

# Lessons Learned or Ignored: New Insights from the Mozambican Civil War

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## Review Article

# *Lessons Learned or Ignored: New Insights from the Mozambican Civil War*

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Nikkie Wiegink, *Former Guerrillas in Mozambique* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

In the 30th anniversary year of the end of the Mozambican civil war (1977–1992), it is timely to reflect on the fresh insights that Michel Cahen, Corinna Jentsch and Nikkie Wiegink have provided over the last few years in their new books on the war's evolution and aftermath. These are additions to the growing body of revisionist academic literature that emphasise Mozambican agency in the civil war, moving the dial further away from earlier analysis that emphasised the external drivers of the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

These books also provide detail and analysis of local Mozambican politics and give voices to those who supported the then rebels, now the opposition party Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo). They are a reminder of the limitations of the post-independence state-building project and that in some areas the party of government, the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), was (and still is) far from dominant – it is contested and often seen as intrusive and oppressive. This new work also documents the difficulties that the government's security forces experiences when responding to organised armed contestation.

Few dispute that Renamo was created by Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Office and foster-parented in 1980 by the Military Intelligence Directorate of apartheid South Africa, but its early efforts to increasingly follow a Mozambican destiny have not been well documented, and these are explored by Michel Cahen in *'Não somos bandidos': a vida diária de uma guerrilha de direita; a Renamo na época do Acordo de Nkomati (1983–1985)* (*'We are Not Bandits': The Daily Life of a Right-Wing Guerrilla; Renamo at the Time of the*

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<sup>1</sup> For a review article of some of this literature, including E. Morier-Genoud, M. Cahen and D. do Rosário (eds), *The War Within: New Perspectives on the Civil War in Mozambique 1976–1992* (Woodbridge and Rochester, James Currey and Boydell & Brewer, 2018), and B.E. Bertelsen, *Violent Becomings: State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique* (Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2016), see A. Vines, 'Violence, Peacebuilding and State Formation in Mozambique,' *African Affairs*, 119, 476 (2020), pp. 490–2.

*Nkomati Accord [1983–1985]*).<sup>2</sup> This book is a rare study of a guerrilla war in using its own written documents, as most analysis to this day is based on oral testimony. Cahen revisits the ‘Cadernos de Gorongosa’ (‘Gorongosa Notebooks’), which are Renamo documents captured in 1985 at Casa Banana by the Mozambican government but originally edited selectively for a public audience by the then state security service, Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular (SNASP). Cahen, though, has been able to access the unedited papers and has reviewed 3,401 messages written by Renamo’s local groups and officers to its general staff between 1983 and 1985.

The book is exhaustive, examining what these papers tell us about Renamo during this period, such as structure, operational guidelines, tactics and local context – for example, how to deal with the rural population, neo-traditional chiefs and healers and education. From these documents Cahen has been able to map out the military areas under Renamo control and the three overall provincial commands: these were divided into regions, all named after animals, such as Crocodilo, Gato and Leão. He also shows that Renamo was becoming a more centralised guerrilla movement with its own agency – not those dictated by apartheid South Africa.

Compared with the original SNASP redacted papers, it is noticeable how few times South Africa was mentioned in these documents but also that Renamo had read the writing on the wall after the Nkomati non-aggression pact of 1984 between the Mozambican government and apartheid South Africa, and had recognised that it would need increasingly to fend for itself. Renamo’s leader Afonso Dhlakama, through messages as ‘Comandante Zacarias’, his pseudonym, encouraged discipline (p. 197). He clearly understood that as a result of losing safe rear bases in South Africa, his forces now needed to invest in nurturing more consistently the support of local communities in key districts of central Mozambique where Renamo had established bases. Examples of this were trying to ban the use of *nipa* (a hand-crafted distilled liquor) and imposing punishments for looting, sexual violence and other instances of indiscipline inside Renamo camps by threatening death or *chamboqueados* (beatings) (p. 160). Cahen concludes that the Nkomati Accord was a driver for Renamo to develop a social base.

