The Political Economy of Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Insurgency and its Impact on Southern Africa's Regional Security

Tinashe Sithole

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Tinashe Sithole is a PhD candidate and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Johannesburg. In 2018, he obtained a Master's degree in Politics at the University of Johannesburg. His research interests include conflict resolution, peace and security in Africa, natural resource governance, democratic transition, and political economy. Email: tsitholetinashe@gmail.com.

Abstract

This article investigates the political economy of Mozambique's Cabo Delgado insurgency and its implications on the regional security of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The conflict in Cabo Delgado has drawn attention to the SADC's vulnerability to conflict, specifically with respect to Islamic extremism. Southern Africa has enjoyed relative peace in comparison to other regions on the continent, but studies on intrastate conflicts have indicated that conflict is likely to spill over into neighboring countries. Secondary data was used to analyze how natural resource governance practices have contributed to intrastate conflicts and how this has driven Islamic extremism and insurgent behavior in Mozambique. This study argues that the SADC must actively intervene by providing humanitarian and military assistance through training and deployment of military personnel to restore peace and security in Mozambique, and that the consequences of inaction have escalated the conflict, as illustrated by the humanitarian crisis. Unless the SADC deploys military personnel and training, there remains a risk of conflict spreading to vulnerable neighboring countries, consequently destabilizing the region.

Keywords

Greed and Grievances Theory; Natural Resource Governance Practices; Political Economy; Regional Security Complex Theory; Southern African Development Community

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Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, conflict dynamics and trends in Africa have generally evolved from interstate into intrastate conflict. Palik, Rustad and Methi (2020) highlight that in 2019 alone, 25 state-based conflicts were recorded in Cameroon, Burundi, Chad, Niger, Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Mali, and Mozambique. In essence, the common causes of state-based conflicts range from political contestations in post-electoral processes, failed transitions, ethno-religious cleavages, and polarization as well as grievances emanating from marginalization—factors which have ignited the most violent civil conflicts. Over the past decade, the proliferation of Islamic/jihadist extremism across Africa, fueled by other factors such as state fragility, poverty, and economic crises, has become the major driver of several conflicts in the African continent (Mroszczyk and Abrahms 2021, 3).

Since 2017, Mozambique has experienced the Islamic insurgency destabilizing the northern region of Cabo Delgado and potentially the whole country as well as the SADC region. A report by International Crisis Group Report (2021, 21) acknowledges that "since 2017, groups of fighters, often carrying black Islamic State (ISIS) flags and denouncing the state and the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) ruling party, have grown from small units targeting remote security posts into heavily equipped companies whose attacks threaten not only national stability but also international peace and security." While the insurgency has destabilized the northern region of Cabo Delgado, its dynamic reflects an even larger potential to destabilize the whole country, with wider implications for SADC regional security.

Considering that Northern Mozambique is known for its oil-rich land, the significance of resource endowment in fueling this conflict cannot be understated. Bissada (2020, 2) emphasizes that "the violence in Cabo Delgado erupted several years ago as companies discovered massive oil and gas deposits in the region." The above reinvigorates Auty's (1993) resource curse thesis, arguing that countries with large endowments of natural resources such as oil and gas perform worse in terms of economic development than countries having fewer resources (Auty 1993; Gary and Karl 2003; Ross 2012; William 2011). However, notwithstanding Auty's (1993) propositions in the resource curse thesis, other Middle East countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have harnessed the full potential of natural resources such as oil, petroleum and liquefied natural gas to spearhead development and economic prosperity. In the absence of conflict, these resources have become the primary pillars of most oil and petroleum-rich Middle East countries.

In contrast, competition over natural resources in most African countries has often resulted in violent conflict. Various factors contribute to this phenomenon, including weak institutions that fail to distribute resources for the benefit of all citizens (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). The conflict in Mozambique brings to light the challenges of natural resource governance practices, including those mentioned above. William (2011) observes that conflicts continue to be experienced in Africa dating back to the Cold War as there were proxy wars fought in the continent. According to Cusak (1995), civil conflicts have mostly been attributed to structural conditions in Africa's social, political, and economic facets. In the case of Mozambique, it can be noted that a constellation of forces ranging from poverty and economic exclusion to natural resource politics and state fragility have exacerbated the Cabo Delgado insurgency.

The conflict in Mozambique has been a cause of concern since 2015; it turned into mass killings and displacement of unarmed citizens (Bissada 2020). Combined with this factor is the nature of the insurgency espousing Islamic extremism in the North, East, and West Africa, and much of the Middle East. Studies on conflict in Mozambique have largely focused on the civil war between Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) and FRELIMO (Gabrita 2000; Hultman 2009). This study notes that, the Islamic insurgency presents a new threat to peace and security in the country as well as southern Africa. In view of the Islamic extremist affiliations of the insurgent forces, this paper explores the impact of the Cabo Delgado insurgency on SADC's regional security. Due to the ever-evolving dynamics and nature of the conflict in Mozambique, the study argues that the insurgency poses security challenges to the stability in the country and the whole region. According to the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC) report of 2021, since October 2017, an Islamic extremist armed group, known as Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama (ASWJ), has been launching violent attacks on civilians, government forces and military installations in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The insurgency attacks led to a humanitarian crisis with more than 400,000 internally displaced persons (HPC 2021). The group's activities have been concentrated on the coast of Cabo Delgado from Pemba city to the Tanzanian border.

The government's reaction to the conflict has been dismal, failing to protect civilians and stem increasing extra-judicial killings, rape as well as the kidnapping of women and children. Government forces have carried out vicious attacks against civilians accused of collaborating with or supporting Islamic insurgents (HPC 2021). Furthermore, reports have suggested that the Mozambican security response has further exacerbated human rights abuses in the region further fueling the conflict (Amnesty International 2021; HPC 2021). For instance, the HPC report mentioned above highlighted how government forces detained journalists who cover humanitarian events in Cabo Delgado. The report further states how government forces subjected civilians

suspected of supporting the group to searches, looting, and arbitrary detention (HPC 2021). The continued conflict in the northern province has caused further insecurity and displacement within Cabo Delgado and the neighboring provinces of Niassa and Nampula.

