MOZAMBIQUE

Northerners

Activity: 2014-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- Soon after Mozambique's independence from Portugal in 1975, a center-seeking rebellion broke out which pitted Renamo (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana/Mozambican National Resistance) against Mozambique's government, which was controlled by Frelimo (Frente de libertação de Moçambique; Front for the Liberation of Mozambique). The conflict involved a strong regional component as Frelimo represented southern groups and Renamo northern groups. A peaceful resolution to the civil war was reached in 1992 and Renamo transformed into a political party. The first multi-party elections were held in October 1994 (UCDP/PRIO).
- In 2008, Renamo criticized that year's local elections as "stolen" and retreated its headquarters from Maputo (Mozambique's capital) to its former war headquarters in the inaccessible Gorongoza mountains. Renamo then boycotted the 2013 local elections and resumed its guerilla campaign (Koessler 2018). According to Bueno et al. (2015), the violent conflict was fought over electoral legislation, the disarmament of Renamo, the integration of Renamo forces into the Mozambican army, and the "depoliticisation" of the state.
- The parties signed a peace agreement on September 5, 2014. In October 2014, national elections were held, in which Renamo had a strong showing. After the election, Renamo began demanding autonomy for six of Mozambique's eleven provinces (Nampula, Niassa, Tete, Zambezia, Sofala, and Manica). Previously, Renamo had only made demands for local/municipal autonomy (Bueno et al. 2015; Koessler 2018; Manning 2016; MRGI). As we do not include claims for municipal autonomy, 2014 is coded as the start date.
- An autonomy bill introduced by Renamo was rejected by Mozambique's parliament in 2015 (Economist Intelligence 2015).
- In 2018, Mozambique adopted constitutional reforms towards decentralization. The reform will enable regional elections in provinces, districts, and municipalities. Previously, provincial governors were appointed. The constitutional amendment also promises administrative and financial autonomy, but the actual scope of autonomy needs to be clarified through implementing implementation (Koessler 2018).
- We found no evidence for claims for increased self-rule after 2018, but also could not find clear evidence that Renamo abandoned the claim for more autonomy. We therefore code the movement as ongoing in 2020 based on the 10-years rule. Note: In 2019, Renamo and the Mozambican government signed a peace agreement, which provided for Renamo's disarmament (AFP 2019; MRGI). [start date: 2014; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- After the 2014 election, Renamo began demanding autonomy for six of Mozambique's eleven provinces (Nampula, Niassa, Tete, Zambezia, Sofala, and Manica) (Bueno et al. 2015; Koessler 2018; Manning 2016; MRGI). [2014-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- After the 2014 election, Renamo began demanding autonomy for six of Mozambique's eleven provinces (Nampula, Niassa, Tete, Zambezia, Sofala, and Manica) (Bueno et al. 2015; Koessler 2018; Manning 2016; MRGI). We code this claim based on GADM.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- UCDP/PRIO codes an armed conflict involving Renamo in 2013-14. However, as the above narrative makes clear, Renamo only began to make claims for provincial autonomy after the cessation of hostilities and signing of a peace agreement in September 2014; and the violent conflict was not fought over autonomy.
- UCDP/PRIO again codes an armed conflict involving Renamo in 2016. This is consistent with MRGI, which suggests that the conflict re-escalated in 2015: "Violence escalated, and in October 2015 the military began an operation against RENAMO, leading some 11,500 people to flee to Malawi by the end of the first quarter of 2016. The worst violence hit the central Tete province on the Malawi border. This period also saw a spate of apparently politically motivated killings on both sides, with both accused of breaching human rights norms." We code separatist armed conflict in 2016 given Renamo's ongoing claim for autonomy but denote the episode as over mixed motives (UCDP/PRIO codes the conflict as over government).
- According to MRGI, A RENAMO faction launched an attack on government forces in December 2019, killing 10 people. In addition, MRGI reports 44 casualties related to election-related violence. It is not clear whether this violence was over separatism, and therefore it is not included here. [2014-2015: NVIOLSD; 2016: LVIOLSD; 2017-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Following independence in 1975, Mozambique emerged as a unitary socialist state under FRELIMO's leadership (Bueno et al. 2015).
- Mozambique's 1990 constitution introduced multiparty politics in which the office of the President of Mozambique would not anymore accrue ex officio to the leader of FRELIMO but to a directly elected candidate, but Mozambique remained highly centralized with little autonomy given to provinces (Koessler 2018).
- RENAMO gained almost half of the vote in the 1994 parliamentary election, with its support concentrated in the central and northern parts of the country. Subsequently, Mozambique initiated a "system of gradual decentralization" in 1997. Under the law, Mozambique's parliament could create local authorities with elected assemblies and a degree of financial autonomy and limited regulatory powers. By 2018, 53 cities and municipalities were transformed into local authorities whereas the remaining 352 local governments were not granted autonomy. Bueno et al. (2015)

describe municipal autonomy as limited; and Renamo considered the 1997 reform inadequate (Koessler 2018).

Concessions and restrictions

- In 2018, Mozambique adopted constitutional reforms towards decentralization. The reform will enable regional elections in provinces, districts, and municipalities. Previously, provincial governors were appointed. The constitutional amendment also promises administrative and financial autonomy, but the actual scope of autonomy needs to be clarified through implementing implementation (Koessler 2018). We still code an autonomy concession due to the introduction of regional elections. [2018: autonomy concession]

Regional autonomy

- We consider the 2018 reform too limited for a regional autonomy code. This is consistent with EPR. [no autonomy]

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

Movement	Northerners
Scenario	1:n
EPR group(s)	Shona-Ndau
Gwgroupid(s)	54103000

- According to MRGI, around two-thirds of Mozambique's population inhabits the country's north, where a range of ethnic groups can be found including the Macua and related Lómuè (the foremost group in the northern provinces of Nampula, Zambezia, Cabo Delgado and Niassa), Sena (foremost in Sofala province), Chuabo and Marendje (important in Zambezia), Nyanja (foremost in Tete), and the Shona-speaking Ndau people (dominant in Manica and important in Sofala). EPR includes two groups in the north, the Shona-Ndau and the Makonde-Yao, but does not include any of the other groups. One of the groups - the Makonde-Yao – are historically associated with Frelimo and Renamo did not claim autonomy for the region inhabited by this group, Cabo Delgado.

Power access

- The EPR coding notes make clear that Renamo and the northern groups it represents have been systemically excluded from political power. [powerless]

Group size

-   According to MRGI, "about two-thirds of Mozambique's population inhabits the seven provinces north of the River Save." However, Renamo only claims autonomy for 6/7 northern provinces (Nampula, Niassa, Tete, Zambezia, Sofala, and Manica – but not Cabo Delgado). According to the 2017 census, there were ca. 20 million people in these six provinces out of the country's total of 29 million. [0.6897]

Regional concentration

-   All sources describe the movement as regionalist, and according to MRGI, most ethnic groups in Mozambique have a clear regional base. [regionally concentrated]

Kin

-   EPR suggests that one of the groups associated with this movement – the Shona-Ndau – have numerically significant transborder ethnic kin in Zimbabwe (Shona & Ndau & Manyika). There are also several million Nyanja (also called Chewa) in Malawi; and ca 0.5 million Sena (another northern group), also in Malawi. [kin in neighboring country]

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