Corinna Jentsch’s book, *Violent Resistance: Militia Formation and the Civil War in Mozambique*, in contrast, is a deep dive into how some of the Mozambican population responded when confronted by severe armed violence against them by Renamo. The government’s armed forces were unable to provide protection, and therefore encouraged militias to fill that void. A reminder of the dangers of over-generalisation about the Mozambican civil war, Jentsch’s work benefits from 13 months of intensive fieldwork in Mozambique between 2010 and 2016, drawing on 250 oral histories with former militia members, rebel combatants, soldiers, civilians and government officials. She also drew upon government documents from the Zambézia and Nampula provincial authorities. It is not only about the Naparama militia that she writes at length, but also the local peace zones in Zambézia, set up with the support of the Catholic Church and Jehovah’s Witnesses and under the guidance of certain chiefs (pp. 99–100). These were small static areas that people could flee to, but were often welcoming only to those that were members of that religious denomination.

Jentsch’s work distinguishes between two types of militia in Mozambique: community-initiated and state-initiated. By the early 1980s, the government started to encourage militias as a counter-insurgency tool. These *milícias populares* were initially created as political forces for communal villages and state companies but were broadened out as the civil war

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2 For those who do not read Portuguese, a good summary in English exists in Cahen’s book chapter ‘The War as Seen by Renamo’, in the edited volume *The War Within* (2018, see previous note), pp. 100–46.

expanded. Often, these militias were ineffective and contributed to insecurity, but also came to be seen as tools of oppression, such as being used to force local populations into the unpopular communal villages.

As the security situation deteriorated, in the late 1980s, the Mozambican government welcomed foreign military support from its neighbours (Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Malawi) but also encouraged the setting-up of some civilian-led militias. The key militia was Naparama, led by a traditional healer in northern Mozambique, Manuel António, who claimed that he had received a divine mission from Jesus Christ to liberate the Mozambican people from the suffering of war and had learned of a medicine to turn bullets into water, and who vaccinated his followers to become ‘bulletproof’.

Naparama became the most important of many violent and non-violent civilian resistance movements at the tail end of the civil war and grew from several hundred to several thousand members by 1989. By 1991, Naparama controlled significant territory in Zambézia and Nampula provinces. There is no doubt that Renamo combatants feared Naparama. A visit by this reviewer to Renamo-controlled Inhaminga in July 1993 validates Jentzsch’s findings, as Renamo combatants openly described their setbacks, including avoiding direct combat action against the Naparama militia.<sup>3</sup> There was an abandoned building in the town containing paintings by Renamo on all four walls, the equivalent of a Bayeux tapestry of the rise and fall of Manuel António – celebrating his eventual killing by Renamo. Naparama became a key target for Renamo counter-operations: Jentzsch too found that these had weakened by 1992, as local communities started to distance themselves as a result of violence against civilians and looting of goods, and arbitrary killings of so-called Renamo collaborators when some Naparama units went rogue. The death in action of António in late 1991 also had a significant impact on the militia and it was disbanded after the signing of the Rome General Peace Accord (GPA) in October 1992.

Naparama filled a gap for government military forces, helping to defend internally displaced camps and district camps. Its success affected peace talks in Rome, delaying the talks in 1990, but advancing them in 1991 following the killing of António. Jentzsch argues that Naparama’s major task was not to kill Renamo combatants and collaborators, but rather to capture them and their weapons and ‘recuperate’ the population (p. 80) from Renamo-held areas. It was a strategically effective response to military stalemate and therefore mostly tolerated by Frelimo. There is a debate over whether Frelimo originally created the Naparama militia. Brigadier General Joaquim Marcos Manjate played a key role in designing the counter-insurgency strategy for Zambézia as head of intelligence in the province for the Forças Populares de Libertação de Moçambique (FPLM) and has written a fascinating book, *Análise estratégica da liderança na guerra em Moçambique: batalha da Zambézia 1986–1992* (2013), which includes the claim that Naparama was a Frelimo counter-insurgency initiative to create an auxiliary force.<sup>4</sup> This may be an exaggeration, but it is puzzling that this work is not drawn upon by Jentzsch. She argues that the Naparama was a community-initiated militia and that Frelimo’s attitude towards it changed over time as it saw its success against Renamo and therefore encouraged its operations, including at times providing it with firearms and other logistical support. This is described vividly in an interview in her book with a local government official in Lugela, Zambézia (p. 123):

[t]he government did not support Naparama. However, as the people were seeing good results from Naparama’s actions the government did not organize a force to eradicate

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3 The reviewer was in Inhaminga in July 1993 to visit the mine clearance programme of the Gurkha Security Guards (GSG) Ltd.

