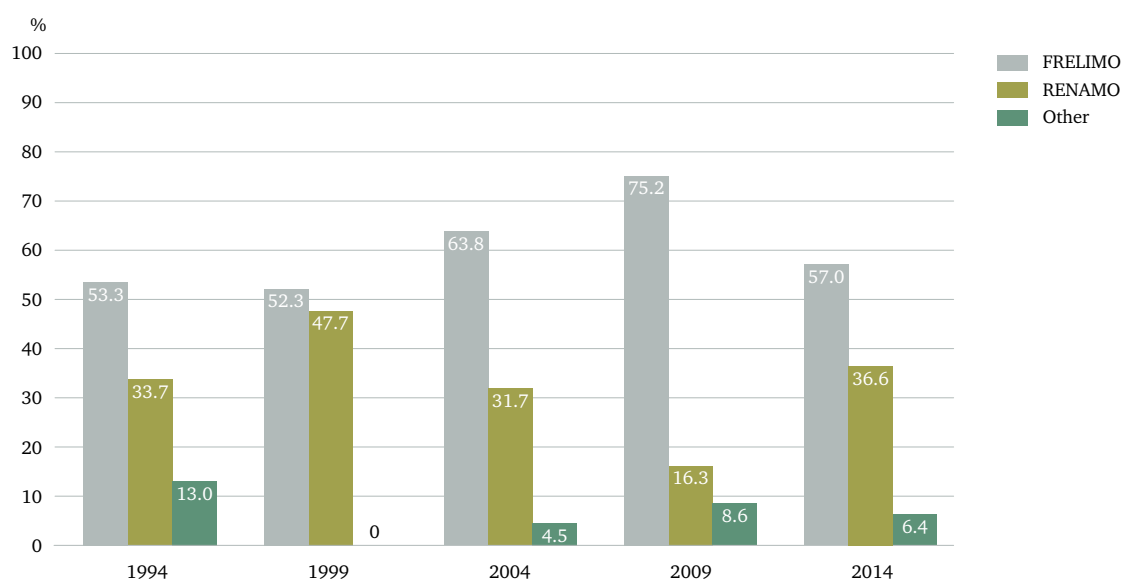
The principal achievement of the GPA was the conversion of RENAMO from an almost entirely military force into a predominantly political organization²³ supported by a UN Trust Fund that, in the run up to the 1994 election, provided some \$17 million. The Trust Fund played an important role in incentivizing RENAMO to forego violence and was referred to as an ‘effective insurance policy against failure’.²⁴

RENAMO’s electoral fortunes

RENAMO has contested all five presidential and parliamentary elections since the civil war ended in 1992. The October 1994 elections enjoyed high voter turnout of above 85 per cent and there was little violence in the low-key campaign, although there was some intimidation by both sides in their stronghold areas. The south and north voted mostly for presidential candidate Joaquim Chissano and FRELIMO, while the central provinces of Manica and Sofala voted for RENAMO, indicating the role of regional and ethnic politics in the elections. The results also reflected inequality and poverty, with a strong sense that FRELIMO had channelled national resources to its hinterland, the far south of Mozambique, where it dominated among the electorate. In the strategically important provinces of Nampula and Zambézia, where 41 per cent of the electorate were registered, RENAMO had the advantage, but it was close.

The results of all five elections up to 2014 show a general clear and consistent pattern. FRELIMO has commanded a majority overall and dominated in the capital, the south and the extreme north, while RENAMO remained strong among voters in the centre and north. However, RENAMO was visibly weakened after the 2009 elections that were dominated by FRELIMO, which won 75 per cent of the votes and had majorities in all former RENAMO strongholds. Positions in the National Assembly were allocated to parties in proportion to their number of parliamentary seats.

Figure 1: Presidential elections vote share (%)



Source: República de Moçambique Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) [Republic of Mozambique National Elections Commission]; Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral (STAE) [Election Technical Secretariat], <http://www.stae.org.mz/>.

²³ Synge, R. (1997), *Mozambique: UN Peace-keeping in Action, 1992-1994*, United States Institute of Peace, p. 148.

²⁴ Ibid.

After 1994, and especially after the 1999 election results – where RENAMO's support held up and Dhlakama came close to challenging Chissano's share of the vote – FRELIMO concluded that RENAMO posed an electoral risk.²⁵ In response, FRELIMO aggressively countered RENAMO, at times this involved intimidation and harassment of its supporters, especially during electoral cycles. As a result, there have been electoral irregularities in the 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections.

RENAMO also contested the 2003 municipal elections for control of 33 municipalities, and successfully returned mayors in Beira, Ilha de Moçambique, Marromeu, Nacala and Angoche and achieved some 40 per cent of the vote in Nampula, Quelimane and Chimoió. However, in the 2008 municipal elections, RENAMO did not win control of a single municipality. Four of its former municipalities were won by FRELIMO and Beira was won by Daviz Simango (standing as an independent candidate). Dhlakama boasted at the time that he would swear the defeated RENAMO candidates into office to run parallel municipal administrations, but did not carry out his threat. After RENAMO's defeat in the 2009 presidential and parliamentary elections, Dhlakama regularly threatened to hold nationwide demonstrations against what he claimed were fraudulent election results, but no RENAMO demonstrations were staged. Dhlakama also announced that the RENAMO deputies elected in 2009 would boycott the new parliament, but all the RENAMO deputies, including their secretary-general, defied him and took up their seats, anxious to claim their allowances.

Dhlakama's strategy between 1994 and 2013 was to regularly obstruct parliament or circumvent it by seeking high-level bilateral negotiations between political party leaderships. There was little vision beyond oppositionist politics, and RENAMO's falling electoral share until 2014 reduced Dhlakama's bargaining power.²⁶

From May 2009, Dhlakama relocated permanently from Maputo to the northern city of Nampula, and in October 2012, Dhlakama left Nampula for Satunjira, Gorongosa, in central Mozambique, near Casa Banana, a guerrilla base that served as RENAMO's headquarters during the early 1980s. The timing of this latter move was significant: Satunjira was a former RENAMO military base and Dhlakama scheduled his arrival to commemorate the anniversary of the death of RENAMO's founder, André Matsangaissa, killed during military action near Satunjira by FRELIMO on 17 October 1979.

Return to armed conflict

As the above sequence of events show, Dhlakama was isolated in Nampula and lacked resources for patronage, which meant that his core supporters in central Mozambique were increasingly impatient. His return to central Mozambique reflected a calculation that his only viable option to strengthen his grip on power and his negotiating hand was to return to targeted armed violence. His economic interests, including artisanal gem mining (Tourmaline) in central Mozambique, also came increasingly under pressure from government officials in 2012, heightening the squeeze on his resources.

Armed attacks started in April 2013 and, in June 2013, the government introduced military convoys to protect a 100-km stretch of road between the River Save and Muxungué (until 28 August 2014).²⁷ Political tensions deepened on 21 October 2013 when FADM occupied the Satunjira base after RENAMO had congregated there again to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Matsangaissa.

²⁵ Author interviews with FRELIMO officials, Maputo, 22 September 2010.

²⁶ Machietto, R. (2016), *Beyond Peacebuilding: the Challenges of Empowerment Promotion in Mozambique*, Palgrave MacMillan, p. 268.

