

Rwandan, SADC Troops Allied with Mozambique Armed Forces, Making Headway in Cabo Delgado

Islamist insurgency has attacked areas under energy resource development leaving many displaced.

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As the United States Pentagon and State Department make a rapid disastrous evacuation from the Central Asian state of Afghanistan, another war is underway in the resource-rich Southern African state of Mozambique.

This threat to the national security of Mozambique and the entire region of Southern Africa, has gained almost no coverage in the western corporate and government-controlled media outlets.

Led by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) ruling party since 1975, this former Portuguese colony has undergone tumultuous historical conjunctures over the last five centuries. As a coastal state, Mozambique proved to be a valuable source of profit through labor, agricultural and hydro-electric exploitation of its resources.

The independence movement took up weaponry after appeals for a peaceful transition to majority rule were closed within the context of the Portuguese colonial and fascist system of governance. Mozambique was administered from Lisbon as an overseas territory of this backward and waning European power which was allied with the U.S. within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Since late 2017, a group calling itself “al-Shabaab”, ostensibly not affiliated within the rebel organization of the same name in Somalia, has waged war on the Mozambican government and people. Cabo Delgado province is the focus of the insurgency which is the center of a natural gas development project.

Mozambique, along with other neighboring and contiguous states along the eastern and southeastern coast of Africa, such as Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda, have experienced tremendous discoveries of natural gas and petroleum resources inland and offshore. Africa as a whole has for centuries been a source of strategic minerals and energy resources which have been hoarded by the world capitalist system.

Member-states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a 16-member

regional federation which often takes similar political and economic positions on a variety of continental and international questions, had expressed grave concerns about the increasing instability in Mozambique. Later the government of the East African state of Rwanda offered assistance to Maputo in fighting the al-Shabaab rebels.

The French-based Total Energies corporation has invested heavily in the development of the Indian Ocean coastal area near Palma. Reports indicate that the project to produce Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is currently valued at \$US20 billion.

As a result of the fighting in Cabo Delgado around Palma, Total halted the LNG development project due to security concerns. Some media outlets in Mozambique have reportedly suggested that France is financing the military operations by Rwanda and other states from SADC.

Whether this is true or not, the recapture of Mocimboa da Praia has prompted confidence in the future security status of Cabo Delgado. The President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), M. Akinwumi Adesina, said in a recent statement that the project could resume within 18 months.

[A report published](#) by Reuters press agency quoted Adesina as saying:

“The return of security in that place will give assurances to Total and others to return. In one year to 18 months, I expect it to be stabilized enough to get back on track. It gave us real concern when Total declared force majeure and they had to move out. But you can understand because of the insecurity situation. Without security, you can’t have investment and you can’t have development.”

A meeting held in Maputo on June 23 involved several governments within the SADC region including Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. This gathering approved the dispatching of the SADC Standby Force to Mozambique specifically to combat what they described as the terrorist threat in Cabo Delgado. The announcement was made by the outgoing Executive Secretary of SADC Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax.

The Executive Secretary did not provide a timetable as it relates to the length of the deployment to Mozambique. A document discussed during the special summit said that up to 3,000 troops from the SADC Standby Force will be sent into the country.

SADC States Involved in the Mozambique Deployment

Several regional states have announced publicly that they are sending troops into Mozambique in line with the security mission. \$12US million has been allocated by SADC to cover the costs of the deployment.

The countries that have announced participation in the operation include Botswana, Tanzania, Angola, Lesotho and South Africa. The military Commander of the SADC mission is South African Maj. Gen. Xolani Mankayi. They will join the already 1,000 soldiers from Rwanda which were deployed after a meeting between Mozambique President Felipe Nyusi and his counterpart Paul Kagame.

[According to a statement issued by SADC](#) on July 17:

“H.E. Dr. Tax presented the instruments of authority as mandated by the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government to the Force Commander of the SADC Mission in Mozambique. The Force Commander will work closely with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation. In her remarks, Dr. Tax highlighted that SADC has high confidence in the capabilities and abilities of the leaders who have been appointed to lead the SADC Mission to lead men and women in uniform to achieve the desired objectives of attaining peace and security in Cabo Delgado and creating a conducive peaceful environment for the people of Mozambique, and of the region at large. The Executive Secretary expressed SADC’s commitment to support the Mission to fulfill its mandate and urged the Force Commander and his team to perform their duties with zeal and diligence for the preservation of peace and security in Mozambique and the SADC region.”

A small contingent of women naval personnel from the Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF) have been sent into Mozambique along with their male counterparts. Lt. Yvonne Umwiza, the leader of the speed boat unit, told the international press that the women are carrying out the same responsibilities as men.

Umwiza was quoted as saying:

“There are no specific challenges here in Cabo Delgado for us as female soldiers. We face the same problems as the men and we are very well trained to perform our duties.”

A report from the United Nations World Food Program indicates that approximately one million people living in northern Mozambique are in need of food assistance.

Pan-Africanism and Regional Security in Within SADC

The challenge of ending the Islamist insurgency in northern Mozambique will be pivotal in the overall aims of fostering development and regional integration in the sub-continent. There is enormous precedent for unity among the SADC member-states which date back to the period of the 1970s and 1980s during the struggle against the racist settler-colonial regimes in Rhodesia, the colonies of Portugal which included Mozambique, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, as well as South Africa and Namibia.

In 1980, the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) was formed in an effort to foster greater cooperation in economic and political spheres. Twelve years later in 1992, the successor Southern African Development Community (SADC) was launched in the newly independent Republic of Namibia. Since 1992, the region has taken on the formidable tasks of reversing the dependency and underdevelopment built into the political economy from the legacies of enslavement and colonialism.

The anti-terrorism mission in Mozambique is being carried out with what appears to be limited involvement from the U.S. and the European Union imperialist states. There are reports of training being provided by a handful of Pentagon Special Forces and EU military operatives. One private military contractor, Dyck Advisory Group, had earlier supplied helicopter air support to Mozambique’s police. However, its contract ran out in April and was not renewed by the government in Maputo. Moreover, the political direction of the mission has been established by the SADC Secretariat utilizing the SADC Standby Force working in conjunction with the RDF.

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