# The Cabo Delgado Insurgency: A Symptom of Governance Failure in Mozambique

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## Abstract

The terrorist attacks in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique started in 2017 and were perpetrated by armed militants. The insurgency resulted in the displacement of people, compromised health facilities, and a growing humanitarian crisis in the province. While the government's national defence forces continue to fight to subdue the insurgents, violence in the province continues. In order to understand the conflict, this article highlights the root causes of the insurgency. Furthermore, by using a case study method and interpreting secondary data, the article illustrates that post-Mozambique civil war, the state has been unable to facilitate an inclusive democracy where citizens can participate in political life or provide them with a conducive environment to improve their lives. This article, thus, argues that the state's limited ability to provide public goods for its population as well as its neglect of the Cabo Delgado province indicate governance failure, which has left the country vulnerable to insurgency. The article further recommends that, in the short-term, the state must counter the current insurgency and secure its territory, while in the long-term it must address evident weakness in governance.

**Keywords:** Mozambique, Cabo Delgado province, Insurgency, Governance failure

## Introduction

Africa remains one of the continents that is most rife with armed conflicts in the post-Cold War and Colonialism eras (Ogun & Aslan 2013). One of the prevailing legacies of European colonialism is the creation of states by way of artificial boundaries that were weak and could not control their territory due to the ethnically, religiously, and tribally different compositions of their societies (Ogun & Aslan 2013). Modern African states have also been further weakened due to the violence that was often characteristic of colonial states and which continued after independence. One final factor for such weakness is partial state-building, which meant that only a portion of given territories supposedly functioned and/or were administered under colonial rule. Such partiality left other areas in a territory ungoverned; thereby undermining colonial states' legitimacy (Heilbrunn 2006).

The impact of these factors has been that the leading form of violent conflict today generally occurs within states themselves, rather than between them (Pearlman & Cunningham 2012). The comparative decline of conventional interstate war, thus, casts a spotlight on the myriad of conflicts involving non-state actors – be they in conflict with each other or with existing states (Pearlman & Cunningham 2012). Weakened states also tend to be more vulnerable to non-state actors, such as armed groups, because of their fragility, which then forms a further contributing factor to protracted conflict in certain African countries. Such noted fragility has been found to generally arise out of the bad governance of decolonised states that do not have sound social and/or economic infrastructure. Strong social and economic infrastructure is the cornerstone of a functional state and when these are weak state fragility is prevalent. Armed conflict has, thus, predominantly occurred as internal conflict in states that became independent in the latter half of the 20th century (i.e., on the tide of decolonisation) (Shinoda 2018).

State-building therefore remains an important endeavour, not only because states should be able to sufficiently take care of their citizens and have the capacity to participate fully in international relations, but because weak or failed states are the source of many of the world's most serious problems (Fukuyama 2005). Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006) similarly states that after decades of self-rule, African people have yet to see the fulfilment of their expectations of full citizenship rights following independence. The capacity of a state to deal with social development and human security has, thus, remained extremely weak (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006).

Further perpetuating this grim picture are the many conflicts that have persisted across various regions of the continent, including civil wars that have to a large extent paralysed some states, as well as the rise of non-state violent actors who are driven by their own agendas. Some of these groups have emerged as a response to failing states and may see themselves as being capable of filling the open capacity vacuum. Other such players may

merely be opportunistic actors whose main aim is usually to pillage and/or take control of resources – much to the detriment of the local populations. As such, various terrorist groups have made themselves at home in Africa – including, but not limited to, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and different ISIS-backed insurrectionists in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia (Bukarti 2021).

Mozambique has been no exception, having been plunged into a civil war between Frelimo[1] and Renamo[2] that lasted for 15 years after the country gained its independence. When the conflict ceased in 1992, a peace agreement was signed by both parties which saw the establishment of a multi-party political system (Darch 2018). The general peace accord was not only to serve as a mechanism to end the conflict but facilitate a better life for all Mozambicans. However, the ruling party has, to date, been unable to bring benefits to its people (Darch 2018).

This lack of beneficial outcomes for the Mozambican population is most apparent in the country's rural areas, and particularly in Cabo Delgado, where violent extremists began their attacks in October 2017 that resulted in forced population migration and a growing humanitarian crisis in the province (International Crisis Group [ICG] 2021). Furthermore, the relationship between the government and the opposition party (Renamo) has not been without its challenges. For example, 2013 saw Renamo take up arms once again to fight the Frelimo-led government (Regalia 2017). The noted terrorist attacks in Cabo Delgado ensued on the heels of a unilateral truce declared by Renamo in December 2016 (Peace and Security Report 2020).