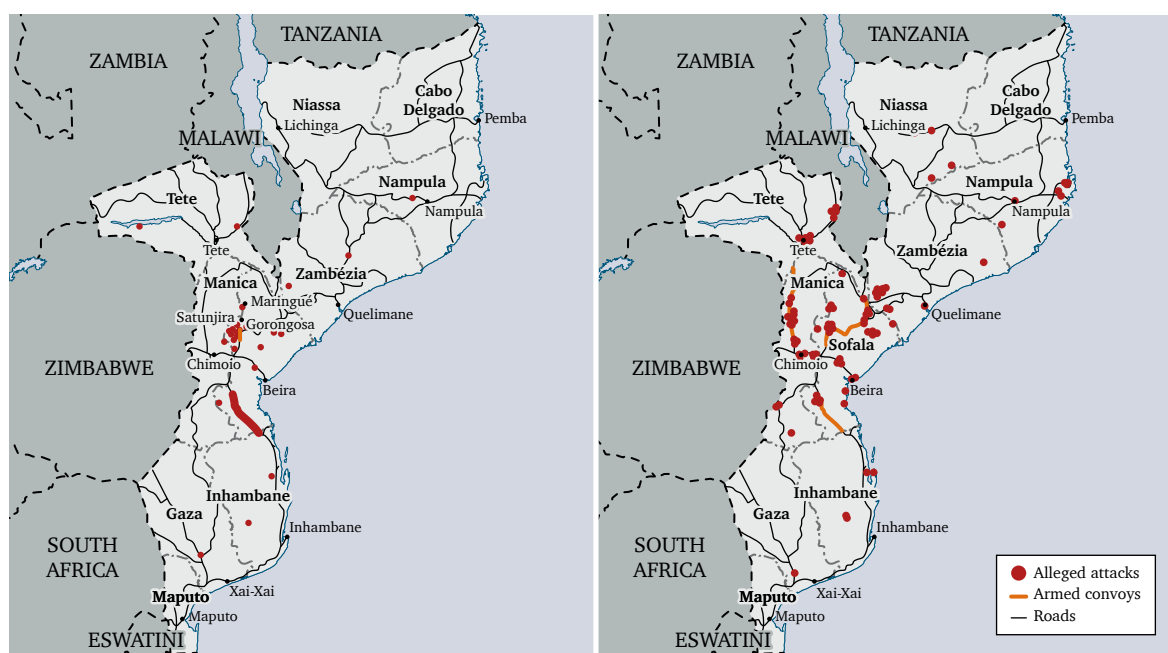
²⁷ Informal mediation started in July 2013, when Anglican bishop Dinis Sengulane and academic Lourenço de Rosário met Dhlakama in Satunjira and agreed to his key conditions: reform of electoral law; the depoliticization of the civil service; reform of the military; and more equitable wealth sharing.

Dhlakama fled to another base deep in the Gorongosa region and the FADM moved on to occupy another RENAMO base, Maringué, which had remained a location of armed RENAMO men with tacit acceptance by the government since 1994.

RENAMO then launched low-intensity targeted attacks, aimed at strengthening its negotiating position. This approach differed from their objectives in the early 1990s of holding towns and territory, degrading government infrastructure and causing massive displacement. In early May 2014, as peace talks progressed, RENAMO announced a ceasefire along the EN1 highway to assist election registration efforts in central Mozambique for the October national elections. The most recent RENAMO armed incident in 2014 was on 1 July in Condue, Sofala province along the railway.

This was followed by RENAMO and the government agreeing upon a ceasefire at the 74th round of negotiations on 24 August 2014 in Maputo. Finally, Dhlakama agreed to leave his hiding place in central Mozambique and be escorted by an international delegation of foreign diplomats accredited in Mozambique back to Maputo on 4 September, and on 5 September President Guebuza and Dhlakama met in Maputo and formally signed the agreement to end hostilities. During 2013, at least 60 people were killed and more than 300 injured. There are no accurate comparable figures for 2014, but observers believe the total number of casualties was less than 100, most of which were injured, while in 2015 the figure was some 20 killed and 50 injured.²⁸

Map 2: Comparison of RENAMO Attacks 2013–14 (left) and 2015–16 (right)



Source: Adapted from @Verdarde, AIM, ACLED and author interviews.

In early 2015, RENAMO again threatened conflict if it did not obtain concessions from the government, following two face-to-face meetings between Dhlakama and President Nyusi. The president signalled he would support a parliamentary bill for autonomous provincial governments if RENAMO ended its boycott of parliament and submitted it to the National Assembly for debate. In the short term, this

²⁸ Author interviews with officials, Maputo, January 2018.

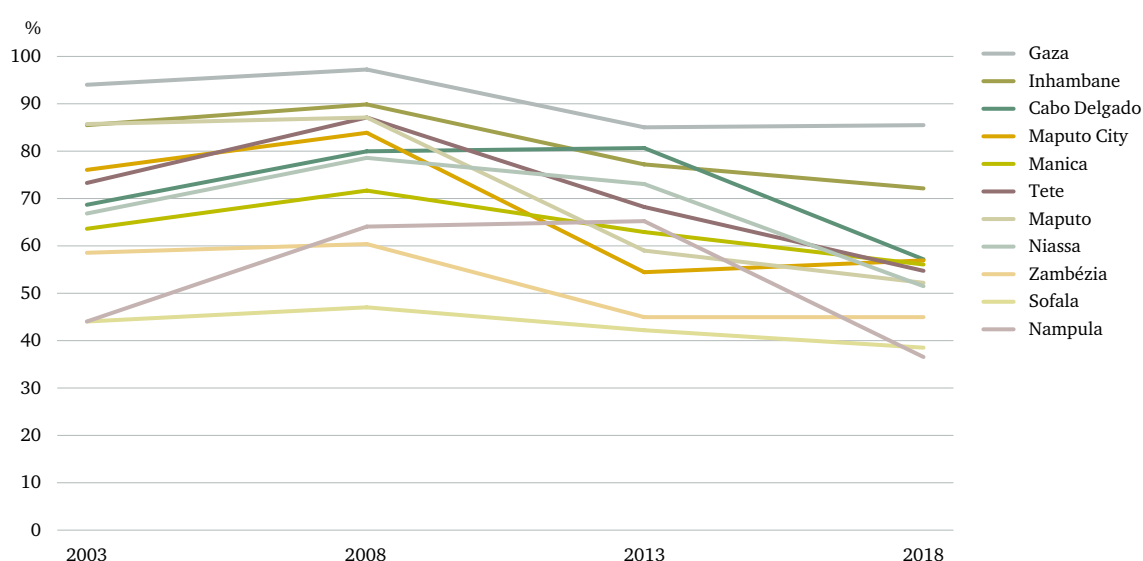
provided hope of a new deal but Nyusi failed to deliver on his promise and FRELIMO parliamentarians rejected the draft bill. On 2 April 2015, the FADM and RENAMO forces exchanged fire in Guija district, Gaza province. Soon after, Dhlakama confirmed the incident saying that 150 RENAMO troops had moved south (many of them aged 40 and over).

Accurate numbers of how many armed men Dhlakama remobilized are not available but the figure is probably in the hundreds. Many of these are ex-combatants of the 1977–92 conflict from central Mozambique, although some younger participants seem to have been drawn to RENAMO by the fighting. RENAMO repeated its low-intensity guerrilla tactics of the past such as ambush, hit and run, and disruption of infrastructure. RENAMO's ability to cause disruption was aided by weak government forces, unable to respond efficiently with counter-insurgency operations in central Mozambique. RENAMO tried to spread its military operations outside central Mozambique and Tete, but this was less successful and better contained by government forces.

Impact of municipal politics

RENAMO's boycott of the 20 November 2013 municipal elections, due to an electoral law dispute, back-fired spectacularly. At the local level, in Quelimane and Nampula, RENAMO supporters tactically voted for the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) – a splinter party of RENAMO. But FRELIMO won 49 mayoral seats and the MDM gained four, including the large cities of Beira, Quelimane and Nampula. MDM managed to secure 365 (30 per cent) of 1,216 municipal assembly seats overall and its candidates took more than 40 per cent of the vote in 13 municipalities, including in the FRELIMO heartlands of Maputo and Matola, a feat never achieved by RENAMO. This was the first time that the MDM contested municipal polls nationwide, and the results show the party can campaign at the national level and attract support from urban areas outside Beira and Quelimane.²⁹

Figure 2: FRELIMO share (%) of total valid votes in municipal elections, 2003–18



Source: República de Moçambique Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) [Republic of Mozambique National Elections Commission]; Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral (STAE) [Election Technical Secretariat], <http://www.stae.org.mz/>.

²⁹ For an analysis of the impact of MDM on Afonso Dhlakama, see Vines, A. (2013), 'Renamo's Rise and Decline: The Politics of Reintegration in Mozambique'.