4 Manjate, J.M., *Análise de estratégia da liderança na guerra em Moçambique: unidade de esforço na batalha da Zambézia 1986-1992* (Maputo, Diname, 2013).

Naparama. Because Naparama said over there is an advanced military position or camp – there is a Renamo base. Naparama was prepared to go to these bases. And in some way, they brought with them some uncles from these areas. They brought some ladies from these areas back here. Taking them from [Renamo’s] base! The disposition of such an individual [António] is welcome. ‘Ah, that’s how [he does things]!’ An individual who reached a dangerous place in order to retrieve his uncle. [They] retrieve your wife who had been with the bandit, with Renamo. Even retrieve your wife! From then on, there was no way for the government to prohibit the work of Naparama.

Although António was successful in Lugela, he was less so in the neighbouring district of Namarrói. This seems to be due to a different experience of the war, but also because the district’s elites were in conflict with each other, and so were divided. There were also times that Naparama combatants saw themselves as superior to government forces, and at times there was open rivalry – in Namarrói, Naparama activity was erratic and riddled with contradictions.

The Naparama militia clearly played an important role in reducing violence in many districts of Zambézia and Nampula provinces by 1992, and contributed to a ‘mutually hurting stalemate’ that resulted in the Rome GPA that October.<sup>5</sup> This book contributes also to deepening our understanding of how civilians during the civil war sought ‘third-way’ strategies, not fully endorsing either of the two key belligerents, Frelimo and Renamo.

There are useful insights from Jentzsch’s book for understanding the government’s attraction towards but also its limitations in the use of militias in Cabo Delgado province in response to the violent conflict that has developed there since 2017. Again, in response to setbacks, the government’s Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique (FADM) encouraged the creation of civilian militias to provide protection for certain communities or to act as an auxiliary counter-insurgency force since early 2020.<sup>6</sup> These have also been used to provide local intelligence by the Rwandan Defence Forces and the Southern African Development Community’s Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) that was deployed in the province from July/August 2021.

These militias have experienced various degrees of success, protecting villages and districts affected by the insurgency. Many draw their leadership from the *antigos combatentes* (war veterans) who fought during the civil war, but they have also recruited male and female members in their twenties and older. The importance of local militias was recognised by President Filipe Nyusi on Heroes’ Day in February 2022 when he decorated 235 members of local militias with medals in Mueda and praised them for their courage, saying, ‘[t]hey didn’t wait for orders before they embarked upon this noble mission’.<sup>7</sup> President Nyusi had already acknowledged the importance of militias when he swore in a new minister of defence in November 2021 by stating that Minister Cristovão Chume’s priorities were the modernisation of the armed forces and greater coordination with the local militias.<sup>8</sup>

Multiple armed actors, however, complicate the conflict and can be difficult to control. Amnesty International and other groups have reported that some of these militias have

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5 The ‘mutually hurting stalemate’ is a technical term from I. William Zartman, meaning that the military stalemate was squeezing both sides, thus incentivising both to engage in dialogue. See I.W. Zartman, ‘“Ripeness”: The Importance of Timing in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution’, E-International Relations website, 20 December 2008, available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2008/12/20/ripeness-the-importance-of-timing-in-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>, retrieved 26 May 2022.

6 Although an offer was made in 2021 by Ossufo Momade, the current leader of Renamo, to provide 362 guerrillas to form a Renamo party armed militia to fight in Cabo Delgado, it was ignored by the government: interview with Renamo official, Maputo, 2 May 2022.

7 ‘Mozambique: “Anonymous Heroes” Fight Against Terrorism – Nyusi’, Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 4 February 2022, available at <https://southafricatoday.net/africa-news/southern-africa/mozambique/mozambique-anonymous-heroes-fight-against-terrorism-nyusi/>, retrieved 3 May 2022.

