MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

674 15 October 2026 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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This is a personal project by Dr Joseph Hanlon, with no outside funding.

J Hanlon's new book "Moçambique recolonizado através da corrupção"
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In this issue

Peace day
+ 2 anniversaries, not just 1
Venâncio Mondlane
+ Confirmed no live coverage of reason trial
+ Claim 60 members of Mondlane party killed

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Anniversaries

Peace day speeches show history forgotten and lessons not learned

The day of Peace and Reconciliation (4 October) marked the anniversary of the signing of a peace accord in Rome by the Mozambique government and Renamo rebels in 1992, that ended a brutal decade-long war. After years of Frelimo saying “we do not talk to terrorists”, it did just that in Rome. And the settlement involved Renamo becoming the official opposition, with some guerrilla fighters becoming members of parliament.

But 5 October is the anniversary of the war in Cabo Delgado. In 2017 insurgents specifically chose the peace and reconciliation day holiday to launch a new war in Mocimboa da Praia, and that war continues today, nine years later – because Frelimo refuses, again, to talk to “terrorists”. Frelimo 10 days ago celebrated the success of talking to “terrorists”, but refuses to do it again.

These are both “civil wars” because most fighters on both sides have been Mozambican. But every civil war is different. The 1981-92 war was a proxy war waged against Frelimo by the US and South Africa. The apartheid state provided air support and even sent trainers to Inhambane by submarine. In the new Cabo Delgado war there is some support from Islamic State, but at a much lower level than in the 1981-92 war. And one piece of history that is conveniently forgotten is that Frelimo was not overwhelmingly popular in either war.

Early in the proxy war Renamo moved south from its initial bases in Sofala through rural Inhambane into Gaza. Even Frelimo leaders were shocked at the speed of the guerrilla move south and admitted the peasants were not supporting Frelimo. Later in the war there was a similar rapid move of guerrillas from Malawi across Zambézia and Nampula; again because Frelimo agriculture policies did not help peasant farmers, they accepted Renamo guerrillas and allowed them to pass.

In the first multi-party elections in 1994, Joaquim Chissano was elected president with 53% of the vote. For the 250 seat parliament, Frelimo won a tiny majority, 129 seats (against 112 for Renamo and 9 for an independent small party, UD). Of 11 provinces, Frelimo won a majority of seats in only 6.

Five years later in the 1999 presidential elections, during the tabulation it became clear that Renamo head Afonso Dhlakama might win, so elections authorities sent technicians out to change the results and give Chissano a narrow victory. All elections since them have seen some manipulation.

Now in the Cabo Delgado war, the problems are the same. Peasants are being pushed off their land by gas and mining companies. Resources bring wealth to a few but increase poverty for most people. Disaffected young people have joined the insurgents. And insurgents now have free movement throughout most of Cabo Delgado. Even where rural people do not actively support the insurgents, they are still seen as local people and not Frelimo, and thus can pass.

The choice of peace and reconciliation day to start the Cabo Delgado war was in part that young people wanted talks with Frelimo and government. Increasingly the international community pushed for talks. In October 2021, the World Bank, European Union (EU), African Development Bank (ADB), and UNDP proposed a $2.5bn development package for the north. But the condition was the government accept that there are local grievances: extreme poverty, corruption, marginalization, and gains from gas and rubies. Then President Filipe Nyusi would not even discuss the proposal if it included that acknowledgement of grievances.

Think tanks like the Institute for Institute for Security Studies have been pushing for talks and identifying grievances (See this newsletter 671, 27 July). A new report calls on government to "address drivers of conflict and underlying grievances" such as "inequalities, including regional marginalization, inequitable resource distribution, high unemployment, and weak service delivery, [which] continue to fuel grievances that increase the risk of mass atrocities." (Critical Present, Precarious Future Preventing mass atrocities in Mozambique, September 2026, Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, 17 Sept 2026.)

But for another year, Peace and Reconciliation Day has passed with empty speeches. Frelimo refuses to see its own history, but the peace and security studies researchers argue that this blindness does not bode well.

Venâncio Mondlane

Confirmed no live coverage of treason trial

The Supreme Court has rejected Venâncio Mondlane's appeal against its decision not to allow live TV and social media broadcasting of his 17 November treason trial. The small courtroom will be open to press and pubic, but they will not be allowed to record sound or pictures. Thus press coverage will be dependent on journalists' notes.