The municipal election results convinced RENAMO and FRELIMO that they needed to return to negotiations to ensure they neutralized MDM's growing support base, and the 2014 presidential and legislative elections re-emphasized that RENAMO and FRELIMO were the primary political players in Mozambique. Both also showed they could control their supporters as there were only isolated violent incidents during the 2014 elections. Given that the elections followed 18 months of targeted armed violence, this was an achievement and shows that peace can prevail when there is leadership and political will. However, electoral participation was low, at around 48.6 per cent, compared with 87.87 per cent in 1994, continuing a long-term trend of political indifference. More than half of registered voters (55.27 per cent) did not participate in the 2009 elections.

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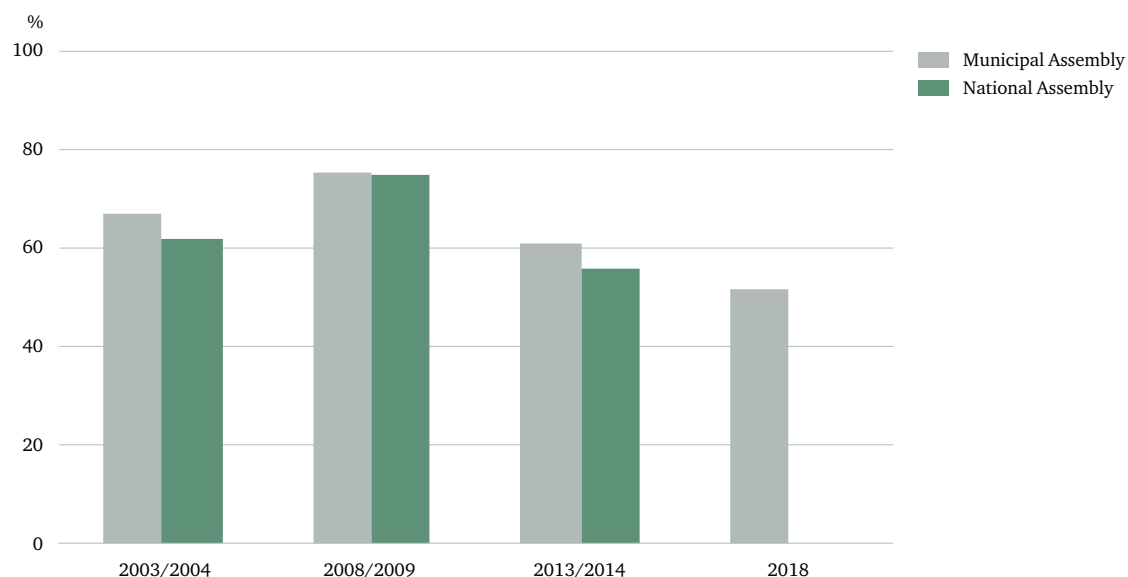
Nevertheless, the election results in 2014 showed that support for FRELIMO was declining and that RENAMO was winning over voters. It also confirmed to Afonso Dhlakama that his strategy of returning to targeted armed conflict had been rewarded, not only had the government re-opened negotiations directly with RENAMO but the party had made gains, increasing its number of deputies. A few years earlier memories of the previous civil war would have been stronger among the electorate and a return to conflict might have been punished but, as is often the case in politics, timing matters.

As occurred after previous elections, the judiciary rejected opposition claims of rigging at the 2014 elections on technicalities.³⁰ Although there is insufficient evidence to conclude that rigging took place on a scale that would affect the overall result of a FRELIMO presidential victory and parliamentary majority, it is clear the electoral commission did commit some level of fraud and did not perform its duties satisfactorily. The opposition parties are also at fault for being unable to provide credible evidence of widespread fraud despite having deployed electoral observers across the country. The resulting suspicion, conspiracy and allegations have contributed to deepening political tensions between FRELIMO and opposition parties. Lessons from the 2014 elections are that the electoral legislation should be amended to provide a clear system of complaints and appeals, and that judges, electoral managing bodies and political parties need training in how to use these procedures. There also needs to be efficient training on counting and tabulation procedures.

While RENAMO has rejected all election results since 1994, due to the 2013–14 outbreak of armed violence, it was important for reconciliation that the electoral process was at least perceived to be better than it had been in the past. RENAMO's strong performance, with Afonso Dhlakama winning the majority of the vote in five provinces (Nampula, Zambézia, Tete, Manica and Sofala), was surprising not least because of his late start to campaigning. It strengthened Dhlakama's position in the party and there were no longer calls for him to step down. RENAMO also concluded that calculated armed violence has restored greater parity with FRELIMO, brought about concessions and marginalized the threat posed by MDM.

³⁰ Vines, A., Thompson, T., Jenson, S. K. and Azevedo-Harman, E. (2015), *Mozambique to 2018: Managers, Mediators and Magnates*, Chatham House Report, p. 18, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20150622Mozambique2018VinesThompsonKirkJensenAzevedoHarman.pdf (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

Figure 3: FRELIMO share of votes municipal and National Assembly elections (%)



Source: República de Moçambique Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) [Republic of Mozambique National Elections Commission]; Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral (STAE) [Election Technical Secretariat], <http://www.stae.org.mz/>.

The October 2018 municipal elections were generally peaceful, and the results further confirmed that even if RENAMO had been disadvantaged by the death of Afonso Dhlakama, the electorate were increasingly voting for the party in protest against FRELIMO. Although FRELIMO won 44 out of 53 municipalities, there were at least five other municipalities in which electoral irregularities denied RENAMO victory.

3. New Mediation (2013 – Present)

The faith process

During the 114 rounds of Mozambican-mediated talks with the government between April 2013 and August 2015, RENAMO obtained concessions over the politicization of the electoral system and additional roles to fill in the military. Five Mozambican mediators were officially added to talks in January 2014, at RENAMO's insistence: academic Lourenço do Rosário, Anglican bishop Dinis Sengulane, Roman Catholic priest Felipe Couto, Methodist pastor Anastacio Chembeze and Muslim cleric Sheikh Saide Abibo. Their appointments were made individually by President Guebuza and were a compromise gesture after Afonso Dhlakama wrote a letter to President Guebuza requesting international and national mediation in November 2013. The president wanted to avoid international involvement and to ensure that the mediation relied on government patronage. This was reflected in the way the appointments were made and was initially problematic, but through the provision of technical expertise from the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, coordination between the mediators improved.³¹

Some of the issues on the agenda for the talks, such as the politicization of the state and the electoral system, were important shifts in policy. In early 2014, the delegations agreed on sweeping changes to electoral legislation, which were then rubber-stamped by parliament. These changes granted the parliamentary political parties absolute dominance of the electoral bodies and political appointees were inserted into the electoral apparatus. The paradox was that RENAMO, during the 2014 elections, was unable to find sufficiently skilled cadres to staff the electoral apparatus.

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During 2014, the dialogue concentrated on the second point of the agenda, defence and security, which led to an agreement to end hostilities, signed by Guebuza and Dhlakama on 5 September 2014. Like in 1992, RENAMO and FADM obtained an amnesty approved by parliament for crimes committed since March 2012. RENAMO, however, as discussed above, refused to hand over a list of its members selected to join FADM and the police. Therefore, the transfer of 'residual forces' of RENAMO into the army and the police remains unresolved.

³¹ The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (2015), *Annual Report – The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in 2015*, p. 10, https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Annual_Report_-_The_Centre_for_Humanitarian_Dialogue_in_2015.pdf; Conciliation Resources (n.d.), 'Neha Sanghrajka', <https://www.c-r.org/who-we-are/people/wmc-members/neha-sanghrajka>.