By reflecting on the Mozambican case historically, through a review of the extant literature and the lens of governance failure, combined with an interpretation of secondary data, this present article suggests that the governing actors in Mozambique (i.e., the Frelimo-led government) have compromised the 1992 peace agreement, much to the detriment of the country's citizens. The article further asserts that the government has fallen short of meeting the needs of its people since severe poverty is widespread, which is a clear indication of governance failure. Consequently, it is this governance failure that has exposed the country's fragility and left it open to attacks by opportunistic actors such as Ansar al-Sunna, which has further compromised human security in the province in question.

[1] FRELIMO: the abbreviation used to refer to the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (or the Mozambique Liberation Front). Frelimo has been the ruling political party in Mozambique since its independence.

[2] RENAMO: the abbreviation used to refer to the former anti-communist movement, the Mozambican National Resistance, which is now the main opposition party in Mozambique.

The article does not, however, suggest that governance failure has caused the insurgency but rather that it is a contributing factor that remains a persistent challenge in Mozambique and which has remained largely unaddressed. Furthermore, the article does not attempt to be novel in its delivery but aims, instead, to emphasise the on-going problem of the governance failure that has plagued not only Mozambique but many post-colonial states in and across the African continent. In so doing, the article highlights how governance failure threatens regional security, particularly as violent extremist groups are rapidly emerging across the continent.

The first part of the article introduces the research methodology. This is followed by a description of the theoretical framework and a provision of a working definition of governance failure as used in this article. Following these discussions, a brief overview of the history of Mozambique is provided, starting with the north-south divide that occurred during the colonial era and stretching to the signing of the peace agreement in 1992 after the civil war. The third part of the article details the political landscape in Mozambique post-1992, along with a discussion of the recent insurgency in Cabo Delgado. The last part of the article offers a secondary data analysis, which is then discussed and followed by associated recommendations and an overall conclusion.

## Research Methodology

In order to effectively explore the phenomenon in question, this article applied a qualitative research design using a single case study method. More specifically, this article adopted the chosen approach as the case studies method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context (Zainal 2007).

Case studies are fundamentally designed to explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through the detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, as well as their relationships (Zainal 2007). Such studies are also useful for explaining both the process and outcome of a phenomenon (Zainal 2007). For the purposes of the current article, research was limited to the review of scholarly works and other relevant sources in a bid to draw conclusions about the research problem, as based on presented evidence. This article also drew from official secondary data for the purposes of interpretation. Such secondary sources were obtained from the Fund for Peace and World Bank databases, respectively.

## Conceptualising Governance

Governance is defined by Rosenau (1995:15) as involving

> …rule systems in which steering mechanisms are employed to frame and implement goals that move communities in the directions they wish to go

or that enable them to maintain the institutions and policies they wish to maintain.

Scholars such as Bøås (1998) have also linked governance to regimes. Notably, Bøås (1998) sees governance as being interwoven with state-civil society interactions and concerned with the 'regime', which constitutes a set of fundamental rules for the organisation of the public realm and not with government. By contrast, Fukuyama (2013) indicates that governance is a government's ability to make and enforce rules and deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not. Governance can, therefore, be understood as being concerned with rule making and the organisation of society with the aim of achieving certain goals..

## Theoretical Framework

### State Failure Theory

As a means of placing the argument of this article into perspective, it was necessary to first reflect on state failure theory, as this theory could provide a sufficient basis for defining governance failure. Of note is that state failure theory has sparked many different debates over the years, yet it remains a prominent point of discussion as many states in the developing world have been victims of crises and, at times, the resultant erosion of the state has led to widespread political violence (Eriksen 2011). Scholars that see the state as predominantly a service provider have, thus, argued that a state has collapsed when its basic functions are no longer performed (Rothberg 2002, 2003; Zartman 1995). Furthermore, state failure occurs when states are unable to provide positive political goods for their citizens (Rothberg 2002, 2003; Zartman 1995).

For Rothberg (2003), there exists a hierarchy of political goods that states should provide, of which security is the most paramount. Once the provision of security has been reasonably applied, the provision of other public goods can then follow (Rothberg 2003). Against this background, a state can either be 'strong', 'weak', or 'failing' in its ability to provide relevant and necessary goods. Failed states are also said to be deeply conflicted, and usually face insurgencies and other forms of civil unrest (Rothberg 2003).

A state's inability to control borders and a loss of control over sections of its territory are also seen as indicators of state failure (Rothberg 2003). Marton (2008) adds that state failure occurs when an internationally recognised government (IRG) is unable to curb the negative spill-over effects from its territory due to an inability to exercise control over its territory. Another indicator of state failure is an inability of a state to maintain its monopoly of violence, which can lead to the state facing armed insurgents with little to no ability to implement policies or promote economic development (Jackson, as cited in Eriksen 2011).

One further indicator is when sub-national groups end up being responsible for providing order (Schneckener 2006).