This paper argues that the nature and pattern of the conflict in Mozambique is not only a national threat but also a regional one, as evidenced by the displacement of people to other provinces and neighboring countries. There is hence the need for concerted regional efforts to stem the negative implications of the insurgency through enhanced security cooperation and mutual assistance. The lack of intervention led to the escalation of the conflict and humanitarian crisis. The paper's key question is: what role can the SADC play in maintaining regional stability? For this purpose, a critical analysis of the role of the SADC through a political economy[1] approach is provided with a view at better understanding the context, the distributional stakes and actors fueling the conflict itself. The political economy approach helps to explain the conflict's drivers and agents in Cabo Delgado and reveals the complex dynamics that have shaped the conflict as well as political and economic incentives to promote regional peace. Focus on the self-interests of political actors' sheds light on why the conflict has persisted despite the government efforts for conflict resolution at the state and regional level. Political economy literature such as Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson (2005) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) illustrates how economic, social disparities and resource control fuel conflict. These are comprehensive issues surrounding Mozambique insurgency. Given that the principles that have informed the SADC's regional peace and security architecture are predicated on mutual assistance and cooperation, this paper emphasizes the role of the SADC as an active player in conflict resolution through military and humanitarian assistance, as stemming from the principle of subsidiarity and complementarity.[2]

This study consists of six parts. The first section focuses on the theoretical framework of the study. This part articulates the regional security complexity theory and greed and grievance theory as well as their insights toward understanding the conflict in Mozambique and the implications towards regional peace and security. This is followed by the political economy interpretation of the Cabo Delgado insurgency. Secondly, an overview of intrastate conflict trends and causes in the region and a brief history of the Cabo Delgado insurgency in Mozambique follows. The third section reviews scholarly views on the factors driving the insurgency and its

[1] Political economy is a mode of analysis that examines how political power and economic resources are shared and distributed contexts and the contestations and contradictions associated with that process-structures, institutions, and agents.

[2] See Article 16 of the PSC Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council. It illustrates the relationship with Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Also, see Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern and Northern Africa (2008). The African peace and security architecture recognizes the RECS in conflict resolution.

implications for Mozambique and SADC. The systematic reviews originate from relevant academic literature, reports published by international non-governmental organizations, grey literature, and anecdotal evidence from the media. After this, the study discusses the role of the SADC and the implication of the insurgency for regional stability. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations are discussed.

Theoretical Framework: Between Regional Security Complex Theory and Greed and Grievance Theory

Regional Security Complex Theory

For this study, this section focuses on the theoretical debates informing this analysis. Regional security complex theory (RSCT) explains the impact of intrastate conflicts on regional security (Buzan and Waever 2003). RSCT's underlying assumption is that tensions between countries are more profound amongst countries close in geographical terms. The lesser the geographical distance between countries, the greater the intensity of war upon the other state. According to Rummel (1976), contact is both a cause and perpetrator of violent conflict due to what Mupereki (2014) termed "spillovers." Africa provides various examples supporting this theory. For instance, the 2011 uprisings, known as the Arab Spring, spread from one country to another across the Maghreb region (i.e., Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt). Moreover, geographic proximity played a key role.

However, RSCT pays little attention to internal causes of conflict as it focuses more on the conflict on a regional level and less on a state level. Specifically, RSCT explains how civil wars have resulted in the region's underdevelopment and less on how these civil wars have come about in the first place. Thus, the theoretical assumptions are useful in illustrating the political, economic and security implications of the conflict in Cabo Delgado towards the SADC countries.

Keeping in mind RSCT's limitations in analyzing the internal causes of a conflict, this paper brings in greed and grievance theory (GGT), which focuses on the local situation and the local actors, to fill this gap. Stewart (2000) argues that "horizontal inequalities,"[3] such as inequalities in economic, social, or political dimensions or cultural status between cultural groups, are a powerful cause of civil wars. On one hand, Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (2008) suggest the overwhelming

[3] See also Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch (2011). Horizontal inequalities occur along several dimensions, including *economic dimensions*, which include income, land ownership and employment; *social dimensions*, such as access to health and education; *political dimensions*, encompassing control and participation in central and local government, as well as other sources of power such as the army; and lastly *cultural dimensions*, such as societal respect for a group's religious practices, language, or dress.

importance of economic agendas instead of grievances as causes of conflict. The emphasis here is that there is always an interdependent relationship between grievances and greed since there must be grievances for a conflict to erupt into violence and to be sustained. This is important in explaining the role played by Mozambique political elites' in causing the grievances that have led to the rise of Islamic insurgents. While Stewart (2000) emphasizes inequality and resulting grievances, Collier (2000) emphasizes the economic and criminal agendas of rebels as a motive behind the rebellion and civil war. For this analysis, there is increasing evidence suggesting that the presence of horizontal inequalities, or inequalities among groups, raises the risk of conflict (Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch 2011). This is the central issue in Mozambique where the grievances have arisen due to the locals' lack of employment opportunities, income, and participation in the extractive industry. The grievance discourse is important in illustrating how and why access and control over resource triggered the conflict in Cabo Delgado between locals and the government.

Consequently, this study identifies grievances relating to the politics of resource appropriation and resource abundance as the fundamental causes of the Cabo Delgado insurgency. Altogether, the theoretical insights are important in understanding the rise of an Islamic insurgency from a local perspective. Social marginalization in Africa has often resulted in conflict over resources. In civil conflicts, people mobilize in groups. For understanding conflict, it is necessary to identify differences that are salient to people and thus may form the basis of mobilization. Particularly, the insurgents have exploited these grievances amongst the youth, such as the lack of income opportunities. On the one hand, the RSCT sheds light on the Mozambican conflict's regional security dilemma; on the other hand, the GGT helps explain the internal causes of the conflict, such as the lack of opportunities. Thus, this study establishes that, the grievance discourse yields more insight into the local causes of the conflict and the struggle for citizenship.