8 ‘Mozambique: New Defence and Interior Ministers Sworn In’, Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 15 November 2021, available at <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-new-defence-and-interior-ministers-sworn-in-aim-204628/>, retrieved 3 May 2022.

conducted human rights abuses against the civilians that they were meant to protect (as also happened with several Naparama rogue units towards the end of the civil war).<sup>9</sup> These militias can act with impunity, hence the government's efforts from late 2021 to better control them. Speaking at the Sixth National Conference of the Associação dos Combatentes da Luta de Libertação Nacional (Association of Fighters of the National Liberation Struggle – ACCLIN) in April 2022, President Nyusi praised the militias' military contribution in Cabo Delgado. This followed a report in the press that the Mozambican military was unhappy with the autonomy of the militias.<sup>10</sup>

The minister of defence, in an interview with this reviewer in early April, also acknowledged the importance of militias in providing cover for security gaps and supporting the Mozambican defence and security forces (FDS) but preferred to call them 'local forces'.<sup>11</sup> He confirmed that the majority were veterans and that he had personally worked closely with them when previously serving as the FADM operational commander in Cabo Delgado. Minister Chume outlined his future plans for them: first, to ensure they are not penetrated by insurgent sympathisers; secondly, to ensure that new recruits are disciplined and that the government has full knowledge of their numbers; thirdly, for the ministry of national defence and other security agencies to work on a statute of regulation to ensure that these militias work in alignment and not outside the government's security framework. Ensuring they respect human rights is also a key element.

Once broader reforms of the FADM are complete, the minister plans that these militias should be withdrawn from active service, but they still could have other roles, such as supporting conservation and game park protection. This thinking was echoed by President Nyusi who during a visit to Uganda in late April announced that Uganda would provide logistical support for a development project for Cabo Delgado's veterans.<sup>12</sup>

Militia members do not receive a salary; the *antigos combatentes* that signed up receive their regular pensions, but these are not increased by virtue of the veterans serving in militias. They have received arms and ammunition and have been paid in kind for protecting supply convoys. This is also leading to a proliferation of weapons beyond the control of government authorities, which could be a problem in a post-conflict era.

Jentzsch notes that in 1993, after the end of the civil war, most of the Naparama militia disintegrated except in Nicoadala, where its headquarters was located during the conflict (p. 183). Here there were protests by ex-Naparama fighters calling for the same benefits as those offered to Renamo ex-combatants. Militias were never recognised for official disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) under the Rome GPA, and the government militias of Cabo Delgado in 2022 also retain an ambiguous status as informal auxiliary units.

'Incomplete' DDR of Renamo is a key theme of Nikkie Wiegink's book, *Former Guerrillas in Mozambique*. Wiegink spent over 18 months conducting fieldwork in central Mozambique between 2008 and 2010 and again briefly in 2017, mainly in Maringuè, the Ground Zero of Afonso Dhlakama's Renamo. She concludes that former fighters' life

9 Amnesty International, 'Mozambique: Civilians Killed as War Crimes Committed by Armed Group, Government Forces, and Private Military Contractors – New Report', available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/mozambique-civilians-killed-as-war-crimes-committed-by-armed-group-government-forces-and-private-military-contractors-new-report/#:~:text=Hundreds%20of%20civilians%20in%20Mozambique,ongoing%20conflict%20in%20Cabo%20Delgado>, retrieved 21 February 2022.

10 'Milícias populares armadas em Cabo Delgado atrapalham,' *Africa Monitor*, no. 1346, 14 April 2022.

11 Interview with Minister of Defence Artur Chume, 6 April 2022, Chatham House, available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/04/interview-cristovao-artur-chume>, retrieved 3 May 2022: listen from 12'49 to 18'25.

12 'Uganda Ready to Support the Fight Against Terrorism', Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 28 April 2022.

trajectories comprised a mixture of ruptures and continuities of relationships and networks, which included their relatives, the spiritual world, fellow former fighters, political parties and much more. The result is a well-written and sensitively researched and inclusive ethnography about the Mozambican civil war and its post-war trajectories of Renamo ex-combatants in Marínguè. The painstaking work of putting individuals back into local history is apparent here. Wiegink, during her time in Marínguè, attempted to become integrated in the local community and use that opportunity to see how their lived experiences compare with the stories they told her.