The Court said its initial ruling was not subject to appeal. But AIM (14 October) notes that "the Supreme Court had also argued that a live broadcast could lead the public to form premature conclusions regarding guilt or innocence before a final verdict is reached". In other words, the Supreme Court does not want the general public to have access to the evidence for fear that they may reach a different judgement than the Court.

Correction: In the previous newsletter (673) we incorrectly said the trial would be by the Constitution Council. It is the Supreme Court which is the highest criminal court and the earlier newsletter (672) is correct. Mondlane must be tried there because he is a member of the Council of State, as the person who came second in the presidential elections. Under the constitution, the Supreme Court is politicised. President and Vice President of the Court are named by the President of Mozambique. The 11 other judges of the Supreme Court are named by parliament, and thus by the parties in proportion to their number of seats. Five judges have been selected to try Mondlane; three of them are Frelimo-linked.

Another leader of Mondlane's party killed

Araújo Tendence, a senior member of Anamola in Mopeia, Zambézia, was shot dead Friday (9 Oct) evening at his home. Anamola (National Alliance for a Free and Autonomous Mozambique) is the political party led by Mondlane, and founded in August 2025. Since then, Mondlane says that almost 60 members have been killed, with no investigations of the murders. Anamola has also reported that Cândido António, a party official in KaTembe municipal district, Maputo, was "kidnapped and brutally tortured". (CDD 12 Oct, AIM 13 Oct)

Recently, the Maputo City Judicial Court decided to unfreeze Mondlane's bank accounts, which had been frozen in November 2024, during mass demonstrations he called to protest against fraud in the general elections.

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Elections

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To subscribe or unsubscribe: https://bit.ly/MozBul-sub Past election newsletters are on https://bit.ly/CIP-El
Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. http://bit.ly/MozElData

Important external links

Books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks
Flood, cyclone and weather: weather https://www.inam.gov.mz/
rainfall https://www.inam.gov.mz/images/DAPT_Previsoes/Manha/Previsao_Manha.pdf
Cyclone trackers, https://bit.ly/Reunion-cyclone, https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html
(which uses z time which is UCT - Coordinated Universal Time) and https://www.cyclocane.com/
Two LSE working papers - World Bank questions its Mozambique 'success' where oligarchs brought high inequality, poverty and corruption - https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-208c and **How the IMF and World Bank caused a resource curse and civil war in Mozambique** - https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-209
Minimum wage & exchange rate charts, tables 1996-2022 https://bit.ly/MozMinWage2022
Previous editions of this newsletter: https://bit.ly/MozNews2023 and https://bit.ly/MozNews2022
My Mozambique archive: http://bit.ly/Mozamb

Cabo Delgado

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war https://www.caboligado.com/
Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data https://bit.ly/Moz-CDg

Special reports on the war

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 27 Feb 2020 http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins
Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion
Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 https://bit.ly/Moz-492
Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 http://bit.ly/Moz-496
A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 http://bit.ly/Moz-498
Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene
Cabo-Delgado-Free-for-all. 20 Apr 2022. http://bit.ly/Moz-593

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - 2018 - http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin
Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT
2001 first article- *Metical* - English and Portuguese https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng
Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Background reading

Special reports

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - http://bit.ly/MozSocPro
Special report on four poverty surveys: bit.ly/MozPoverty

$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt
Kroll - Full report on $2bn debt - http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz
Kroll report summary - http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum
Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En
Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's $2.2 bn debt - http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt
2018 Constitution - http://bit.ly/2KF588T

Twelve books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks
"Moçambique recolonizado através da corrupção" (2025) https://bit.ly/MozRecol **(**Portuguese only)
Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013) https://bit.ly/Zim-takes-land
Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)
Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014) is on https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer
Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)
Civil War Civil Peace (2006): https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace
Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)
Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000 (2001)
Paz Sem Beneficio: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)
Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996) https://bit.ly/Peace-wo-Profit
Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991) https://bit.ly/Shots-Moz
Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

These are still available for sale:
Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)
Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)
Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)
Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

Mozambique media websites, English:
Club of Mozambique (free): http://clubofmozambique.com/
Zitamar (paywall): http://zitamar.com/
Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall)**:**
Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz
O País: www.opais.co.mz
@Verdade: http://www.verdade.co.mz
Carta de Moçambique https://cartamz.com
Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:
Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP https://cipmoz.org/
Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR https://omrmz.org/
Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE https://www.iese.ac.mz/
Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD https://cddmoz.org/ (some CDD in English)
Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) http://www.fmo.org.mz
and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).
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