



Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030

Lessons from Mozambique

Event Communiqué

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The ‘Silencing the Guns in Africa’ agenda, a flagship initiative of the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063, aspires to end all wars and conflict, prevent genocide, and stop gender-based violence. On the side of the AU summit in Addis Ababa in February 2023, the Chatham House Africa Programme, African Union, and United Nations Development Programme brought together high-level speakers and participants to reflect on the experience of Mozambique and the lessons for other peace initiatives on the continent.

Mozambique is seeking to break from the cyclical ‘conflict trap’ - where once a country experiences one civil war it is significantly more likely to experience additional episodes of violence. Since the end of Mozambique’s civil war in 1992, targeted armed conflict by RENAMO resumed in 2013 and ended through the new agreement in August 2019. The final reintegration into civilian life of former Mozambican combatants of opposition RENAMO will be completed in 2023.

The 2019 peace agreement in Mozambique and the subsequent disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process supported by the United Nations (UN) but implemented by Mozambique’s government and institutions, provides experience and learning for other continental conflicts that have recently ended or resumed. International attention on this process is poignant in 2023 as Mozambique and Switzerland – a key supporter of successive Mozambican peace processes – are both non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for the first time in their respective histories. This position offers an important platform for sharing the key factors that will enable this agreement to ‘stick’ and the cycle of violence to end.

HE Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique emphasised the importance of national ownership over the peace process. “In Mozambique we realised that one of the stumbling blocks to Silencing the Guns was limited national ownership of the peace processes. In Mozambique, the peace process and implementation of the Peace and National Reconciliation agreement sought to be different and assumed discretion, dialogue, and national ownership.”

“In Mozambique we look back at more than 3 years of DDR with delight and appreciation that so far, we have covered 4800 men and women. It is the collective will of Mozambicans that the process should be sustainable and demobilised combatants find their livelihood and sustain them.”

President Nyusi’s remarks were supported by an intervention from the President of the Republic of the Comoros and incoming AU Chairperson HE Azali Assoumani who reiterated the importance of national ownerships over multi-stakeholder processes. He noted that “The AU security council is mobilising member states and working with different partners to find solutions to end conflict. We need a holistic approach including society, government, and international organisations to address the root causes of violence.”

In a video message recorded during his recent visit to the conflict affected northern province of Mozambique, Cabo Delgado, HE Alain Berset, President of Switzerland, also stressed how inclusive dialogue and providing space for a wide range of voices is critical for building a lasting peace. He said “I have spoken with women and men who have been part of the inclusive peace process in Mozambique. People involved and affected by conflict need to be central to efforts. Switzerland supports this peace process and champions national ownership and context specific solutions.”

One of the central lessons from the Mozambique case is the mutually reinforcing relationships between development and security. This must entail the provision of opportunities for all. The former President of the Republic of Liberia, HE Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, reflected on her own

experience as a post conflict leader and how the challenges that she faced offer a useful lesson for Mozambique and other conflicts on the continent. She reflected that “25 years of violence had brought Liberia to its lowest point, Liberia’s GDP had declined by 90% and had external debts of \$3.7 billion. Institutions and infrastructure had collapsed, corruption was rife and moral of citizens low. I worked hard to provide opportunities for capacity building especially for women and girls. With development and education, we believed sustainable solutions to challenges could be achieved.”

The importance of development of development was underscored by the Regional Director of the United Nations Development Programme, Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa. A UNDP report published in 2022 entitled [Silencing the Guns: A Developmental Approach](#) focused on the developmental approach to silencing the guns, and provides a synthesis of how UNDP’s programmatic priorities on people, prosperity, planet and peace coincide with and contribute to the AU’s continental aspirations.

Ms Eziakonwa drew on the experience of the UNDP in its support for the AU Agenda 2063 ambition of silencing the guns and argued that “realistic ambitions for silencing guns do not include more guns. While security interventions might be necessary, they must be done proportionately to development interventions. There must also be greater investment in shared knowledge and analysis.”

Ambassador William Awinador-Kanyirige, Senior Adviser on Governance and Peace Building to African Union Commission, representing Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security, highlighted comparative regional lessons from the peace process, especially the importance of national ownership. He also explained that “last October, in Abuja, Nigeria, the AU organised the first lessons learned forum on AU led peace support operations. These lessons learned discussions are so critical to silencing the guns. We also had the first conference in Tangier Morocco in November last year... in order to look at the peace security development and governance nexus. Silencing the guns requires socioeconomic transformation.”

In his first public statement as the AU high representative for Silencing the Guns, Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas stated that “we must collectively revive political will, mobilise determination and resources, and promote African solidarity and ownership of the peace and security agenda through African solutions to African problems, to build a conflict free Africa by 2030.”

Dr Chambas concluded that “Challenges ahead are numerous, complex, and interlinked. The intensity and transboundary nature make of these challenges it difficult for countries and regions to face alone. For example, the expansion of terrorism and resurgence of unconstitutional changes in government.”

Ends.

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