Peters (2015) also notes that there are two types of governance failure The first involves the governing apparatus of the state, whereby it lacks the capacity to provide systematic direction to society and the economy (Peters 2015). The second involves the government and its incapacity to make policies addressing specific issues, which is usually tied to specific social and economic interests (Peters 2015). Peters (2015) further highlights that both types of failures result in either limited governance outputs, or outputs that are incapable of addressing the fundamental challenges faced by the public sector and society. For the purposes of this article, focus has been primarily placed on the first type of governance failure noted by Peters (2015) while keeping in mind that both types can, and do, function interdependently.

**Deprivation Theory**

In order to highlight how governance failure can affect society, the article also included deprivation theory as part of its framework. Advocates of this theory claim that some social movements emerge when certain people or groups in a society feel that they are being deprived of a specific good, service, or resource (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald 1988; Opp 1988). Within the deprivation theory space there are two primary schools of thought, namely 'relative deprivation' and 'absolute deprivation' (Sen & Avci 2016). Supporters of absolute deprivation treat grievances of affected groups in isolation to such groups' position(s) in society (McAdam et al. 1988). By contrast, proponents of relative deprivation see a group as being in a disadvantaged situation in relation to another group within the same society (McAdam et al. 1988).

Although deprivation theory provides an explanation for how social movements might come to be, the theory has also been criticised for being unable to explain why, in some contexts, deprivation does not trigger a social movement (Sen & Avci 2016). The argument is, then, that deprivation theory might be a necessary but not *sufficient* condition for a social movement to begin. In-spite of this challenge, the theory can still be a useful lens through which to better understand the insurgency in Cabo Delgado in so far as how local grievances might have been a trigger for the conflict.

By taking both noted theories into account, the present article defines governance failure as any state that lacks the capacity to adequately provide public goods (i.e., as articulated by Rothberg (2002, 2003) for its citizens, is susceptible to armed conflict, and has had its territorial control compromised as a result of a dysfunctional governance system.

## History of Mozambique

- *North South Divide*

Historically, Mozambique has always had a north-south divide that has its roots in the Portuguese colonial era of the country (Neethling 2021). Both pre-colonial and colonial Mozambique essentially developed as two different states until the first bridge was built in 1934, which connected the two regions. The south was ruled by large kingdoms, whose economies were based on the gold trade (Neethling 2021). By comparison, the north's economy was heavily based on cash-crop farming (Neethling 2021). This divide is still evident in Mozambique today, and the primary political focus on Maputo (i.e., the capital city of Mozambique situated in the south) is one of the most critical factors that needs to be kept in mind when attempting to understand the conflict dynamics currently at play in the country (Vines 2020).

- *Road to Independence*

The war for independence was an armed conflict between former colonialist Portugal and the guerrilla forces of Frelimo. In 1962, Frelimo launched the liberation struggle against Portugal, and in 1974 the Portuguese withdrew after being brought to the edge of collapse by Frelimo with the assistance of the Soviets (Graham 2010). This victory paved the way for the first Marxist-inspired regime to come into power in Southern Africa (Graham 2010).

Also in 1974, an agreement was signed to form a transitional government headed by Frelimo (Hanlon 2010). The party then took formal control of the country and, in 1975, Mozambique finally gained its independence. The situation in the country began deteriorating, however, when, in 1976, the anti-communist rebel group, Renamo, violently began to resist Frelimo with the aid of the then white minority-led South African and Rhodesian governments. This new conflict plunged Mozambique into a civil war that took a heavy toll on the country's social and economic structures (Hanlon 2010).

- *Civil War*

Waterhouse (1996) states that Frelimo inherited a fragmented nation governed by colonial laws and consisting of a weak state administrative system. As the Portuguese left (taking with them what they could in regard to valuables and capital and destroying much of what they could not take with them), Frelimo found itself facing economic chaos (Waterhouse 1996). During this time, Frelimo labelled itself as a party for the masses and adopted a Marxist-Leninist stance (Waterhouse 1996). As such, land, healthcare, and education were nationalised, and the government took over the running of all abandoned farms, companies, and shops (Waterhouse 1996).

Against this backdrop, Frelimo was confronted with the then rebel group Renamo, which launched its rebellion in 1976, marking the beginning of the civil war. This civil war took

place during the Cold War period and was spurred on by the growing liberation movements (LMs) present across Southern Africa. The initial phase of the conflict was, therefore, a foreign-supported war against the so-called communist policies of the Frelimo government (Darch 2018). Renamo's main strategy entailed terrorising rural populations as well as sabotaging governmental infrastructure. Later, the rebel group changed its strategy to begin exploiting the dissatisfaction of the locals over governmental policies. This strategy helped to build a base of popular support for Renamo, particularly in the central provinces (Darch 2018).