What differs from most other recent analysis on Mozambique is that Wiegink treats the post-conflict individual and community responses as open-ended and seeks to understand and describe how these ex-combatants navigate ‘unstable and sometimes dangerous landscapes, seeking to increase their social possibilities and life chances’ (p. 2). This contrasts with mainstream analysis of DDR that assumes that if that process fails, the combatants go back to conflict. Correctly, Wiegink problematises the concept of DDR, arguing that it should not be formulaic or time dependent and that it needs to be contextual. She also shows in Chapter 5 that the position of Renamo ex-combatants among their kin and communities changed by ‘(1) the time they spent away from home, (2) the demobilisation allowance they received, and (3) the fact that some survived and others did not. These also created tensions and incited fears and suspicions of misfortune by witchcraft’ (p. 138).

This book also reviews past theories and assumptions about the war – although limited to Marínguè, it shows that even at local level, generalisations are difficult and that there are many different episodes and outcomes over the duration of the conflict. What is clear is that over time the Maringuenses concluded that Renamo had become the most powerful player in their town and needed to adapt their lives to accommodate that political reality.

At the end of the war Marínguè had basically been abandoned, but it was re-established by Renamo combatants awaiting demobilisation and over time became one of Renamo’s key civilian settlements for returnees as it boasted plenty of fertile land around it. Renamo-appointed administrators governed the district until 1997, to the unease of Frelimo, and there were subsequent stand-offs between both parties. In post-war Marínguè, residents were discreet about their political affiliations, although much influenced by their families’ war-time experiences.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part, ‘Setting the Stage’, presents the historical context of Marínguè and of its ex-Renamo fighters. It provides a historical account of Marínguè, with a focus on the collaborations between civilians and armed actors which are characterised by collaboration and mobility. The book’s second part, ‘Family Affairs’, presents ex-Renamo combatants’ social navigations of three interrelated social environments that are each embedded, albeit in different ways, in kin structures and notions of what it means to be a good father, daughter, son, husband, wife and so on. The book’s third part, ‘Navigating Politics’, discusses ex-combatants’ navigation of two social environments that are each characterised by participation in social and political networks throughout the war and the post-war period.

The final reflections bring the different parts of the book together and consider how the study of former Renamo combatants’ trajectories takes debates on reintegration and war veterans further (p. 202). These reflections are followed by a short epilogue that briefly attempts to understand the remobilisation of a group of Renamo politicians and ex-combatants for targeted armed conflict in 2013.

There are graphic individual accounts in this book, for example that of Renamo ex-fighter Balthazar describing how he joined Renamo and how he used targeted violence including against civilians, but acted professionally. He also grumbled about demobilisation, saying that his UN demobilisation allowance was ‘only a little, just to keep us happy’ and that, since then, ‘[u]s [people living] in these zones, we receive nothing’ (p. 43). He clearly felt



victimised and that the government or Renamo should provide something for his years of sacrifice as a combatant.

Many of the demobilised combatants were simple rank-and-file combatants, pre-literate and with few skills but, like Balthazar, waiting for compensation, and frustrated. These Renamo ex-combatants expected Renamo and its leader Dhlakama to deliver expectations based on promises made during the war and on the regular pensions they saw being paid to Frelimo *antigos combatentes*. In Maríngue, Frelimo's *antigos combatentes* were regarded as privileged citizens because of the regular pensions they received.

Pensions were what Renamo's veterans desired, and Wiegink observed that in Maríngue their demobilisation cards were one of the most treasured possessions – as they had been a requirement for the demobilisation allowance during the period 1994–96. The veterans 'sensed that if they were ever to receive benefits from the state or the Renamo party, this card would be essential' (p. 192).