In March 2015, RENAMO tabled its parliamentary bill for more autonomous provincial governments, expecting it to be debated in parliament. This proposal came after Dhlakama and President Nyusi held two rounds of bilateral talks in February 2015 aimed at improving relations. Nyusi successfully convinced Dhlakama to end his boycott of parliament and table the bill for autonomous provincial governments, promising that it would be taken seriously.³²

This was a step-change from the Guebuza-era treatment of RENAMO and provided hope of a modus vivendi between the government and RENAMO in the short term. But from late March 2015, Dhlakama and RENAMO threatened that if the proposal was rejected, RENAMO would implement it in the provinces regardless. Political tensions increased, resulting in some armed exchanges. On 30 April 2015, parliament rejected the RENAMO proposal by 138 votes to 98 with all FRELIMO deputies voting against the bill, while MDM deputies voted with RENAMO in favour. On 31 July RENAMO submitted a constitutional amendment to the National Assembly that proposed that provincial governors should be appointed by elected provincial authorities, but this was later rejected by all FRELIMO deputies during a vote on 7 December 2015. Dhlakama officially ended RENAMO's negotiations with the government in August 2015.

The proposal for autonomous regional governments sparked a national debate, which FRELIMO responded to by taking the issue to its grassroots and presenting it as an effort to divide the country. In fact, the proposal advocated a dual administration for elected municipal governments, by a mayor and an elected assembly. Dhlakama would, under this proposal, be able to appoint five of six 'council presidents' (where RENAMO most recently won majorities in elections) with the approval of the assemblies and full provincial elections would take place at the same time as the 2019 elections. There were two particularly controversial parts of the draft bill: heads of administrative posts and localities would be named by the new 'council president', and provinces would give half of all taxes from minerals, gas and oil extracted from the province to the state. Nominally, RENAMO, through provincial administrations, would therefore draw revenue from some of the country's most resource-rich provinces, namely Nampula, Zambézia, Tete, Manica and Sofala. This reflects the fact that Dhlakama had calculated that if RENAMO was to survive in the long term, he needed to build up long-term funding. Although not a true separatist, his autonomous regions proposal was an attempt to gain concessions that would put RENAMO in control of patronage positions in order to draw rents.

Rising political tensions and scant progress saw renewed armed violence from May 2015.

Rising political tensions and scant progress saw renewed armed violence from May 2015. Sporadic armed clashes in parts of Tete province from June 2015 resulted in some dead and injured and up to 11,000 Mozambicans fled and registered as refugees in Malawi by mid-2016 (although the majority had left the official camps by September 2016, a large number have stayed in Malawi waiting for a new peace agreement).³³

³² Kenyan ex-Prime Minister Raila Odinga helped convince RENAMO that the Kenyan example showed that opposition could make gains through decentralization. Kenya's historical connections and Odinga's role leading the EISA observer group in the 2014 elections helped persuade RENAMO.

³³ Interviews in 2016 with internally displaced persons from Tete and with NGOs and officials who visited the refugees in Malawi indicate that government forces violently abused communities but RENAMO also encouraged communities to flee, saying they would be safer in Malawi and would receive better food supplies. This also successfully humiliated the Mozambican government as it had demonstrated that the conflict had spread and it could not control its territory.

Dhlakama's own vulnerability became apparent when, in September 2015, his security escort was involved in two armed incidents in Manica province.³⁴ As happened at Satunjira in 2013, it seems that hardliners in FRELIMO wanted to humiliate RENAMO and had launched an ambush. The 25 September was a symbolic day for one of the attacks as it took place on Mozambican Armed Forces Day (and President Nyusi was out of the country). FRELIMO (and by extension, the security forces) remains divided between Nyusi's allies and those aligned to the former president Armando Guebuza – who had objected to a conciliatory approach to RENAMO.

After the 25-September incident, Dhlakama went into hiding in Gorongosa again. With President Nyusi's blessing and guarantees of safety official mediators arranged to meet him in the bush and escort him to Beira on 8 October. He was then effectively placed under house arrest by armed riot police and a stand-off ensued with Dhlakama's armed guards at his Beira house the following day.

After direct mediation by the provincial FRELIMO governor, the MDM's leader, the MDM mayor of Quelimane and the Catholic bishop of Beira, this stand-off passed without violence as Dhlakama himself recognized that bloodshed needed to be avoided.³⁵ His guards handed over their weapons and in exchange the police released eight RENAMO supporters they had detained. The Beira disarmament deal also guaranteed that Dhlakama's armed guards would be retrained as government police. Shortly after, Dhlakama left the city and returned to the safety of the area around Satunjira and RENAMO announced that it no longer had confidence in the five national mediators and requested they be replaced with international mediators, suggesting President Zuma of South Africa and representatives of the Catholic Church.³⁶

The renewed conflict of 2015–16 was more serious than the 2013–14 insurrection, but RENAMO's attacks remained low cost and high profile, intended to frighten people and show that the government was unable to guarantee security, especially of its officials.

Armed clashes escalated from October 2015 until December 2016. The renewed conflict of 2015–16 was more serious than the 2013–14 insurrection, but RENAMO's attacks remained low cost and high profile, intended to frighten people and show that the government was unable to guarantee security, especially of its officials. Soft targets such as two hospitals and a number of health clinics were part of this objective in 2016, as were ambushes of road convoys, including once again digging trenches across major highways. The government response was stronger than in 2013–14, with civilians targeted in central Mozambique and Tete province, including reports of huts and property burnt, looting and killings. This was probably also reflective of splits in government military forces, different chains of command and mixed messaging on how to respond to this renewed challenge by RENAMO.

³⁴ In Manica after these failed ambushes the myth was revived that Dhlakama possessed rain-making powers and had the ability to evade these ambushes laid for him by the government by turning himself into a partridge, the symbol of RENAMO, See, Bertelsen, B. (2016), *Violent Becomings: State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique*, Berghahn Books, p. 109.

³⁵ Author interview with eyewitnesses, Maputo, 17 March 2016. There are allegations that the governor of Beira might have initially supported the security operation against Dhlakama but shifted her position during the stand-off.

³⁶ RENAMO clearly blamed the mediators for providing guarantees of safe passage to Dhlakama that resulted in the armed stand-off at his Beira house.

These armed incidents, alongside political killings, kidnappings and shootings such as the January 2016 shooting by unidentified gunmen of RENAMO's Secretary-General Bissopo in Beira, had further eroded trust between both sides.³⁷ The killings and shootings in 2016 of RENAMO officials in the urban areas reminded Dhlakama of his own vulnerabilities and focused his attention on the need to reach a new agreement with the government.

The Avenida process

President Nyusi consistently signalled that he wanted a third round of 'direct talks' with Dhlakama, who agreed in May 2016 to discuss the possibility of formal talks between RENAMO and the government. A Joint Commission was established in Maputo, initially tasked with preparing a meeting between President Nyusi and Dhlakama. This resulted in two phone conversations in mid-June, which endorsed a four-point agenda for formal talks. Each side selected two items on the agenda. RENAMO wanted to discuss governance of the six provinces it administers and the integration of RENAMO military cadres into key positions in the armed forces, while the government's agenda items included an immediate ceasefire and the disarmament of RENAMO.

The government also compromised on 7 July and officially agreed to the introduction of international mediators (three chosen by RENAMO and three chosen by the government). The mediation team included representatives of the Catholic Church; the European Union, South Africa (proposed by RENAMO), and the Global Leadership Foundation; as well as Sir Ketumile Masire (former President of Botswana); Jonathan Powell (Inter Mediate); and Jakaya Kikwete (former President of Tanzania, proposed by RENAMO).³⁸

The former Italian government mediator from the 1992 Rome peace process, Mario Raffaelli was chosen to lead the mediation efforts jointly with Angelo Romano of Community Sant'Egidio, as representatives of the EU. Sir Ketumile Masire, a member of the Global Leadership Foundation was also invited to be a co-chair.³⁹ These negotiations took place at the Hotel Avenida, in central Maputo, and the Joint Commission held 47 sessions.

Between July and December 2016, the Joint Commission and the international mediators worked through the agenda items over five rounds of negotiations. The government and RENAMO set up a sub-commission to work on resulting constitutional amendments on decentralization.

The talks between the government and RENAMO in 2015 and 2016 were not helped by an ongoing internal struggle in FRELIMO over strategy. The two armed confrontations involving Afonso Dhlakama in September and October 2015 were apparently not authorized by the Mozambican president, and highlighted the divisions in FRELIMO, particularly between hardliners in the FRELIMO Political Commission and President Nyusi and his cabinet.⁴⁰ The stand-off outside Dhlakama's house in Beira

³⁷ Author interviews with RENAMO members indicated that Bissopo was running ammunition from porous government arsenals, 2019.