The impact of the civil war was severe and resulted in a population of between 13 and 15 million in the mid-1980s decreasing significantly in the years after– with an estimated 1 million people dying and a further 5 million being displaced or becoming refugees in neighbouring countries (Hanlon 2010). The overall damage is estimated to have amounted to around US $ 20 billion (Hanlon 2010). The war lasted until 1992, when a peace agreement was eventually signed between Frelimo and Renamo in Rome, Italy.

- *General Peace Accord*

The overarching objective of the General Peace Accord (GPA) was to end what had been prolonged fighting between Frelimo and Renamo and, subsequently, facilitate a multiple-party political system (Hanlon 2010). The Accord recognised the existing constitution as well as the Frelimo-led government as legitimate, but called for new elections and support for Renamo transitioning into a political party (Hanlon 2010). As a result, multiple party elections have taken place since 1994 to date – all of which have been won by Frelimo, with Renamo remaining the primary opposition party. Although scholars agree that the GPA was successful in ending the civil war and bringing peace and democracy (characterised by populace voting) to Mozambique, it did not provide for a firm base for processes that could constitute positive peace in the full sense (Darch 2016, 2018). As such, the GPA has been unable to effectively aid in the democratisation of the state, the promotion of political accountability and transparency, the process of decentralisation, and/or the assurance of a better life for the majority of Mozambicans (Darch 2016).

**Post-1992 Mozambique**

Following the GPA and its requirements, and prior to the first democratic elections, Frelimo (i.e., the ruling party) was to keep being responsible for the public administration of the country (Bornstein 2008). Foreign agencies also worked in collaboration with the Mozambican government to reconstruct the country and move it towards the elections, which formed the initial steps in consolidating peace. Such activities ranged from humanitarian relief, demobilisation, refugee repatriation, physical reconstruction, and several other institutional reforms at the political level (Bornstein 2008).

The years immediately following 1992 were deemed by many as 'the golden years', and Mozambique was widely regarded as a post-conflict success story and a model for post-

conflict reconciliation and economic growth (Darch 2016). This situation, however, became unstable as soon as multi-party politics and market economics were adopted (i.e., from the time Mozambique departed from its socialist modernisation endeavours). These changes brought out social disruptions despite simultaneously marking the end of the armed conflict (Darch 2016).

Although Mozambique has seen regular elections since 1992, along with a relative level of decentralisation of power and on-going economic growth, bouts of conflict at different times have also occurred. Such conflicts have often included a resurgence of armed conflict between the Frelimo government and the opposition Renamo party (Peace and Security Report 2020). Furthermore, the country's economic growth has not, in essence, benefitted the most impoverished in the society (Darch 2016).

Governance has also been a challenge for Mozambique post-1992 in so far as how the current political system has impacted development (Phiri 2012). For example, Frelimo has maintained control of the country's power structures since 1992, with Phiri (referencing Alden 2006) noting that Mozambique has essentially become an unconsolidated democracy built on a fragile economic foundation.

The Frelimo government has also been noted as being rife with corruption stemming from the extractive political and economic institutions that were characteristic of the colonial period and the shift from authoritarian to democratic rule (Hanlon 2001). Phiri (2014) further notes that democratic governments are mandated to serve their constituencies, but corruption undermines the promotion of democratic citizenship and inclusivity; thereby reducing accountability and transparency in the political constituency. Not only do corrupt governments become a source of insecurity to their citizens, but they also stifle the development of democratic institutions (Phiri 2014). Phiri (2014) further alludes to Mozambique's governance trajectory as having become dependent on aid (due in large part to economic and political reforms undertaken when the socialist project was rejected in favour of democratic institutions). Such aid-reliance has facilitated corruption and promoted elite capitalism to the detriment of the country's citizens (Phiri 2014).