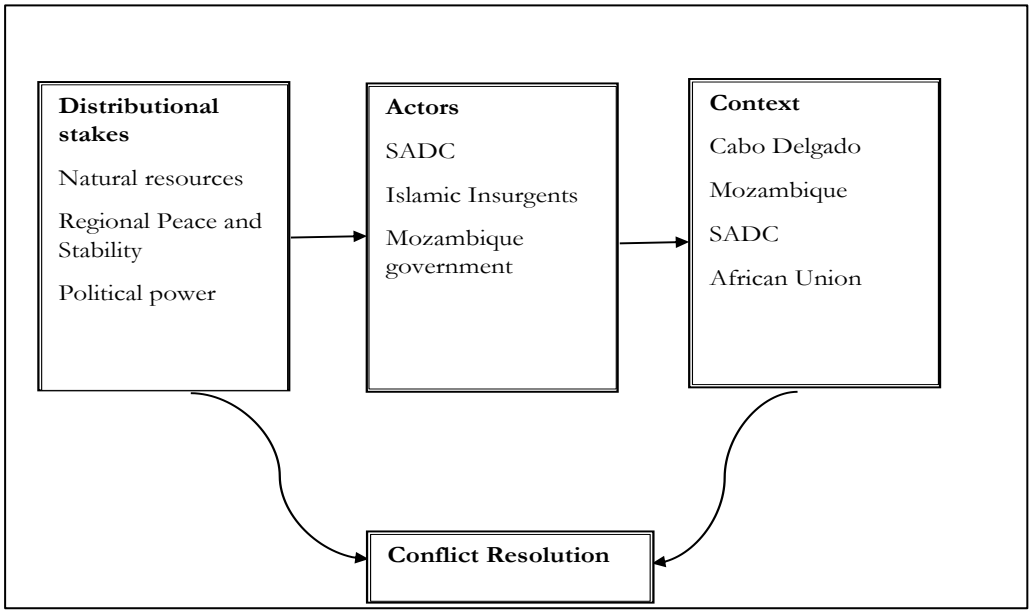
To address the causes and solutions to the conflict in Cabo Delgado, the study adopts the political economy approach to critically analyse the role the SADC can play towards conflict resolution. Political economy examines how political power and economic resources are shared and distributed between institutions and agents. Thus, actors, distributional stakes and context become central towards understanding conflict drivers and solutions to this conflict. The following section develops a conceptual framework for critically assessing the conflict in Cabo Delgado and what conflict resolution should entail.

Towards a Conceptual Framework

According to Dickson and Hussein (2018, 439), "a conceptual framework describes the relationship between the main concepts. It is arranged in a logical structure to provide a picture of how ideas in a study are related to each other." The framework makes it easier for the researcher to easily specify and define the concepts within the problem of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that a conceptual framework showing the key variables to be studied and the presumed relationship between them can be graphical or narrative. Therefore, a conceptual framework is used when the existing theories are not sufficient in creating a firm structure of the study.

Specifically, this study adopts the political economy approach and focuses on the actors, distributional stakes, and context. To analyze the conflict more comprehensively, this study identifies actors, distributional stakes, and the context as important elements/variables fueling the conflict and important for conflict resolution. The actors this study identifies are the Mozambique government, the SADC, and the Al Sunna, which have interests in the conflict. Their interests are defined as distributional stakes, which entail political power, natural resource control and regional peace and security. Therefore, any attempts at conflict resolution should aim to be inclusive of these issues. Lastly, the SADC's regional context should also be considered as this conflict has political, economic and security implications for the region. Any conflict resolution attempts should consider the variables stated above. A diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework for this study is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework on conflict resolution



Source: Author.

This paper makes the argument that the actors, distributional stakes, and the context shape the conflict. More specifically, natural resources and governance practices have shaped the nature of the conflict in Cabo Delgado. The following sections gives an overview of conflict trends and causes in the SADC region and history of the Cabo Delgado insurgency in Mozambique.

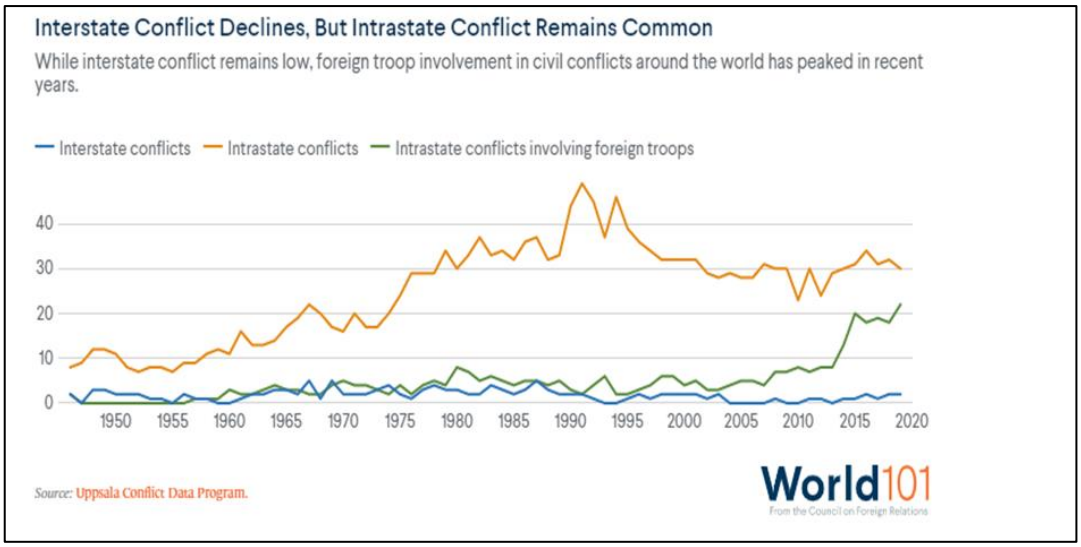
The Growth of Intrastate Conflicts in Africa: The Cabo Delgado Insurgency

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been increased intrastate conflict (Williams 2011, 4). Poverty in the Horn of Africa, terrorist groups in West Africa (Boko Haram in Nigeria) and East Africa (Al Shabab in Kenya and Somalia), corruption and maladministration of governments, ethnic marginalization as in the case of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, competition over natural resources have all been sources of intrastate conflicts in Africa (Uppsala Conflict Data Program – UCDP 2019). Moreover, in 2019, the UCDP found that the occurrence of intrastate conflicts between 2008 and 2016 drastically increased with causes ranging from competition over resources to seeking independence and control over the territory (UCDP 2019). Figure 2 shows that interstate conflict has remained relatively low, compared to intrastate or internationalized civil conflict. While it is more obvious than apparent that there is a significant rise in the number of intrastate conflicts, it is observed that since 2014, there has been a steady increase of intrastate conflicts involving foreign troops and mercenaries. Types of intrastate conflict include secession, succession (mainly election-related violence), resource-driven motives, and violence waged by criminal organizations such as terrorist groups. In light of these dynamics of conflicts in Africa, it can be reiterated that the primary factors necessitating the outbreak and continuity of conflict revolve around dissatisfaction with status quo government politics, issues of self-determination and terrorism, as well as state-sponsored corruption that has resulted in the economic marginalization and political disenfranchisement of key populations, resulting in violent conflict, often involving armed military and paramilitary acts of belligerence.