³⁸ Humanitarian Dialogue Adviser, Neha Sanghrajka supported Masire and Powell.

³⁹ The Global Leadership Foundation (GLF) first approached President Guebuza in late 2013 offering its good offices and subsequently Sir Ketumile Masire led a team to Mozambique on six occasions up to July 2016, see, GLF (2016), 'GLF Co-chair mediation in Mozambique', July 2016; See also, 'GLF Chairman's Statement for Annual Report 2017', <https://www.g-l-f.org/Network-news?blog=1&modeX=BlogID&modeXval=27264&BlogID=27264> (accessed 22 Jul. 2019).

⁴⁰ Dhlakama had tried to moderate hardliners in RENAMO that call for direct military confrontation. Dhlakama faced challenges of maintaining unity over strategy and there are indications that some of his advisers hoped to benefit from him miscalculating.

contravened an agreement reached by peace mediators, who had guaranteed Dhlakama's safe passage as a build up to a further meeting between President Nyusi and Dhlakama. The incident demolished what little trust remained.

The security situation remained volatile, mostly driven by brinkmanship rather than brute force, and mostly confined to the central provinces – Zambézia, Sofala, Manica, Nampula and Tete – where RENAMO received high levels of support in the October 2014 presidential and National Assembly elections. The impasse demonstrated that RENAMO lacked the military capacity to sustain an insurgency across the country and signalled increasing fatigue among its mostly middle-aged combatants (40–60 years old) who desired jobs, pensions and a lasting deal. It is significant that although much of Mozambique's young people vote for RENAMO to protest the government, there is little evidence that significant numbers of youth have become armed combatants. However, in 2017 there was an up-turn in recruitment of young fighters.⁴¹ This has meant that since 2013, rather than a genuine challenge to the government, RENAMO's return to armed conflict has been more about extracting a new elite bargain through violence, looking to exploit the government's inability to provide basic services and rampant inequality as the FRELIMO leadership grows richer.

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The 2016 negotiations had two phases. The first ran to November and discussed handing over two to six governorships to RENAMO in exchange for progress on demobilization. RENAMO and FRELIMO finally compromised, agreeing to the principle of supporting constitutional reform to allow for decentralization and elected governorships.⁴² It became apparent that Dhlakama was becoming fatigued of his rural existence, under pressure from his supporters for a deal and convinced that RENAMO could make gains in local and national elections in 2018 and 2019, especially if the constitution was amended and decentralization allowed for gubernatorial elections (which would enable him to win new rents to redistribute among his supporters). President Nyusi's position strengthened over 2016, although two deals agreed in principle by his negotiator Jacinto Veloso were vetoed by the administration (a signal of the lack of full buy-in from hardliners in FRELIMO).

As discussed above, initially these discussions needed facilitation by international mediation led by EU-supported Mario Raffaelli and the Community Sant' Egidio. However, in November 2016, President Nyusi and Dhlakama decided to take a firmer grip of the process themselves as they had become frustrated by intrigues inside their own negotiating teams and decided to start talking directly to each other by phone (rather than using intermediaries). This was a breakthrough, signalling that both men felt they could reach a new deal and that they wanted greater Mozambican ownership of the process.⁴³

⁴¹ This is unlikely to be for combat, a similar pattern happened as RENAMO prepared for agreement in 1992. These recruits hope to benefit from the fruits of the next agreement.

⁴² Morier-Genoud, E. (2017), 'Proto-guerre et négociations. Le Mozambique en crise, 2013-2016', *Politique africaine*, 145, pp. 153–175.

⁴³ Some of the mediators felt the Mario Raffaelli and Angelo Romano were over-committed to protecting the legacy of the Rome GPA and too public with their opinions. They failed to build trust with President Nyusi and increasingly with Dhlakama. Author interviews with ex-mediators, February 2017.

The Manzoni process

Most of the international mediators left Mozambique on 16 December 2016 and soon after the Swiss Ambassador to Mozambique, Mirko Manzoni, and mediators Jonathan Powell and Neha Sanghrajka began facilitating direct and continuing engagement between the two leaders, which led to Dhlakama announcing a week-long ceasefire (27 December 2016–3 January 2017).⁴⁴ An extension of a 60-day truce (until 4 March 2017) followed, which RENAMO and government forces both observed and armed convoys were suspended during this time. On 3 March, RENAMO extended its truce to 4 May and then extended it indefinitely to allow the new peace talks to progress. RENAMO restarted peaceful political activities in central Mozambique in 2017.

In February 2017, President Nyusi and Dhlakama confirmed that new negotiations were underway. Two six-person working groups were established: one on decentralization and the other on military affairs (including disarming and dismantling the RENAMO militia, integration of RENAMO into the defence and security forces, and equality for former RENAMO fighters in the military). In May 2017, an eight-person Monitoring and Verification Team was established and mandated to supervise the ceasefire.

Furthermore, a contact group made up of ambassadors of Switzerland (Chair), the US (co-Chair), Botswana, China, the EU and Norway and the UK began work on 6 March 2017. Learning from mistakes made during the Avenida process, the contact group was a disciplined and accomplished mediation effort led by Manzoni, who gained trust from his discretion and focus.

By August 2017, sufficient progress was achieved for President Nyusi to meet Dhlakama near his bush base in central Mozambique for a face-to-face meeting to the amazement of many Mozambicans.⁴⁵ They met for a second time in February 2018 in central Mozambique and a lasting deal was close to being agreed. However, Dhlakama died on 3 May 2018 in Gorongosa due to complications linked to diabetes.

The unexpected death of Dhlakama was a major setback for a peace process that was coming to fruition and weeks, if not months, away from a final agreement.

The unexpected death of Dhlakama was a major setback for a peace process that was coming to fruition and weeks, if not months, away from a final agreement. Negotiations stalled for many months as RENAMO came to terms with its leadership loss and prepared to choose a successor. Soon after, 58-year-old Ossufo Momade (an ex-general and secretary-general of RENAMO) became interim leader and was later elected at a party congress as permanent leader on 17 January 2019.

The mediation process, resumed in August 2018, when the government and RENAMO signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on military issues, paving the way for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of RENAMO's militia. The signing of the memorandum coincided with the first anniversary of the meeting between President Nyusi and Dhlakama.

⁴⁴ Frustration at foreign mediators was one reason for resumed direct talks, but a successful FRELIMO armed strategy in urban areas against RENAMO officials and supporters also demonstrated to Dhlakama and RENAMO's military chief of staff, General T. Maquinze, that they could not protect their own and had little choice but to resume dialogue to avoid further casualties. General Maquinze is the key RENAMO military strategist and developed the targeted armed violence strategy with Dhlakama in 2012. He has remained a powerful influence over Dhlakama's successor Momade and encouraged reforms of the RENAMO military in February 2019, including the replacements of Brigadier Thaio and Brigadier Josefa and their transfers from Gorongosa to other bases and the promotion of Major General Kia.

⁴⁵ An earlier attempt to bring Nyusi together with Dhlakama in December 2017 failed as RENAMO's senior commanders blocked him boarding a government helicopter – indicating that Dhlakama was not in absolute control.

This change of leader also significantly slowed the pace of mediation efforts, as demonstrated by Momade remaining in the safety of the Gorongosa region until eventually visiting Maputo for two rounds of direct talks with President Nyusi in late February and early March 2019.⁴⁶ This was followed on 2 June by a meeting between President Nyusi and Momade in Chimoio during which they agreed on a provisional commitment for a definitive peace agreement in early August (scheduled for a final cessation of hostilities ceremony on 1 August in central Mozambique and on the 6 August a final peace deal ceremony in Maputo).⁴⁷

Internal RENAMO discord

The death of Dhlakama in May 2018 not only slowed the pace of negotiations but also changed the internal dynamics of RENAMO and sparked a power struggle between different regions and ethnic groups.⁴⁸ Momade is part of the largest ethnic group in Mozambique, the Macua, and is from Nampula province. He and his supporters have been pivoting the party away from central Mozambican leadership, which is dominated by those of the Ndau ethnic group.⁴⁹ This was evident during the 2019 Congress and the leadership election, but it also has some electoral logic as RENAMO's greatest gains in the municipal elections of 2018 were in Zambézia and Nampula provinces.