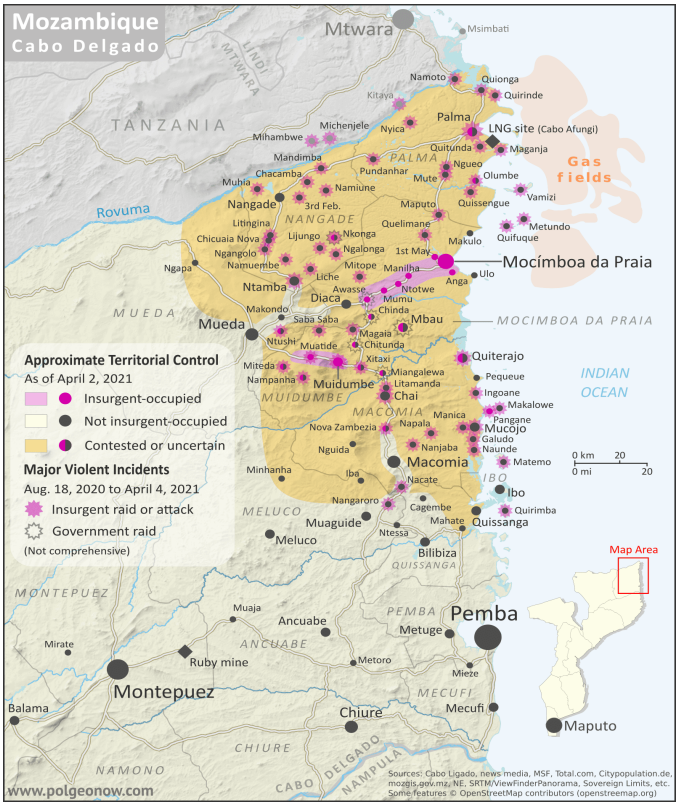
## Cabo Delgado Insurgency

Although 'formal' terrorist attacks started in October 2017 in the Cabo Delgado province, the conflict had its roots in the formation of a religious Islamic sect in 2007 (Jentzsch 2021). This sect sought to withdraw its members from state institutions and society, with the sect's first confrontations with police occurring in 2015-2016 (Jentzsch 2021). By 2017, then, the armed militants escalated their endeavours by targeting governmental positions and institutions (Matsinhe & Valoi 2019). A series of clashes followed between governmental forces and insurgent groups, with an estimated 18 reported terror attacks

occurring between October 2017 and December 2018 in the districts of Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia, Nangade, Quissanga, and Palma – all of which are traditionally Islamic in population (Matsinhe & Valoi 2019).

Between January and the end of March 2019, the group carried out more than 28 attacks targeting remote villages, kidnapping and beheading villagers, seizing Government property, robbing banks, blocking roads, and hoisting its infamous black and white flag (Mutasa & Muchemwa 2021). The insurgency has since grown into full guerrilla warfare and, as of 2020, the insurgents have overrun district capitals and circulated videos that clearly articulate a jihadi agenda (Morier-Genoud 2020). The government's response has been to send troops to the province, secure towns and villages, and pursue the insurgents (Morier-Genoud 2020). Although the government has not yet succeeded in ending the insurgency, it has at least managed to confine the conflict to a single geographical area covering half the province (Morier-Genoud 2020). Despite this success, Figure 1 illustrates how territorial control by the state has, nonetheless, been compromised.

**Figure 1: Map of Control in Cabo Delgado as of April 2021**




*Source: Polgeonow (2021)*

The instigators of the terror attacks have primarily been reported to be groups of local young men with limited education who did not want to become peasant farmers and, instead, became street traders in Palma and Mocimboa da Praia on the coast of northern Cabo Delgado (Hanlon 2018). Disgruntled by seeing gas workers coming in from outside the province (after failed attempts to find employment in the gas companies themselves) these youth began to protest (Hanlon 2018).

According to Matshine and Valoi (2019), the Cabo Delgado province is colloquially referred to as the 'Forgotten Cape'. From the perspective of economic and social development, this 'forgottenness' means economic and social exclusion (Matshine & Valoi 2019). As Matshine and Valoi (2019:12) note:

> Most of the province has poor economic and social conditions – the poorest health facilities; the poorest schools; the poorest sanitation; high unemployment, notably youth unemployment' even though it is one of the richest in natural resources.

There are varying debates regarding the cause(s) of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado, with scholars attributing the causes and origins thereof to different factors. For example, scholars such as Hanlon (2018) suggest that the new Islamic insurgency is related to youth who have been marginalised and who are now demanding to be heard. Thus, the conflict is seen as the result of poverty and a lack of perspectives being acknowledged, particularly as it pertains to the youth, with religion functioning as a rallying point for the marginalised to project their frustrations (Hanlon 2018). By contrast, scholars such as Habibe, Forquilha and Salvador (2019) emphasise that the Islamic religion is the primary factor behind the insurgency, with young Muslims in Mozambique having been radicalised under the influence of preachers from Kenya and Tanzania.