Renamo's ex-combatants regularly recalled the UN Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) period of 1992–1994 as their golden age, when they received clothing, tools and seeds and a bimonthly allowance: UNOMOZ acted in their eyes in the manner that they hoped for from the state or their party and shaped their expectations of both. Wiegink provides insight into some of the local pressures upon Renamo's leader at the time. During a lengthy interview that this reviewer conducted with Afonso Dhlakama in September 2010 in his Nampula home, Dhlakama referred to such pressures and warned that he was considering a return to targeted armed conflict.<sup>13</sup> He particularly referred to the government's vague promise that all demobilised soldiers should receive pensions and that a ministry of combatants had been established; however, no Renamo ex-combatants had benefited from this, owing to bureaucracy. The government, as Wiegink also observed, was insisting that there needed to be a record of the number of years of military service, but the demobilisation cards that ex-combatants had did not include this information.

Renamo lacked any record-keeping or ability to collate this information. This was clearly deliberate on the part of Armando Guebuza's administration, which had decided upon a course of trying to suffocate Renamo after the years of elite bargaining and 'taming' encouraged by his predecessor Joaquim Chissano. The partisan delivery of rural development funds just to Frelimo supporters in districts such as Maríngue, as in many other parts of Mozambique, was also divisive and furthered the sense of inequality and disenfranchisement. One interpretation is that Dhlakama wanted to keep some Renamo-armed combatants in a state of perpetual 'waithood' in central Mozambique, to back his elite bargaining strategy with Frelimo.<sup>14</sup> Drawing on this network, he successfully remobilised these fighters again in 2012, disrupting central Mozambique again. In 2012 and 2013, Renamo established new and reactivated old military bases in rural areas across central Mozambique, including near Maríngue. One result of the renewed hostilities was that Maríngue was attacked and occupied by government forces in October 2013, and it is alleged that 430 homes were burned in the area and an unknown number of people killed indiscriminately (p. 213). Very few core Renamo combatants were ever captured as they melted into the forests, but the civilian deaths, displacement and destruction of property were collateral damage in this renewed bout of violence.

13 A. Vines, 'Renamo's Rise and Decline: The Politics of Reintegration in Mozambique,' *International Peacekeeping*, 20, 3 (2013), pp. 375–93.

14 A. Vines, 'Violence, Peacebuilding, and Elite Bargains in Mozambique Since Independence', in T. McNamee and M. Muyangwa (eds), *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa: Lessons Learned for Policymakers and Practitioners* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 321–42. Available at [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7\\_18](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-46636-7_18), retrieved 3 May 2022.

As mentioned above, Wiegink's book is based on field research conducted in 2008–10 and then followed up briefly in 2017. She does not cover the negotiations, the 2019 peace agreement, the DDR and the splintering that followed. Her research does contextualise more recent developments outlined below, which confirm much of her book's thesis on Renamo's ex-combatants' aspirations.<sup>15</sup>

Dhlakama had by 2012 recognised that, despite decades of patience, he could not assume that his increasingly middle-aged ex-combatants in Marínguè and other areas would indefinitely support him. Hence, after a return to armed conflict and several false starts in negotiations with the government, Dhlakama and Nyusi, the new Mozambican president, concluded that they needed to build up mutual trust. They agreed on a ceasefire in December 2016 and then met twice face to face in the bush in central Mozambique. Despite Dhlakama's untimely death in May 2018 from underlying health issues, this process culminated in a new peace agreement in August 2019. In exchange for Renamo fully demobilising its residual forces and receiving benefits for them and some extra positions in the FDS, the government accepted a constitutional change to allow for indirectly elected provincial governors. Renamo hoped to win some of these in the national elections of October 2019 but failed, partly because these elections were flawed.

At the time in 2019, some analysts expected a further return to armed conflict if Renamo failed to make electoral gains.<sup>16</sup> This has failed to materialise; instead, there was some fragmentation, with a small, hundred-plus-strong armed splinter group made up mostly of Renamo ex-fighters from Manica and Sofala provinces. This formed the Junta Militar da Renamo (RMJ) and was led by Mariano Nhongo until he was killed by government forces in October 2021. From August 2019 to October 2021 the RMJ conducted targeted attacks in central Mozambique, mostly against civilians, killing 30.<sup>17</sup> It was predominantly an internal Renamo dispute over ethnicity and patronage, with the RMJ disputing Ossufo Momade's legitimacy to lead the party – but with Nhongo's death, the RMJ ended. Momade had marginalised Renamo's military leaders from central Mozambique, including from Marínguè, as he tried to pivot the party towards his home province of Nampula and Zambézia, promoting his supporters to senior leadership positions.