Characterized by diversely heterogenous identities, political systems and internal dynamics of governance, Africa is a vast and varied continent made up of countries with specific histories and geographical conditions and uneven levels of economic development. This also means that there are diverse and complex drivers of conflict. While some causes are purely internal and portray specific sub-regional dynamics, others have a significant international dimension. Notwithstanding these differences, African conflicts show several cross-cutting themes and experiences (Adedeji 1999, 364). Holsti (1991) acknowledges that there is no single cause of conflict in Africa. For Elbadawin and Sambanis (2000), social inequalities made more pronounced by Africa's underdevelopment, religious clashes leading to leadership issues, ethnicity, poverty,

identity politics, the control or access to valuable natural resources, authoritarian rule, the colonial ills that Africa adopted and influence from external state and non-state actors, have played a significant role in the insurgence of civil wars in Africa.

Figure 2: Conflict trends across the globe



Source: UPPSALA conflict Data Program (2019).

As a result, there is arguably no single deterministic cause of conflicts in Africa. For example, cases of ethnic clashes in Rwanda 1994 or the Sudan in 2003, oppressive authoritarian rule in the North African countries of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, social inequalities in Nigeria, resource wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Niger delta, as well as social pressures due to an influx of refugees in Cameroon compounded by a history of colonial violence spilling into the independent state of Burundi have influenced the outburst of mass crimes against humanity in Africa (Elbadawin and Sambanis 2000). The above illustrates that combinatorial causation offers a convincing explanation of causes of intrastate conflict in Africa. William (2011) argues that post-colonial elites are greedy criminals robbing countries of their development. Such pervasive uneven development occurs between regions, instigating violent conflicts, for instance, in Mali in 2010 and in Ivory Coast in 2002. Where governments are dysfunctional and unable to provide and control their own people, Willems (2012) observes that a gap between the very rich and the very poor occurs, and there is bound to rise fractionalized and polarized societies. In some cases, the resource curse syndrome in instances where an increase in competition for oil and other precious resources in Africa by external and foreign actors who play a decisive role both in suppressing the conflict and sustaining it, has fueled the nature and course of African conflicts. Like most of the civil conflicts in Africa, the Cabo Delgado insurgency is characterized by a

complex interplay of exacerbating factors ranging from the involvement of foreign mercenaries to armed rival ethnic groups all vying for control of the provinces' natural resources. Altogether, with Mozambique already reeling from the years-long conflict between government forces and RENAMO rebels, heightened by poverty, dissatisfaction with the status quo and emergent Islamic extremism, it can be noted the country has been a powder keg waiting to explode.

Following that background, the conflict in Cabo Delgado exhibits most of the characteristics defining an intrastate conflict. This conflict has been mainly fought between the Mozambican security forces and the militants of the Islamic state attempting to establish an Islamic state in the Cabo Delgado region (Bissada 2020). The Islamic State (IS) is a global network of emerging international jihadist terrorist groups. This paper focuses on the branch in Mozambique that is responsible for the intrastate conflict in Cabo Delgado. The Islamic insurgents, mainly Ansar Al Sunna, have been the main agents of the conflict. Notably, religion has played a fundamental role in the conflict. For example, Ansar Al Sunna has recruited on promises of eradicating corruption through Islam (Bissada 2000). In addition to that, evidence also indicates that increasing inequalities and lack of opportunities have led young men to join the Islamic rebel groups. The grievance discourse posits that conflicts in the region are mainly a product of under-development. Triggers to conflict such as unequal distribution of wealth and income, marginalization of minority groups, poor governance of natural resources, denial of democratic rights and ethnic divisions have been caused by grievances (Stewart 2000).

Consequently, youth have been drawn into cycles of violence in the region. As much as this internal conflict has had a detrimental effect on Mozambique, shock waves have also been felt in the region. Since 2017, arguably, the conflict in Cabo Delgado has heightened the threat of terrorism to Southern Africa peace and security. An article by Fabricius (2020, 6) acknowledges that "the worry is that Mozambique insurgents might cross into countries due to porous borders." Calabrese (2012) holds that intrastate conflicts weaken countries and neighboring countries, and enemies of a country then take advantage of this situation for waging war.

Geographically, Mozambique is surrounded by six of 16 member countries of Southern Africa countries. These countries are Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Eswatini, and Zimbabwe. If plunged into full-scale civil war, the consequences are bound to spill over in each direction as internally displaced persons are likely to flee to neighboring countries. Specifically, Tanzania's response to protect its southern border indicates the threat of this conflict is not only to confined to Southern Africa but also threatens East Africa. Given the challenges posed by porous borders, conflict can easily spread to other countries. Coupled with the threat posed by

Islamic insurgency, local, regional, and global networks intrastate conflict presents the biggest threat to the SADC region (Bøås, Osland, and Erstad 2019).

Causes and Impacts of the Insurgency in Mozambique and the SADC

The war of liberation in Mozambique began in 1964 and lasted for 10 years ending in 1974. After negotiations, the country got independence in 1975 (Cabrita 2000). However, peace did not last, and a civil war ensued from 1977, lasting for 16 years and culminated in a peace agreement. The war had pitted Mozambican ruling Marxist party FRELIMO (Portuguese Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) against the anti-Communist RENAMO (Portuguese: Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) which opposed FRELIMO attempt to establish a socialist on party state (Cabrita 2000). Although the peace agreement between RENAMO and FRELIMO was signed in 1992, only in 2017 a real commitment leading to the suspension of the hostility between the two political organizations took place. A history of violence and serious abuses of the population by the FRELIMO as government and by RENAMO as the opposition group has been documented in Mozambique (Hultman 2009). Hultman (2009, 821) notes, "somewhere between 600,000 and one million people died and mass violence was used for the purpose of coercing the civilian population into compliance."

The Northern region is a rich area with oil and gas and alluvial minerals. This sets the backdrop of the current development in the region. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 181 out of 187 in the 2017 UNDP Human Development Index (UNDP Human Development Report 2017). Its northern part is the most marginalized one. Firstly, there is massive poverty, and more than half of the population lives below poverty. Also, there is no governance in the North of the country, with the police and military forces often abusing their positions. Evidence suggests that they are harsh in their dealings with the local population (Amnesty International 2021). This not only created a sense of marginalization and alienation but also made it challenging to engage with the population cooperatively.