Mutasa and Muchemwa (2021) similarly attribute poverty, unemployment, perceptions of state neglect (with Cabo Delgado being the poorest province in Mozambique), degrading social conditions, and distrust of the state to the current state of affairs. Alberdi and Barosso (2021), in turn, highlight the actions of extractive industry (e.g., transnational corporations responsible for extracting natural resources in the province), which have led to forced displacement and resettlement as well as a loss of land and livelihoods for locals. Other scholars argue that external factors are at play behind the insurgency, such as the work of Kenyan militants who fled to Mozambique (ICG 2021)

With due acknowledgement and respect to the different arguments put forward in the preceding paragraphs, this article focuses on the long-standing socio-economic challenges that have resulted in poverty and (human) insecurity in the country. The article attributes such issues to governance failure, which has opened Mozambique to insurgent attacks

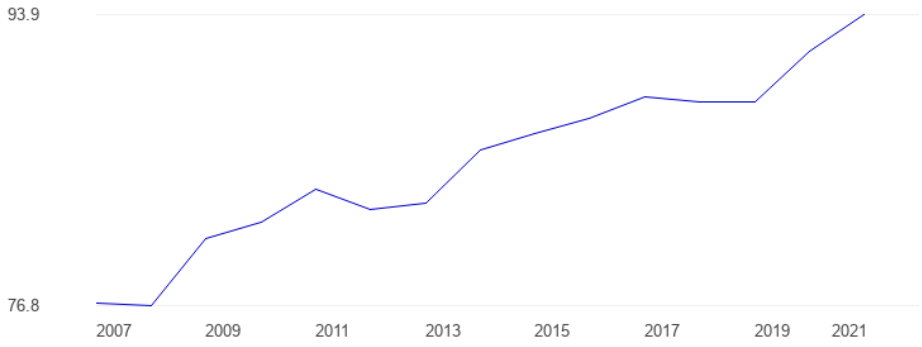
## Indicators of Bad Governance

In order to support the argument put forward by this article, secondary data for Mozambique, post-1992, were analysed. Such data and analysis are presented in the following subsections. In addition, findings from the African Development Banks Country Results Brief (2018) for Mozambique, as compiled by the African Development Group, were considered. Together, these different data sources provided a comprehensive understanding of the situation in Mozambique and worked support the assertion that governance failure is present.

### High Fragile State Index

Figure 2 provides data regarding the fragile state index for Mozambique, as gathered between 2007 and 2021.

**Figure 2: Fragile State Index for Mozambique: 0 (low) – 120 (high), 2007-2021**



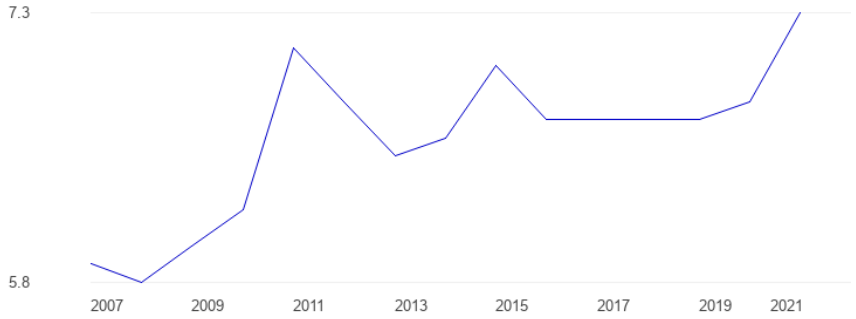

*Source: Fund for Peace (2022a)*

From the presented data in Figure 2, it can be seen that Mozambique has increasingly become more fragile since 2007, with its highest level of fragility noted in 2021. Although the fragile state index incorporates a few different indicators, including social, economic, political, and cohesion indicators, the present article focused primarily on security threats, governmental effectiveness, and uneven economic development indexes in order to best understand the underlying challenges present in Mozambique and which have fostered an environment ripe for insurgency. Despite such focus, however, all indicators should still be taken into consideration when discussing, in depth, any state's level of fragility.

### *High Security Threat Index*

Figure 3 details security threat trends for Mozambique between 2007 and 2021.

**Figure 3: Security Threats Index: 0 (low) – 10 (high), 2007-2021**



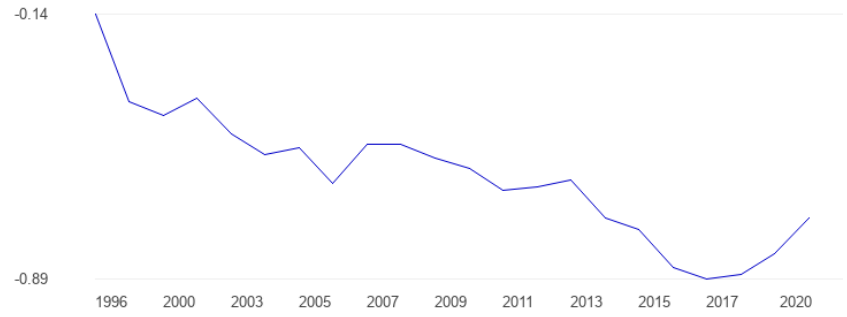

*Source: Fund for Peace (2022b)*

The information in Figure 3 confirms that Mozambique has seen an increasing trend in security threats over the past few years.