The discord inside the opposition party became public in June 2019, when a group of rebel RENAMO military officers threatened to overthrow Momade as party leader if he did not step down by 10 July. They alleged that Momade had persecuted and executed two dissidents who had opposed his presidency and his disarmament undertakings with Nyusi.⁵⁰ In April 2019, Momade appointed one of his key-backers, André Magibire as the new secretary-general of RENAMO (who is a member of the Military Affairs Commission and has actively been involved in the peace process since it began). He replaced Manuel Bissopo, who was dismissed in February 2019 (Bissopo was from Sofala province and a failed candidate for the RENAMO presidency).⁵¹

Momade refused to step down and, on 26 June 2019, after weeks of party wrangling, RENAMO officially nominated Ossufo Momade as its presidential candidate in the October elections. Shortly afterwards, on 1 July, RENAMO announced its candidates for governorship elections. These include two popular defectors from MDM – Manuel de Araújo for Zambézia and Ricardo Tomás for Tete. Other key appointments are António Muchanga for Maputo province, Alfredo Magumisse for Manica and Luis Trinta Mecupia for Nampula. These appointments indicate that RENAMO is seriously targeting these governorships and hopes to pick up seats using these names to help galvanize support. Sofala province may prove more difficult. Elias Dhlakama, younger brother of the late RENAMO leader,

⁴⁶ Momade had previously met Nyusi at the memorandum signing in August 2018. Momade stayed in Maputo until very late March 2019, due to impact of Cyclone Idai.

⁴⁷ On 29 July 2019, parliament approved a new amnesty law to protect disarmed RENAMO cadres from harassment as the previous legislation only covered the period up to September 2014.

⁴⁸ The Mozambican government were unable to medically evacuate him as RENAMO did not inform them of the seriousness of his condition. Dhlakama had developed a good working relationship with President Nyusi, both men respected each other – Nyusi even organized for one of Dhlakama's sons to study overseas to avoid bullying. Such gestures, built up trust.

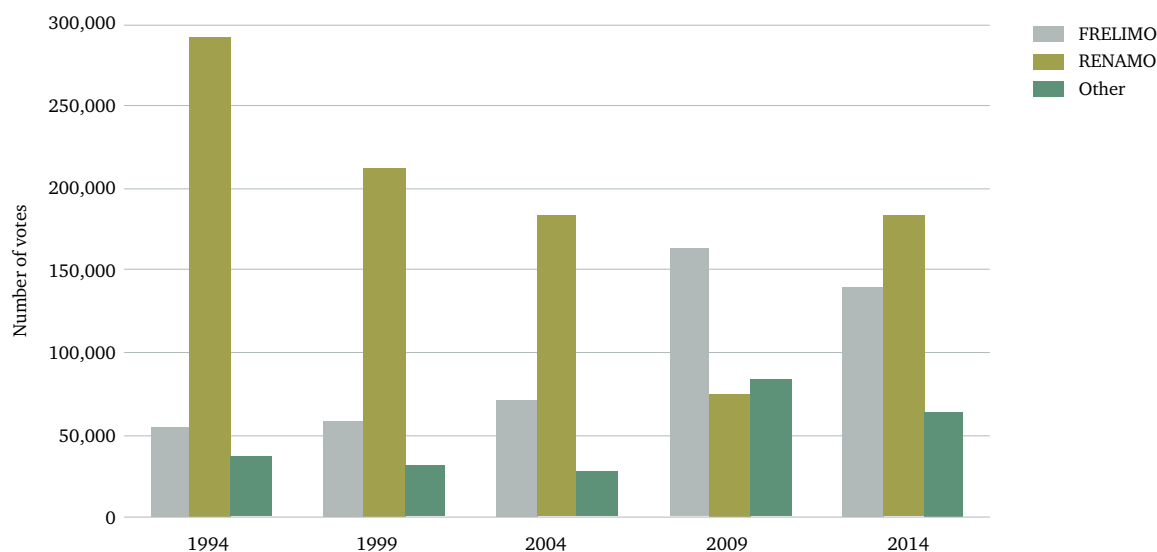
⁴⁹ In May 2019, President Nyusi complained that RENAMO had provided an old list of already demobilized combatants working in the FADM for posts in the police force. At that time RENAMO was trying to argue that past peace agreements were no longer valid.

⁵⁰ The dissidents' claims were weakened when one of the alleged victims to have been executed, Brigadier Josefa de Sousa, was shown by RENAMO to be alive – although it seems he was detained. Author interviews with RENAMO members, June 2019.

⁵¹ Author interviews with RENAMO members, Maputo, February 2019. RENAMO supporters from Manica, Sofala and Tete in particular felt they were being replaced by family and friends of Momade following the party's congress. This pivot away from the central provinces also was apparent in the reshuffle of the party and its military structure.

was caught off-guard by his nomination for Sofala.⁵² He only knew of his nomination when it was announced and declined to stand. A dispute over RENAMO leadership continues to rumble on, which may weaken Momade's grip on Sofala. Voters that disagree with Momade's leadership are likely to transfer their support to MDM (as happened in 2009).

Figure 4: National Assembly results – Sofala province (1994–2014)



Source: República de Moçambique Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) [Republic of Mozambique National Elections Commission]; Secretariado Técnico da Administração Eleitoral (STAE) [Election Technical Secretariat], <http://www.stae.org.mz/>.

On 24 July 2019, a dissident group of RENAMO's militia based in Gorongosa, led by Major-General Mariano Nhungue Chissinge and self-styled as a 'Military Junta', threatened violence for a second time and to disrupt the final stage of peace talks. In a press conference they called for an end to government dialogue with Momade and declared that Momade was no longer the party's leader, accusing him of 'abducting and isolating' RENAMO officials who had supported the party's late leader, Afonso Dhlakama.

The death of Afonso Dhlakama was a major setback for the peace talks and probably delayed a final agreement by at least a year. Dhlakama demonstrated statesmanship in seeking a sustainable agreement with President Nyusi and both men had shown brave leadership to meet face-to-face. Time will tell, whether RENAMO's new leadership, can deliver on peace and capitalize on an electorate increasingly disillusioned with FRELIMO. Time will also tell, whether the recent intra-RENAMO splits hinder its disarmament and 'imperil completion of the peace process – as well as hinder RENAMO's 2019 electoral prospects'.⁵³

⁵² Dhlakama stood against Ossufo Momade for the presidency of RENAMO at the party congress in January 2019 and was defeated by 410 votes to 238.

⁵³ Cook, N. (2019), 'Mozambique: Politics, Economy, and U.S. Relations', Congressional Research Service, R45817, 18 July, p. 6, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45817> (accessed 22 Jul. 2019).

4. Sustainability of Elite Bargains

While many observers have focused on the civil divides between RENAMO and FRELIMO, they have neglected the significance of post-war relationships between RENAMO's low- and mid-ranked veterans and its leadership. Studies in West Africa show that long after a conflict, military networks remain involved in myriad activities such as election campaigning, illicit trade, private security, mining and criminality.⁵⁴ In Mozambique, with RENAMO's rapidly degrading fortunes, Dhlakama has shown that he could still remobilize aging ex-combatants and arm them 20 years after the conflict ended. However, that support had to be earned. When the relationship between Dhlakama and core followers in central Mozambique began to break down in 2012, he moved back to shore up support.⁵⁵ A Dutch anthropologist who spent several years in this area estimates that some 3,000 RENAMO ex-combatants lived in Maringué district, Sofala province, without any financial support from the party and have been 'waiting' for the party to provide them with benefits. Although some observers disagree and think that this estimate is likely more accurate for the whole of the province.⁵⁶ This demonstrates the local nature of Mozambique's politics at times and goes some way to explain why RENAMO was unable to return to full-scale conflict, though its structures remained sufficiently intact in central Mozambique to resume targeted violence.