Along with social marginalization and poor governance, religious intolerance dominates the narrative behind the conflict in Cabo Delgado. The above discussion has highlighted the nature and extent of the threat posed by the Islamic state on peace and security (Alvi 2019; Lyman and Morrison 2004). The conflict in Mozambique is not a result of external influence. Rather, domestic grievances, which Stewart (2000) defines as horizontal inequalities, have led to the conflict. The idea that the insurgency in Cabo Delgado is part of a global jihadist movement has been given credibility by the militants who swore allegiance to IS in 2019 (BBC 2020). However, a circulated video from the Jihadist noted that "we occupy the town to show that the government of the day

is unfair. It humiliates the poor and give the profit to the bosses" (BBC 2020). Arguably the evolution of IS in Mozambique mirrors that of the emergence of Boko Haram, where the marginalized group exploited local grievances. The IS offers the unemployed youth an alternative path for employment as they have been neglected by the state and frustrated by the corrupt elite. What happened in northern Mozambique started in Mozambique. People did not come from outside of the country and started to ferment the uprising. The uprising started because of limited opportunity, marginalization, and alienation. The youth felt marginalized due to a lack of opportunities for the future. It rejected the existing religious context and started engaging in more criminal activities (Bissada 2020). The youth saw the opportunity to create opportunities for themselves by engaging in illicit activities, which formed the backdrop against which it became a more militant engagement. For example, ASWJ has facilitated smuggling and the free flow of people and goods in the region of Mocímboa da Praia and the Tanzanian border (Haysom 2018, 1). Illegal activities include heroin, human trafficking, mining, and illegal logging (Brincat 2020).

Conflicts once driven by local grievances in individual countries have become transnational in nature. The combatants on both sides of this conflict illustrate how a regional conflict is emerging in SADC. Brincat (2020) acknowledges that illicit funds allowed for the group's rapid expansion and transnational linkages to criminal syndicates and others in support of jihadism. Mobility across porous borders in the region continues to facilitate the growth of this group. From this background, preventing, managing, and resolving conflict should be a priority for the SADC. The initial response of the Mozambican government was to deny that there is anything of this nature happening in Mozambique (Bissada 2020). Its later response was extremely harsh, which aggravated the situation as it undermined the options available in terms of building capacity and relationships able to deal with the issue (Amnesty International 2021).

There is a definite possibility for this conflict to cross the border into southern Tanzania. Tanzania already responded very strongly and deployed military personnel to secure its southern border and prevent the conflict from spilling over into its territory (Fabricius 2020). There is also the argument that there are links that reach East Africa (i.e., Somalia and Kenya) in terms of the leaders in the radicalized groups. While it is not clear that the IS in Mozambique is a transnational terrorist organization, the conflict involves individuals trying to exploit the situation (Fabricius 2020).

Drivers of Conflict

The Mozambique government, SADC, and the IS are identified as the key actors in the conflict. While the role of international actors such as France and Russia are acknowledged,

debates about its role in conflict resolution fall outside the scope of this study. The actors identified have their own interests, such as distributional stakes that explain what they will lose or gain from the conflict. Brincat (2020, 2) acknowledges that the conflict is part of a "national struggle among the elites in Mozambique, for these mineral riches." The discovery of natural resources and control over them is a key factor influencing the government response. Shivji (1998) notes that, in post-colonial Africa, controlling natural resources represents the ultimate source of power. The government has responded violently, according to accounts, against the insurgencies at the same time involved in violent acts against citizens that it perceives support the IS. The IS has continued to exploit the grievances surrounding the discovery of gas and oil and widespread poverty in Cabo Delgado, the least developed province in Mozambique (Brincat 2020). Natural resources can alleviate poverty and contribute to economic development, which has not been the case. Lastly, context matters. From a regional perspective, securing peace and security is imperative for the Regional Economic Community. The mutual defense pact stipulates that "an armed attack against a state party shall be considered a threat to regional peace and security and such an attack shall be met with immediate collective action" (SADC 2003, 3) The lack of political will to resolve the conflict has inadvertently escalated the conflict and threat to regional stability. An article by PSC Report (2020) states that solidarity between former liberation movements is an obstacle to any meaningful engagement. In addition to that, President Filipe Nyusi has indicated that he does not want full intervention by the SADC because of sovereignty (Chingono 2021). The above issues have undermined the SADC conflict resolution. While the region has enjoyed relative peace, the threat posed by the Islamic state to the 'regions' stability cannot be understated. The instability that has resulted in West Africa and parts of East Africa is a telling precedent that shows the conflict has the potential to destabilize the SADC region.

The marginalization of peoples in the northern part of Mozambique dates to the independence in 1975. The region has been cut off from the rest of the country since colonial times and has been inhabited by foreigners. The North is rich in resources and remains the least developed province in Mozambique (Brincat 2020). In 2005/6, international oil companies discovered gas reserves. Nyoka (2020) notes that the government of Mozambique and the French company TotalEnergies signed the biggest energy deal in Africa worth billions. TotalEnergies was able to secure the largest share in the deals liquefication projects. Other MNCs involved include ExxonMobil of the United States and Italian oil and gas company Eni (Nyoka 2020). As far as security in the region is concerned, the government has often been preoccupied with protecting the business interests of the MNCs and never the security of people affected by conflict. This has influenced the perception with regards to elite corruption, further fueling the conflict. Like most

post-colonial Africa, the political and economic elites have exploited the circumstances at the expense of the wider populace. Lack of economic opportunities for the people in the region has pushed many to join the rebels. That economic gap between the northerners and the rest of the country has necessitated uprisings to redress that marginalization. This concurs with Khadiagala's (2018) study that identified social marginalization, bad governance, and political intolerance as a source of regional conflict in Africa.

Mozambique is situated in the south-eastern part of Africa and borders relatively peaceful countries. However, South Africa has challenges to secure its borders, with many migrants crossing the Limpopo province illegally. Illegal immigration periodically leads to xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Berman and Lombard (2008) Small Arms Survey observed that the conflict in the Central African Republic had increased because of porous borders the country shares with Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chad witnessing civil war insurgencies. Similarly, Ingerstad (2014, 2) concurs that people from Chad and Sudan (Darfur) had joined Central African rebel groups, which intensified the conflict in the Central African Republic. With Zimbabwe bordering its western border, the country faces dire economic challenges and high youth unemployment.