**Weakening Government Effectiveness Index**

Figure 4 presents data related to governmental effectiveness within Mozambique for the period 1996-2020.

**Figure 4: Government Effectiveness Index: -2.5 weak; 2.5 strong, 1996-2020**



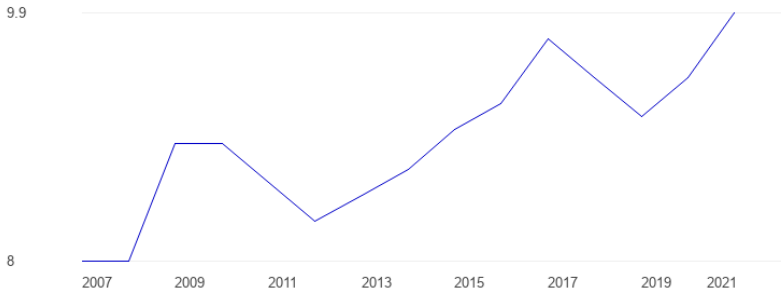

*Source: The World Bank (2021)*

As shown in Figure 4, Mozambique has seen a general decline in governmental effectiveness for the period 1996-2020. The global economy sourced this index from The World Bank hence the difference in clustering of the years.

**Low Public Service Index**

Figure 5 details data related to the delivery of public services in Mozambique for the period 2007-2021.

**Figure 5: Public Services Index: 0 (high) – 10 (low), 2007-2021**



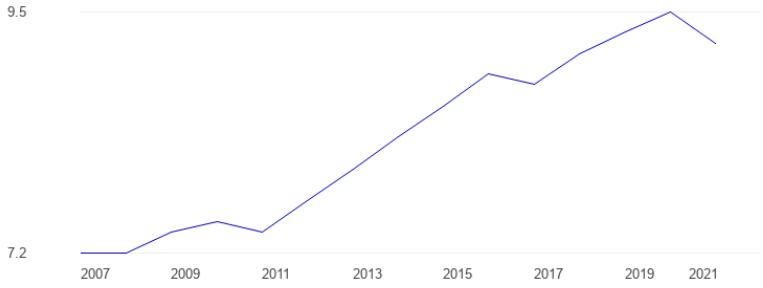

*Source: Fund for Peace (2022c)*

As seen in Figure 5, public services in Mozambique have generally worsened since 2007, despite visible improvements in some years.

**High Uneven Economic Development Index**

Figure 6 presents information related to Mozambique's economic development for the period 2007-2021.

**Figure 6: Uneven Economic Development: 0 (low) – 10 (high), 2007-2021**




*Source: Fund for Peace (2022d)*

It is clear from Figure 6 that there has been a general increase in economic inequality in Mozambique between 2007 and 2021.

## Discussion

Following the findings presented in the previous section, it was possible to make various inferences regarding the current state of Mozambique. For example, with regard to the increase in security threats (Figure 3), it can be asserted that other functions of the state can and will be negatively affected if the provision of security remains a challenge. This assertion holds true when embracing the notion that security is the most important public good from which other goods follow (Rothberg 2003). Thus, if security is compromised, so too will the provision of other goods.

Furthermore, the on-going insurgency is evidence of a weak security apparatus within the state, which has allowed insurgents to take control of some parts of the country's territory. The fact that such territorial control can be taken away from the government is indicative of a dysfunctional governance system. Government effectiveness has also been found to be on a decline for years post-1992 (Figure 4), with a significant drop around 2017 (i.e., when the insurgent attacks began in Cabo Delgado). From the presented data, it can be asserted that the state's intended outcomes related to governmental effectiveness have generally not been met.

Although there have been some improvements in public service provision over the years (Figure 5), the general trend remains on the decline. As such, it can be asserted that the provision of public goods by the state remains an on-going challenge – likely due in large part to the security environment being fragile (Figure 3).

One final consideration is that of the noted general increase in economic inequality (Figure 6). Although an uneven economic development trajectory alone cannot result in insurgency, findings from the index did, however, demonstrate that there is an inability of the state to perform its functions in so far as implementing effective redistributive policies that can promote economic development. Without effective economic development, the standard of living remains low, which can foster a conflict-prone environment. Based on the presented data, as a whole, it is possible to state that overall governance in Mozambique continues to be challenge. Phiri (2012) similarly supports this notion, noting that, as such, the state has been left vulnerable to conflict and infiltration by insurgents.

According to the African Development Bank Group (2018), Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 181 out of 188 countries in the UNDP Human Development index in 2016. Mozambique's economy has also experienced a major slowdown that has led to a general decline in the country's GDP growth (from 3.8% in 2016 to 3.7% in 2017 – in comparison to an average of 7.3% growth in the prior 10 years) (African Development Bank Group 2018). Economic governance in the country has also

deteriorated, decreasing from 3.6 in 2007 to 3.3 in 2016 (African Development Bank Group 2018).