Many Renamo ex-combatants have had enough and have signed up to the new peace deal of August 2019. By June 2022, 3,558 former Renamo fighters had been demobilised (156 women and 3,402 men) out of a recognised list of 5,221 (257 women and 4,964 men), some 68 per cent. DDR activities have taken place in 16 bases and 12 have now closed, including Marínguè.<sup>18</sup> This has also included 90 (the majority) from the RMJ – who demobilised in Murrupula in December 2021. Wiegink's estimate that there were 3,000 ex-combatants in the Marínguè area was not too far off the mark, and many of them do appear to have fought in past conflicts (p. 8). Although a few firearms and some ammunition have been surrendered, the Renamo demobilised are able to return to their home areas (or anywhere else they wish to go). They are also registered so that they can enjoy the rights envisaged for the former guerrillas under the peace agreements signed by President Nyusi and Renamo leader Momade in August 2019.

Lessons have been learned from the past DDR efforts that Wiegink highlighted. At the accommodation centres for the demobilised fighters, ex-Renamo fighters are provided with

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15 The following section draws on interviews by this reviewer in Maputo and Nampula in December 2021, and on A. Vines, *As perspectivas de um acordo sustentável entre as elites em Moçambique: à terceira é de vez?* (London, Chatham House, 2019), pp. 1–66, available at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2019-09-04-ElitePerspectivesMozambique-Portuguese.pdf>, retrieved 3 May 2022.

16 This reviewer included. See Vines, *As perspectivas de um acordo sustentável*.

17 Information provided by ministry of national defence, Maputo, 3 May 2022.

18 Information provided by the Peace Process Support (PPS), Maputo, June 2022.

various services, such as the issuing of identity documents, birth certificates and tax numbers. They are also assisted in opening bank accounts and provided with pre-paid SIM cards for mobile phones. However, this process remains bumpy: Renamo complains that its former fighters demobilised under the August 2019 peace agreement have not received all their allowances and that their pensions have not been fixed.<sup>19</sup> The payments from the state that were due to begin immediately after the payments from international donors, lasting for one year, came to an end in early 2021. Sorting this out is key for the sustainability of the August 2019 peace agreement but requires broader pensions reform. The government currently pays pensions to around 170,000 Mozambicans (including mostly Frelimo ex-combatants) at a annual cost of around \$220 million.<sup>20</sup> The pensions for former combatants are currently non-contributory and depend on disbursements from the national treasury. These are not financially sustainable and are a significant addition to the growing debt burden. The government needs to develop a new financial model for the national pension scheme for all ex-combatants, including those from Renamo. The ministry of combatants, the ministry of national defence and the ministry of finance's institute for social welfare have all argued for reform and there has been a request to the international financial institutions and bilateral donors to assist in designing a viable and manageable new system.<sup>21</sup>

All three books reviewed demonstrate that when understanding the Mozambican conflict, its evolution and the post-1992 GPA developments, its local context and its politics matter greatly. Jentsch's research showed that the Naparama militia experienced different levels of acceptance and success in neighbouring districts because of local elite politics. Wiegink's ethnography of ex-combatants is also a reminder that although the UNOMOZ supervised DDR process worked for much of Mozambique, it failed in central Mozambique, and a new process is under way and designed to avoid past mistakes.

Thirty years on from the end of the Mozambican civil war, the deep scars are still healing and these three books are reminders of the human cost and the fragility of the post-independence state-building project. What is clear from these books is that there are many continuities from the civil war, such as weak government defence and security forces needing militia support and the help of foreign militaries, but also increased pressure for more accountable, better government that provides public goods, such as health and education, and increased political pluralism. The top Renamo priority for those who fought in the civil war and in the post-2013 armed incursions remains that of obtaining predictable and dependable pensions.

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19 Renamo also complained in 2022 that ten of its officers should have been placed in the general command of the Mozambican police and that 36 of them should have been placed in a VIP protection unit: interview with Renamo, Maputo, 3 May 2022.

20 Information provided by ministry of finance, Maputo, 3 May 2022.

21 *Ibid.*