Besides the economic and social disparities and regional dimension, resource control adds up to the main conflict's drivers in the country. The region is rich in natural oil and gas. However, these resources have been accumulated and embezzled by a corrupt class of leaders. Specifically, the IS from the North recurred to arms in 2017 to take control of the oil fields. Evidence from the area suggests that lack of employment and social institutions in the North has triggered conflict in the region. Control over natural resources is a potential source of financial aid for the Islamic state and corrupt elites in the region. A study by Asfaw (2017) on the role of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in maintaining peace in the Darfur region found that resource appropriation and abundance lies at the heart of drivers of conflicts in Africa. She argued that if alienation exists within a country and because of the Hobbesian state of nature, according to which men are driven by self-fulfilling ambitions, a state of war will follow suit. Similarly, alienation of the northerners in the case of Cabo Delgado is a conflict driver. All in all, one can argue that combinatorial causation offers the most convincing explanation for the drivers of conflict in Cabo Delgado.

At least hundreds of civilians have been killed by the Islamic State-linked armed group ASWJ, the Mozambique government forces and the South African mercenary group Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) (Ahmed 2021). Amnesty International (2021) reported that these three

actors had committed war crimes in Cabo Delgado. These are characterized by indiscriminate killings which have resulted in more than half a million people being displaced (Ahmed 2021).

The pattern of violence by the Islamic militant group has resulted in the deliberate killing of civilians, burning of villages and towns, and commission of heinous acts of violence with machetes, including numerous beheadings and desecration of corpses (Amnesty International 2021). Evidence also shows that during attacks, teenagers are abducted, including both boys and girls (ibid). For example, it has been shown that some of these teenagers are beheaded and girls are taken as wives to work in the base. Similarly, in 2014 Boko Haram abducted 276 girls in a Chibok government schools which made international headlines (Diep 2019). The United Nations Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1820 (2008) recognizes the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and an end to the impunity of the perpetrators. This shows that the pattern of violence amounts to war crimes. In addition to that, boys become soldiers. Consequently, most displaced youths constituting displaced young women, girls, and young men, have fled likely because of the threat of abduction, detention, rape, and forced marriage to Islamic insurgents (Amnesty International 2021).

Government forces have also carried out vicious attacks against civilians accused of collaborating with or supporting Islamic insurgents. Arguably, the violence can be characterized as state-sponsored violence. The state in Africa has often responded with violence against its citizens, as witnessed by events in Kenya 2008 and Zimbabwe 2018 post-election violence (Sithole 2020). In Mozambique, the military and the police committed extrajudicial executions and acts of torture and mutilated bodies. For example, three days after the initial attack on Quissanga, government security forces captured civilians they believed were supportive of Al-Shabaab (Amnesty International 2021). The government forces blindfolded and shot several men before dumping their bodies in a mass grave. In addition to that, government security forces took women to be raped at the nearby base they had set up, where they also detained, beat, and summarily executed more men (Amnesty International 2021). Article 4 (h) and (j) of the Constitutive Act recognizes the need for intervention into member states in case of crimes against humanity, such as war crimes and genocide. The extent, pattern and nature of violence that has persisted in Cabo Delgado, therefore, warrant humanitarian and military intervention.

Lastly, Ahmed (2021) notes that, after security forces lost several battles against the Islamic insurgents, the government hired the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), a South African private military company, to fight on their behalf using armed helicopters. However, reports have suggested that DAG operatives have fired machine guns from helicopters, dropped hand grenades

indiscriminately into crowds of people, and repeatedly fired at civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, and homes (Ahmed, 2021). For example, during an attack on the town of Mocímboa in June 2020, DAG helicopters destroyed a hospital as they aimed Islamic insurgents' fighters hiding inside the facility (Amnesty International, 2021). All these atrocities that have happened during the conflict are indisputably appalling. For instance, witnesses have highlighted indiscriminate violence, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure (Amnesty International 2021).

The nature, pattern, and extend of the conflict in Cabo Delgado has negatively impacted the livelihoods of millions of Mozambicans. The deliberate targeting of citizens has arguably resulted in war crimes and crimes against humanity and displacement of people. Against this background, the role of the SADC is imperative in resolving the conflict which risks spilling into neighboring countries. The following section discusses Islamic insurgency's threat to regional peace and security and its effects in Mozambique.

The Islamic Insurgency and Regional Security: Effects on Mozambique

Conflict in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, mimics key tenets of violent extremist insurgencies, which suggest that the region now needs to reconsider the susceptibility of the region to acts of terror. Therefore, Islamic insurgency poses an international security threat to the region. Alvi (2019, 111) notes, "the Islamic State has strategically used Africa as a springboard for its global *jihadist*-based violence in the post-Cold war era." Southern Africa has been spared human rights violations propagated through acts of terror, unlike West and North Africa, which have had to deal with terror activities by groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and multiple rebel groups. The Institute of Security Studies (ISS) (2020a) acknowledge that the Southern African region has never experienced terrorism of this scale in its post-colonial history. Due to the transnational reach of terrorist groups in the region and the extent of disruption they have managed to exert, the potential of spillover of conflicts of this nature to Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Eswatini, and Zimbabwe is heightened. For instance, Fabricius (2020) identifies how porous borders can aid the insurgents to expand and grow their illicit networks with already existing sleeper ISIS cells in South Africa. Evidence has shown that the Islamic insurgents have been undertaking more sophisticated attacks and are expanding into new territory. Given the extent and nature of Islamic insurgency, intrastate conflict can easily spread to neighboring countries and destabilize the region.

The Islamic insurgents in Mozambique are still extremely *local organizations,* which is part of the reason why they have been so successful. They have local support from disgruntled local youths who join the ranks to fight for the cause. Thus, young individuals weigh up the cost and

the benefit of participating in rebellion and consider other opportunities to generate income (Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner 2008). As far as Mozambique is concerned, instability has been created not because of an external influence. Domestic issues and grievances, such as limited opportunity, marginalization, and alienation (horizontal inequalities), provided the ground for the uprising to emerge (Stewart 2000). For instance, the stagnant formal sector in Mozambique constricts employment opportunities for the few conventional jobs. Hence, higher levels of poverty and under-employment, due to the fewer productive opportunities and lower incomes have exacerbated the conflict. If the conflict in Cabo Delgado is left unchecked, it risks spreading into neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe, which faces similar social, political, and economic conditions as those mentioned above.