Although the share of people living below the poverty line showed a decline from 51.7% in 2008 to 46.1% in 2015 for people living in urban areas, and from 53.8% to 50.1% for people living in rural areas, the poverty rate remains high in the northern provinces of Nampula, Niassa, and Cabo Delgado (African Development Bank Group 2018). Food insecurity also continues to be a problem, with 25% of the population in 2017 reporting hunger and/or malnutrition (African Development Bank Group 2018). The youth unemployment rate was also reported as being 41.7 % in 2017, which is above average for the rest of the continent (African Development Bank Group 2018).

The data presented in this and the preceding section, therefore, support the argument that governance failure is present in Mozambique, and has been for a long time. As alluded to earlier in this article, this governance failure has not directly caused the insurgency; however, it is safe to deduce that this failure has been a major contributing factor.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This article echoes the sentiments of Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006) that, in Africa, the expectation of its people that their fundamental rights and liberties be recognised and a better standard of living be gained after independence has not yet been achieved. Many post-colonial states and their rulers have disappointed this expectation, as while they initially expressed a commitment to democracy, economic development, and Pan-African solidarity, once they began facing the realities of governance, they became more interested in advancing their own narrow class interests to the detriment of their people (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006). It can be said that although most leaders of post-colonial states inherited problematic colonial political institutions, few have stayed the course in transforming these institutions to improve the lives of all their citizens. The result has been the many conflicts seen across Africa, even to the present day.

By reflecting on the Mozambican case from an historical viewpoint and providing evidence related to the current state of affairs, this present article argued that the insurgency in Mozambique is a symptom of governance failure. It was found that the Mozambican state has been unable to facilitate an inclusive democracy that might provide the country's citizens with the opportunity to better their lives. Civilian frustration was noted as being further fuelled by citizen's inability to reap the fruits of the country's resources, which has led to a sense of deprivation. Such deprivation and resultant dissatisfaction is most evident in the Cabo Delgado province, where disgruntled locals – particularly the marginalised youth – have provided a fertile ground for insurgents to attack the state's structures.

The Mozambican government's territorial control has, thus, been compromised by the noted insurgency. Based on the literature presented in this article, there are historically-embedded challenges that continue to manifest themselves in Mozambique today. These challenges include, but are not limited to: the north-south divide, inequality, poverty (particularly in the Cabo Delgado province), security threats, governmental ineffectiveness, diminished public services provision, and uneven economic development. All these factors have contributed to Islamist militants taking advantage of the situation in Cabo Delgado and promoting insurgency.

Understanding and addressing violent conflict requires an approach that confronts, firstly, the structural drivers behind such conflict. Secondly, it is necessary to comprehend the current context in which the conflict unfolds. The recommendations for addressing the Cabo Delgado insurgency presented in the article are, thus, two-fold, and function at the country level.

1. The short-term approach for addressing the conflict would be for the state (assisted by external actors) to counter the insurgency through military efforts so that it can reclaim those territories that have been lost and secure the country's borders.

2. The long-term approach would be for internal actors to intentionally address the lingering governance failure present in Mozambique, with an emphasis on reconstructing the existing political institutions so as to enable the effective governing of the country. Such an approach could pave the way for a new social contract.

At a regional level, this article recommends that the African Union (AU) work closely with the country's regional communities, particularly the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community, to address public security.

**Disclosure statement**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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## Figure Legends

**Figure 2**: The fragile state index measures the vulnerability in pre-conflict, active conflict and post-conflict situations. The index comprises twelve conflict risk indicators that are used to measure the condition of a state at any given moment: security apparatus, factionalised elites, group grievance, economic decline, uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain, state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law, demographic pressures, refugees and IDPs, and external intervention. The higher the value of the index, the more "fragile" the country is.

**Figure 3**: The Security apparatus indicator considers the security threats to a state, such as bombings, attacks and battle-related deaths, rebel movements, mutinies, coups, or terrorism. The Security apparatus also considers serious criminal factors, such as organised crime and homicides, and perceived trust of citizens in domestic security. The higher the value of the indicator, the more the threats in the state.

**Figure 4**: The index of Government Effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

**Figure 5**: The Public services indicator refers to the presence of basic state functions that serve the people. This may include the provision of essential services, such as health, education, water and sanitation, transport infrastructure, electricity and power, and internet and connectivity. On the other hand, it may include the state's ability to protect its citizens, such as

from terrorism and violence, through perceived effective policing. The higher the value of the indicator, the worse the public services in the country.

**Figure 6**: The Uneven economic development indicator considers inequality within the economy, irrespective of the actual performance of an economy. The higher the value of the index, the higher the inequality in the country's economy.