The recent confrontation grew out of a variety of factors, which may also have some bearing on the sustainability of any future elite bargain, including:

- **RENAMO's rejection of electoral laws approved in parliament:** During the extended debate on electoral laws in 2012, RENAMO consistently demanded the right to have veto power in the National Elections Commission (CNE). Tensions had risen because of municipal elections in November 2013, which RENAMO boycotted, and preparations for national presidential and parliamentary elections in October 2014.
- **RENAMO veteran fighters:** In 2011 parliament approved FRELIMO-proposed legislation providing pensions for civil war veterans, although it did not win the support of RENAMO. Despite good intentions, the law raised unfulfilled expectations. The bureaucratic and lengthy process rekindled feelings of discrimination among RENAMO veterans, leading them to mobilize and pressure their leadership to do the same.
- **Dhlakama:** Afonso Dhlakama was 64 in 2018 at his death. His relative youth meant there had been little discussion of a potential successor, and dissent against him could lead to expulsion. Dhlakama had proved to be an inconsistent and poor negotiator, often holding out for maximum concessions, using boycotts and threats. However, in 2016–18 his tactics and statesmanship improved.

⁵⁴ Themnér, A. (2012), 'Former Mid-Level Commanders in Big Man Networks', in Utas, M. (ed), *African Conflicts and Informal Power: Big Men and Networks*, Zed Books.

⁵⁵ Wiegink, N. (2015), "'It Will Be Our Time to Eat': Former Renamo Combatants and Big-Men Dynamics in Central Mozambique", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41 (4), pp. 1–17.

⁵⁶ Wiegink, N. (2013), 'Why Did the Soldiers Not Go Home? Demobilized Combatants, Family Life, and Witchcraft in Post War Mozambique', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 86 (1) pp. 107–132.

- **Guebuza:** On several occasions, FRELIMO ‘negotiated’ concessions with RENAMO resulting in financial compensation or electoral legislation amendments.⁵⁷ During Guebuza’s tenure as president, he was less amenable to granting such concessions. It might also be that Guebuza wanted to extend his term in office by encouraging an armed stand-off with RENAMO in 2013 and early 2014 until coming under internal and regional pressure to reach agreement in 2014.⁵⁸
- **RENAMO’s poor finances and lack of accountability:** Losing MPs in the 2009 election and being without local-government representation further damaged RENAMO’s already fragile finances. Leadership secrecy over party finances and patronage has been the norm since 1994. Dhlakama himself has faced allegations of misuse and greed.⁵⁹ Action by government officials from 2012 against RENAMO’s artisanal mining interests also heightened the sense of vulnerability.
- **The younger RENAMO generation:** There are several important leaders who are not from the civil war generation. They are now in their thirties and forties, and some of them believe that FRELIMO will never cede power without the use of force.
- **Promise of riches:** In 2012–13, Mozambique’s politicians, private companies and the press talked up the prospects of Mozambique becoming rich on coal, oil and gas. This encouraged Afonso Dhlakama to act radically and not settle for small cash handouts through an elite bargain. The political dangers of not managing expectations of potential rewards from natural resources seem to be playing out now in Mozambique, following the discovery of world class gas fields and a growing sense of FRELIMO elite capture of these future rents and growing inequality.⁶⁰
- **FRELIMO unity:** FRELIMO’s rejection of the decentralization bill of April 2015 undermined President Nyusi’s authority and the trust he had built up with Dhlakama, and showed he lacked a tight grip over the party. This failure resulted in a fresh round of armed violence.

Importance of decentralization

Meaningful decentralization by the government and full demobilization by RENAMO have been the key issues of recent negotiations. In early 2018, President Nyusi and Dhlakama negotiated a framework accord on political decentralization. Following Dhlakama’s death there were fears this might not last, but in May 2018 parliament enacted a series of constitutional amendments to prepare for deepened decentralization. These provide for elected provincial, district and municipal assemblies (with the leading delegate with the party with a simple majority, heading them). Following the work of the commission on decentralization, a constitutional amendment on the issue was passed in the National Assembly in May 2019. In June, the president promulgated the Law of Punctual Review of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique.

RENAMO had dropped its insistence of directly appointing governors in the provinces it claimed to dominate and accepted the principle of indirect gubernatorial elections in 2019 – as new provincial governors would be chosen based on the winning provincial party list. So for the first time, provincial

⁵⁷ Vines (2013), ‘Renamo’s Rise and Decline: The Politics of Reintegration in Mozambique’.

⁵⁸ In 2013, Guebuza also underestimated RENAMO’s capacity to disrupt and did not support FADM efforts including diverting resources towards maritime security. Author interview with ex-FADM official, November 2016.

⁵⁹ Cahen, M. (2011), ‘The Enemy as Model: Patronage as a Crisis Factor in Constructing Opposition in Mozambique,’ OXPO Working Papers, http://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/materials/centres/oxpo/working-papers/wp_10-11/OXPO_10-11f_Cahen.pdf (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

⁶⁰ Ross, M. (2012), *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*, Princeton University Press, pp. 149–151.

time, provincial governors will be elected, not appointed by the president. Provincial assemblies, that currently play an advisory role are to become provincial executive councils and will have some tax-raising authority. A legislative package for decentralization of powers across 10 provinces was announced by Mozambique's cabinet in February 2019.⁶¹ The proposals impose overlapping mandates on provincially elected governors and state-appointed secretaries and this looks like an arrangement designed to preserve FRELIMO power and disadvantage grass-root representation. Under these new laws, crucial tax-raising powers remain with the Secretariat of State, who is appointed by the president – a request FRELIMO insisted on.⁶²

RENAMO's comprehensive disarmament is the key government demand.⁶³ The government understands that it needs to offer concessions for reintegrating RENAMO combatants into the FADM and police. In this regard, the MoU on Military Affairs includes security provisions for the placement of RENAMO ex-combatants into senior positions in the army and police force. New symbolic senior posts are being created to absorb some of these former fighters and RENAMO has raised the idea of creating a 'provincial police force'.⁶⁴ In February 2019, for example, 11 officers from RENAMO were appointed to leadership positions in the FADM and this followed the appointment in January of three top commanders from RENAMO to key army leadership positions. Another positive step occurred in mid-July when RENAMO delivered a revised list of 10 officers it wanted to see integrated into the police force as part of the DDR process. The government rejected the previous list because it included people who had already served in the armed forces and were now demobilized or retired. Finally, on 28 July 2019, RENAMO commenced DDR of its residual forces in Satunjira. This process will cover 5,221 RENAMO militia currently in the provinces of Sofala, Inhambane, Tete, Niassa and Nampula.⁶⁵

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It will be a challenge to manage new 'opportunistic' recruits hoping for jobs and benefits following reports in 2019 that RENAMO is recruiting and training armed men. However, this action is likely more about preparing for the new deal and sending a message that RENAMO could still act as a spoiler, than any real intent to return to conflict.

International partners will need to make long-term guarantees to DDR efforts in hot spots, particularly parts of central Mozambique and Tete province, and focus on bringing Momade into a process that incentivizes non-violent politics. A basket fund has been established to channel financing for DDR activities and a DDR camp has been constructed in central Mozambique, overseen by Brigadier General Javier Perez Aquino and a group of military experts.⁶⁶ Too much focus on austerity by international donors and the international financial institutions at this critical moment might back-fire – their

⁶¹ This is to come into effect for cities and provinces with the 2019 elections and for district assemblies in the 2024 elections. Under a RENAMO-government compromise, until 2024, the government will consult with governors regarding district executive appointments.

⁶² Author interview with government official in Maputo, February 2019.

⁶³ After the May 2018 decentralization reforms, FRELIMO parliamentarians delayed additional action pending progress on RENAMO's disarmament. In July 2018, the signed MoU on military affairs paved the way for further parliamentary progress on decentralization.

⁶⁴ The existing force, the Mozambique Republic Police (PRM), would retain responsibility 'for the most serious crimes', while other policing matters would pass into the hand of the provincial forces.

⁶⁵ Author interview with international observer in Gorongosa, 29 July 2019.

