

The Mozambican cradle of the Makonde Nation and its wars of wealth: Challenges and opportunities

Sky Mkuti

The cradle of the Makonde Nation of Mozambique is historically rich with stories of bravery, heroism, and unmatched artefacts that convey the experienced socio-political struggles that are adorned in a unique heritage. However, despite taking part in heroic wars that led to the end of imperialism, colonialism, and ultimately led to the liberation of Mozambique in 1975, little is documented about the Makonde people of Mozambique. The Makonde of Mozambique fought wars of liberation for over a decade in the 1960s. In the aftermath of Independence, the country had to deal with a civil war from 1976 ending in 1992 through a peace agreement with the main opposition party – the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). The 16-year-long civil war left many socio-political and economic bruises on the Mozambican people. The attainment of peace was elusive for Mozambique as the underlying factors that led to the rise of socio-economic and political attrition created conditions for the infiltration of opportunist transnational actors such as Al-Shabaab, in the frail yet minerally wealthy Cabo Delgado. This unfolding of events reveals the implications of unresolved past conflicts which potentially escalate into futuristic complex conflicts like terrorism. Although terrorism is prevalent in Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been relatively a peaceful region until 2017 when Cabo Delgado was plagued with transnational terror. The struggle for national and regional security remains as terrorists challenge the military capacity of the Mozambican government and its strategy to restore peace and stability in Mozambique. Reflecting on past conflicts and their influence on current conflicts, this paper explores the emerging conflict trends in Mozambique. It argues that the ill-management of natural resources has created conditions for the manifestation of extremism in Cabo Delgado. The interdependence and cooperation perspective presents opportunities for the collective implementation of robust counterterror strategic plans viable to redress the extant challenges associated with natural resource conflict management.

Keywords: Colonialism, Civil War, Interdependence, Terrorism, Peace, National Security, Natural Resources.