Overall, Mozambique exhibits challenges many of the post-colonial states in Africa have been facing, such as weak institutions and poor governance (Ross 2012). Similarly, countries that border Mozambique have similar characteristics as those mentioned above. Conflict could spread because of the close proximity. Evidence also shows that the Islamic insurgency thrives in areas where there is either a weak government or no government, thus allowing for a local conflict to arise. It is the authors view that Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Malawi can easily harbor IS cells because of similar political and economic challenges. Incidences of violent terror groups such as the '*mashurugwi*' in Zimbabwe's informal extractive sector, is an indication of how social and economic issues in the country can result in the proliferation of the Islamic state cells within the country (Zimbabwe Morning Post 2020).

Particularly, conflict in Cabo Delgado has been exacerbated by the discovery of oil and gas reserves. Collier and Hoeffler's (2000) greed and grievance theory argues that conflicts are more likely to be caused by economic opportunities. Thus, the discovery of natural resources presented economic opportunities for locals who sought to benefit from natural resources. Perceptions of deprivation and government corruption led to clashes among locals and the government, which resulted in the conflict. Issa Shivji acknowledges that controlling natural resources represents the ultimate source of power (Shivji 1998). Similarly, Murombedzi (2016, 59) highlights that "the control of natural resources and access to them has underpinned processes of social stratification and class formation in Africa." Thus, the success of the *modus operandi* of the insurgents can serve as a blueprint for the proliferation of cells within the region, and the grievances that already exist can easily drive the youth into a cycle of violence. Evidence suggests that the youth have been manipulated into violent conflict and rebel activity to generate income (Chikwanha 2020, 9). From this background, the insurgency poses a security threat towards the region of Southern Africa.

The political implications of the conflict in Mozambique are that the current government has lost legitimacy in governing the region. This has far-reaching consequences to the government of Nyusi that is widely seen as corrupt ruling elite. Brincat (2020, 2) acknowledges that the conflict is part of a "national struggle among the elites in Mozambique, for these mineral riches." Failure to address the political issues will further destabilize the region where the larger population feel they have been neglected by the government. On the regional level, a political solution to the crisis is imperative and political players at the regional level need to engage with the political leaders in Mozambique to resolve the conflict. Failure to come up with any substantial solution has led to the escalation of conflict and internally displaced people. The insurgency attacks led to a humanitarian crisis with more than 400,000 internally displaced persons (HPC 2021). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that, in June 2021 alone, Tanzania forcibly deported 1 270 Mozambican refugees fleeing the conflict (UNHCR 2020). Tanzania has continued to deport Mozambican nationals because of security concerns an indication of the reality of the security challenge the conflict poses to Tanzania internal stability.

Forced migration affects the host country's service delivery. In Zimbabwe, many people left for South Africa and because of the high numbers of incoming people, South Africa's service delivery suffered. Moreover, the locals blamed foreign nationals for the poor service delivery and the unavailability of jobs, leading to civil strife in the country (McKnight 2008). The forced displacement of peoples denies development opportunities to millions, creating a major obstacle to fight extreme poverty in the region. Unlike economic migrants who move to places where there are jobs, the forcibly displaced fleeing conflict and violence often suffer from a loss of assets, lack of legal rights and absence of opportunities. Forced migration contributes to under-development as the region loses human capital and infrastructure due to its security. Consequently, a humanitarian crisis has ensued in the Cabo Delgado. Reports in areas such as Macomia and Mocimboa have highlighted there are no sufficient resources to cater for affected people resulting in a humanitarian crisis. Nyoka (2020) identifies a lack of tents, low food supplies, sanitation issues, cholera, and malaria. Humanitarian agencies have also left the region because of the lack of security.

The above has focused on the implications of intrastate conflict on the region and on people suffering from diseases, poor social service delivery, economic downturns, and closure of trade routes. Such is of paramount importance to this research because regional security does mean not only the absence of war or the protection of the state's political independence and territorial integrity but also the safety and socioeconomic and political well-being of the inhabitants of such countries.

The SADC: Regional Attempts at Conflict Resolution

Despite the SADC summit held in May 2020 of the Troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security that put Mozambique on the agenda, it concluded without an agreement on the SADC role (Moyo 2020). This paper's view is that the lack of the SADC's resolve because of the lack of Mozambique's consent for intervention inadvertently led to the conflict escalate. The SADC has legal frameworks for a military response which entail collective self-defence and military assistance (intervention by invitation). Lastly, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approved military intervention.

Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi has indicated that he does not want full intervention by the SADC because of sovereignty issues (Chingono 2021). However, reports have suggested that Mozambique requested direct intervention from Zimbabwe and private military contractors (Chingono 2021). Historically, when the question of intervention comes to the fore, leaders of countries cling to the principle of sovereignty[4] to the detriment of their citizens. Leaders can only claim sovereignty when they work to protect their citizens from catastrophes and respect their rights. When a leader fails to uphold the rights of the citizens and his duties to them, the leader cannot lay claim to sovereignty which is assumed by the international community. Is this not Mozambique right now? Article 11 (3)(e) of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-Operation states that "… military threats to the Region shall be addressed through collective security arrangements to be agreed upon in a Mutual Defence Pact among the State Parties." This places the SADC at the fore of any intervention efforts to stop the conflict in Cabo Delgado. The SADC has demonstrated capacity for military intervention, most notably in the DRC (1998) and Lesotho (1998, 2017). Military intervention is dependent upon whether Mozambique will consent, but it has not indicated that willingness. Mozambique's reluctance and lack of political will to let the SADC intervene has undermined conflict resolution efforts risking insurgencies that will destabilise the whole region. Therefore, the question arises*: what is the legality of an SADC military intervention without Mozambique's consent*?

[4] State sovereignty has both internal and external qualities. Internally, sovereignty means that a state has the right to regulate and preside over matters obtaining in its territory. Externally, state sovereignty means that the state recognises no supreme authority. The concept of sovereignty as responsibility denotes that sovereignty no longer refers to the right of a government to regulate internal behaviour and recognition of no other supreme authority outside its borders, but that a state can only claim sovereignty if it upholds its duties to protect its citizens in line with internationally recognised human rights and humanitarian norms. In the event of a failure, such a state must abrogate its claims of sovereignty voluntarily to the international community by seeking international assistance (Asuelime and Kondlo 2018, 122).