⁶⁶ His previous mission was supervising the disarmament of guerrillas in Colombia for the UN and his efforts are funded by Argentina and the EU.

engagement needs to be conflict-sensitive and not time dependent.⁶⁷ Like many other guerrilla groups, RENAMO will only gradually disarm its gunmen and is likely to keep hidden arms caches as an insurance policy. As a response, the best strategy is to build up political confidence and economic opportunity so that gradually this armed wing of RENAMO becomes redundant.

A durable peace settlement will require compromise by FRELIMO and an acceptance that RENAMO has in the short term been able to capitalize on some of the government's shortcomings. A danger for RENAMO is that its armed militia is mostly middle aged and that it will not be able to rely on them indefinitely to provide armed back up.⁶⁸ The military wing is also divided, split over the appointment of Momade as president and his efforts to pivot the party core away from Manica and Sofala provinces. There is also uncertainty over Momade's commitment to historical loyalties from the 1977–92 war. Furthermore, there is concern over the impact caused by Cyclone Ida in key strong-holds in Sofala and Manica, which damaged hidden arms caches.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Contact Group members have plans to improve roads, support microfinance and agricultural extension projects. Author interviews with ex-Contact Group members, London, January 2019.

⁶⁸ During author interviews in Maputo in March 2016, a number of RENAMO supporters speculated that Afonso Dhlakama's niece, Ivone Soares might be a possible successor. Several also mentioned the son of RENAMO's first leader, André Matsangaissa, was also being groomed for leadership. In August 2017, senior RENAMO officials signalled that Dhlakama would run for a sixth time as the party's candidate in the 2019 national elections for the Mozambican presidency but with Dhlakama's death in 2018 this all changed.

⁶⁹ Author interviews with RENAMO officials in 2019, including some who claim the cyclones were called by the spirit of Dhlakama to protest at divisions in RENAMO.

5. Conclusion

On 15 October 2019, Mozambicans vote for the sixth time in national multi-party elections. According to the National Election Commission, 39 parties and three coalitions will contest the upcoming legislative and presidential elections.⁷⁰ However, in reality, this electoral contest is between FRELIMO and RENAMO and the main competition will be for the provincial governorships and parliamentary seats in the National Assembly, rather than for the presidency.

Thirty-nine parties and three coalitions will contest the upcoming legislative and presidential elections.

The municipal election results of 2018 illustrated how RENAMO had significant support in Maputo province and made dramatic gains in Zambézia and Nampula provinces. This is not lost on FRELIMO and, despite RENAMO's internal crisis, the government is expecting a hard-fought election. Corrupt elections could threaten the sustainability of the emerging elite bargain due to be signed in August. The conduct of credible elections requires the political will of RENAMO and FRELIMO leaders to moderate their hard-liners and prepare for compromise. The results that emerge are unlikely to be fully democratic, but hopefully they will be partly democratic and improve political accountability and pluralism. International partners, including through their good offices of election monitoring, can assist this process. The newly created post of Personal Envoy for Mozambique by the UN Secretary-General is an important development.⁷¹

Reaching a lasting elite bargain between RENAMO and FRELIMO is a long-term project. Looking back, many factors contributed to the end of the Mozambican civil war in 1992: the end of the Cold War and Apartheid in South Africa; political changes among Mozambique's neighbours; and a damaging military stalemate between FRELIMO and RENAMO. As occurred during the civil war, post-conflict politics was framed by regionalism and inequality – with FRELIMO increasingly trying to assert its hegemony across Mozambique.

Since Mozambique's first ever multiparty elections in 1994, FRELIMO has pursued a strategy of co-option and division of RENAMO through elite bargains. After the shock of the 1999 presidential election result, President Guebuza determined to end these cycles of often opaque elite bargains (payments and offering token concessions in particular) and neutralize RENAMO permanently. He underestimated RENAMO's support and ability to disrupt, but also the weakness of the Mozambican state to effectively respond.

⁷⁰ Some 90 per cent of voting-age adults have reportedly registered, but the process has featured some possible manipulation by STAE, the election administration secretariat. In pro-FRELIMO Gaza and Cabo Delgado provinces, it calculated unusually high adult registrations compared with Zambézia province (a RENAMO stronghold). This could provide FRELIMO nine additional parliamentary seats and has been challenged by opposition and civil society. The legitimacy of the CNE, the electoral commission could also become a flash point.

⁷¹ This is particularly important as in 2019 divisions appeared among the Maputo diplomatic core regarding who should lead mediation efforts. The appointment on 8 July 2019 of Mirko Manzonni as the Personal Envoy for Mozambique of the UN Secretary-General, should help manage such distraction.

Some 27 years after the Mozambican conflict ended, many RENAMO combatants have successfully reintegrated, but a hardened core of ex-militia remain mainly in central Mozambique and have re-mobilized for armed conflict since 2013. The 'pay and scatter' DDR strategy and other efforts to dismantle RENAMO's command and control structures ensured that the party could not reignite total civil war. Overall, Mozambique remains an example of mostly successful demobilization, but poor reintegration. Mozambican domestic politics is partly to blame for this, but so, too, is past international complacency that Mozambique's peace was secure.

The situation today in Mozambique also highlights the degree to which these bargaining processes are long-term and there is still a need to look at strategies to accommodate clusters of combatants that remain cohesive, particularly in central Mozambique. It remains to be seen if this August agreement will be backed up with development promises in central Mozambique, which are needed to guarantee a better retirement for RENAMO's gunmen and a non-violent, poverty-free future for their children.

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RENAMO faces many challenges. Mediators and advisers to the peace talks complain that RENAMO flip flops in its demands – a reflection of differing interests and unrealistic expectations. Afonso Dhlakama's long-term vision was to replicate FRELIMO by setting up a neo-patrimonial system. His gamble of targeted armed violence since 2013 was aimed at shoring up support in central Mozambique and was rewarded for challenging FRELIMO by increased votes, thereby gaining seats in the 2014 elections.

FRELIMO's post-conflict strategy under Chissano was to weaken RENAMO's support base in central Mozambique through compromise and patronage. This was abruptly ended by President Guebuza's attempt to impose total FRELIMO domination across Mozambique in 1999, once RENAMO's levels of electoral support were clear. Guebuza's strategy spectacularly backfired, humiliating Dhlakama and radicalizing RENAMO's ex-combatants, resulting in their push for resumed targeted armed violence. Isolated, and backed into a corner, Dhlakama felt he had nothing to lose by authorizing targeted violence. This violence was rewarded in the 2014 elections, especially by voters in central Mozambique. The election results also strengthened Dhlakama's leadership position in RENAMO and again postponed long-needed party reform.⁷²

By 2015, Dhlakama also miscalculated, believing his threat of further violence would win more concessions. Instead it increased splits in FRELIMO over its RENAMO strategy and weakened President Nyusi's attempts to reach a lasting accommodation. The result was at least one assassination attempt on Dhlakama and increased violence by both sides, despite a haphazard good offices effort by various international mediators at the Hotel Avenida. Common frustration of this process encouraged President Nyusi and Afonso Dhlakama to cut intermediaries and start bilateral talks. Helped with logistics and focus by a new Contact Group, led by Swiss Ambassador Manzoni, this process has made progress in fits-and-starts.

⁷² Vines, A. (2018), 'Remembering a warlord democrat', *Mail & Guardian*, 9 May 2018, <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-05-09-00-remembering-a-warlord-democrat> (accessed 6 Jul. 2019).

The October elections will be the first immediate test of the August agreement. If RENAMO wins at least three provincial governorships, will it be enough to seal a new sustainable elite bargain? RENAMO's armed men are looking for a lasting accommodation and FRELIMO's elite also want political stability to attract international investment. The benefits of the elite bargain for RENAMO include elected governorships, payment for disarmament and employment, and development opportunities. If this deal sticks on the third attempt, the domestic focus should then move onto poverty reduction, combatting inequality, education and solving the new security crisis with Islamic militants in Cabo Delgado province.

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Cover image: A Mozambican woman marks her ballot at a polling station in Maputo as Mozambique votes in presidential and legislative elections, 15 October 2014.

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