The principle of subsidiarity and complementarity[5] highlights that the African Union (AU) should be involved only after the SADC has failed to resolve this matter (Memorandum of Understanding 2008). Nonetheless, the pace at which the conflict has continued to escalate shows that they must intervene in a way that will secure the peace in the Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, and SADC. The current security challenge in Cabo Delgado requires SADC and its member states to ask the AU to intervene to restore peace and security. Through the principle of subsidiarity and complementarity, the provisions of the AU constitutive act 4(j) allows the SADC to ask the AU to intervene to restore peace and security. However, the AU cannot intervene if SADC has not required it to do so. Notably, this complex relationship can either undermine or enhance conflict resolution efforts. The use of preventive diplomacy efforts, mediation, peace support operations, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts has situated the SADC at the forefront of peace processes in the region. The reality further necessitates the role of the SADC in conflict intervention that insurgency in Cabo Delgado provides a setback to regional development and can impact beyond the region. However, it is important to note that any intervention heavily relies on the SADC. The SADC's instruments, such as the Mutual Defense Pact, oblige it to come to the aid of Mozambique (ISS 2020b). For example, Article 6(1) of the SADC Mutual Defence Pact stipulates that, "an armed attack against a state party shall be considered a threat to regional peace and security and such an attack shall be met with immediate collection action" (SADC 2003, 3). While Mozambique's consent remains integral to this strategy, it is the view of this paper that SADC can use other strategies such as approaching the AU as the conflict already threatens peace and security in the region. Also, SADC can negotiate with the Mozambique government the terms and conditions of such an intervention. Moreover, the reality is that collaboration, cooperation, and concerted efforts are critical in resolving the violence in Cabo Delgado.

What options are left for the SADC? Bissada (2020) notes that the SADC had a slow initial response to the conflict in Mozambique, highlighting a domestic issue. Despite the SADC summit in May 2020 that put Mozambique on the agenda, it concluded without an agreement on the role of the SADC (Moyo 2020). A study by Ndinga-Muvumba and Pharaoh (2008, 19) highlights that the reality of limited financial and human resources has undermined the implementation of the numerous and ambitious activities outlined by the SADC in peace and security. Another issue they

[5] See Article 16 of the PSC Protocol relating to the establishment of the peace and security council. It illustrates the relationship with Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern and Northern Africa. 2008.

identify is that "southern African states are still grappling with identifying and defining common threats facing the sub-region therefore, SADC member states should explicitly identify and define common threats to southern Africa" (Muvumba and Pharaoh 2008, 19-20). Despite Mozambique requesting assistance and support from SADC members as stipulated under Article 11, the SADC requested Mozambique to prepare a roadmap to address the conflict (Government of South Africa 2020). This puts into perspective the issue of political will from the regional leaders to deal with the conflict.

All in all, the Cabo Delgado conflict provides an example of a conflict that has not only regional and transboundary dimensions and impact but also requires regional efforts towards sustainably resolving it. Thus, the conflict, particularly its intractability, has numerous risks for neighboring countries and the region due to the negative consequences from unstable conflict spillovers. Given these conditions it is argued here that the SADC must intervene.

Summary and Contribution

The paper attempted to illustrate how the political economy approach helps to explain the conflict's drivers and agents behind the insurgency in Cabo Delgado. Political economy helps to explain the complex dynamics that have shaped the nature of conflict in the region as well as incentives towards promoting regional peace. Thus, it becomes clear why the conflict has persisted despite the government efforts for conflict resolution at the state and regional level. Delayed SADC humanitarian and military assistance through training and deployment of military personnel to restore peace and security in Mozambique escalated the conflict, as witnessed by the worsening humanitarian crisis. The grievance discourse demonstrated that the conflict in the region is mainly a product of the Mozambican political economy of under-development. Triggers to conflict such as unequal distribution of wealth and income, marginalization of minority groups, poor governance of natural resources, denial of democratic rights and Islamic insurgency have been caused by grievances. The study identified these comprehensive issues surrounding the Cabo Delgado conflict, specifically how natural resource governance practices and control over natural resources has been exploited by the insurgents. The study argued that due to the ever-evolving dynamics and nature of the conflict in Mozambique, the insurgency poses security challenges to the stability in the country and the whole region.

The success of the SADC's conflict resolution in Mozambique hinges on the participation and inclusion of actors and their distributional stakes and the context. This opportunity is provided through the SADC conflict resolution mechanisms such as mediation, peace support operations, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction. The legal frameworks

give a legal basis for the SADC to intervene with consent from the member state as stipulated. In instances where a member state is unwilling to give consent, the SADC can approach AU, which through the constitutive Act 4(j) allows it to militarily intervene under such circumstances present in Mozambique. The SADC can negotiate with the Mozambique government the terms and conditions of such an intervention. The above illustrates that the SADC has the legal basis for military and humanitarian intervention in the Mozambique Cabo Delgado conflict.

Conflict resolution efforts should be inclusive of the actors who are the Mozambique government, IS and the SADC. As agents in the conflict, their interests are not only drivers of the conflict but are important factors in ending the conflict. Context matters. In Cabo Delgado, a humanitarian crisis requires an intervention that will also secure the human security of the affected citizens. Humanitarian efforts are essential to help alleviate poverty and neglect in Cabo Delgado in the short and long term. The SADC must lead a comprehensive approach that targets both the insurgency and its destabilizing effects, as well as the conflict's broader causes.

Military intervention can stop conflict and secure borders so that conflict will not spillover to the region. These efforts should aim to uphold human rights and effective border policing to quell illicit activities such as the drug trade that fund the IS. In addition, these efforts should aim at re-establishing the rule of law and good governance. Military intervention will ensure the protection of citizens who have experienced targeted violence from the Mozambique security forces and IS insurgents. Post conflict reconstruction Mozambique should focus on building inclusive institutions that benefit the citizens. Inclusionary governance mechanisms remain an essential process in minimising violent conflict. Arguably the conflict is a culmination of bad governance, social marginalization and political intolerance that has characterized much of post-colonial Mozambique. This has contributed to conflict, and the rise and consequence of Islamic terrorism in West Africa have illustrated the challenges of governance in post-colonial Africa.

Therefore, the SADC must actively intervene and provide military and humanitarian aid to prevent the conflict plunging the whole Southern Africa region into conflict. While the legality of the SADC's intervention relies on Mozambique's consent, the SADC can negotiate with the Mozambique government the terms and conditions of such an intervention. The conflict resolution proposed above will likely result in lasting peace and avoid conflict spilling into the region. Future research should focus on gender and children's rights as it is worth noting that the conflict in Mozambique is relatively new and still emerging compared to other conflicts on the continent.

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