

# Terrorist Insurgency in Northern Mozambique: Context, Analysis, and Spillover Effects on Tanzania

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## Abstract

Tanzania has been closely following the evolution of the security situation in the region of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. Worsening living conditions and safety in this bordering region suggest the eruption of a multifaceted security and human threat of transnational magnitude. This paper looks at the different cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic ties that link Tanzania and Mozambique, while exploring how the security situation in Cabo Delgado might impact national security in Tanzania. To understand the complex situation in the region, the paper uses the concepts of governance and resources curse applied to the case of the Cabo Delgado insurgency.



# Terrorist Insurgency in Northern Mozambique: Context, Analysis, and Spillover Effects on Tanzania

## The Roots of the Insurgency

October 2017, an armed group attacked three police stations in the town of Mocimboa da Praia, in the region of Cabo Delgado, killing 17 people including police officers and a community leader<sup>1</sup>. Some days later, the army arrested the suspects in relation to the attack, but violence continued in the region. The targets of the attacks slowly evolved from police and government installations to include civilians and representatives of international oil and gas companies operating in the region. The origins and ideological underpinnings of the movement commonly called Al Shabaab or Ahl Al Sunna Wa-Al Jamâa are unclear. It is worth mentioning that the appellation Al Shabaab is in reference to the word 'youth' in Arabic and is not related to Al Shabaab in Somalia. Potential links with Islamic State (IS) have been evoked, particularly after ISIS publically recognized in mid-2019 links with Al Shabaab in Cabo Delgado<sup>2</sup>. However, differences in the target and modus operandi suggest that Al Shabaab remains a locally driven movement. Foreign intervention if confirmed, only came at later stages as ISIS tried to take over the insurgency for international media exposure and recognition. Analysts also linked references to ISIS with foreign interests to legitimise international military action. It is easier to provide military support for Mozambique to combat a global threat like ISIS than to curb a local insurgency emerging from Mozambique's own citizens<sup>3</sup>. Other media reports linked the insurgency to the interests of private security companies trying to obtain lucrative contracts in the region, but the obvious failure of both the Russian Wagner Group<sup>4</sup> and the South African Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) military companies hired by the Mozambican government show the limits of this analysis. Both companies had to leave the region after delivering very limited and controversial results<sup>5</sup>.

Other plausible explanations can be found in theories of governance and public policies that link human security and stability to satisfactory levels of public services delivery by the government. This perception of states' legitimacy in relation to public service provision finds its roots in the work of the founders of the social pact theory (T. Hobbes, J. Locke, and J.J. Rousseau), which state that individuals give up their right to absolute freedom in exchange for gaining access to safety and basic services: a relationship encapsulated in the term 'social contract'. Failure of the state to fulfill the provision of public services and security implies default in the function of the state. Max Weber, another architect of the legitimacy of modern states, added to the above-mentioned obligations the capacity of the state to exercise the monopoly over physical violence within its borders. Confronting these criteria with the current situation in the region of Cabo Delgado is an interesting exercise. Before the beginning of the insurgency in 2017, Cabo Delgado was very little known to the wide public. The region, situated in the north of the country, hosts more than one third of the Muslim population in Mozambique, with 54% of its inhabitants being Muslim, but the region is also host to a considerable number of Christians<sup>6</sup>. The latter are in their majority Makondé and partisans of the ruling party FRELIMO, while the Muslims are Mwani, notably known for their support for the main opposition party RENAMO. These political divergences

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1. Fabricius, P., (Oct 2017), Mozambique's first Islamist attacks shock the region. Institute for Security Studies.

2. Alden, C & Chichava, S., (2021), Cabo Delgado: 'Al Shabaab/ISIS' and the Crisis in Southern Africa.

3. BBC News, (2021), Mozambique Palma attack: Why IS involvement is exaggerated.

4. Sixto, D., (2020), Russian Mercenaries: A String of Failures in Africa.

5. Nhamirre, B., (2020), Resort to private military companies to fight the insurgency in Cabo Delgado: without transparency and with disastrous results.

6. Margarida, A & Sousa, S., (2020), « Histoire du Cabo Delgado : aux origines du conflit ».

were fueled by Portuguese colonization, which sought to include the Mwani in administrative and army positions, while keeping the Makondé for hard labor in agriculture and construction, despite the fact that they were Christianized by the Portuguese, which was not the case for the Mwani.

Feeling discriminated against and marginalized by the Portuguese, many Makondé fled to bordering Tanzania, from which they returned richer and fighting for independence from Portugal. Hence, they formed and financed the liberation movement FRELIMO. After independence, when FRELIMO gained power, Makondé were given rewards and pensions for their role in the independence of Mozambique. However, many Mwani claim to have actively fought for independence, but the official history of the country omits their important role. Therefore, in Cabo Delgado, belonging to an ethnic group determines both the social and economic status of individuals.

Religion plays a central role in the region. Signs of faith are displayed by both clans. The Makondé often wear rosaries around their neck, while Mwani men go out publicly with prayer hats and the women wear hijabs. However, experts argue that despite the importance of religion in understanding the current conflict in Cabo Delgado, linking it solely to religious radicalism would be very simplistic. As throughout the history of Mozambique, Islam was more of the Sufi peaceful variety before Mwani preachers trained in Wahhabi schools in Egypt and Somalia. It is only recently that a not very common form of radical and political Islam has started to gain ground in Cabo Delgado, under the influence of some Kenyan preachers in contact with Mwani religious leaders.

The general dynamics in the region are characterized by a strong feeling of inequality and discrimination towards the Mwani as they are generally less integrated in the social and economic sphere, unlike the Makondé. Social tensions and the potential for unrest have been present in the region since independence. A large share of Mwani reject the way the country has been ruled since independence, arguing the role of the Mwani in the independence of Mozambique was marginalized by the ruling elite of FRELIMO.

Signs of inequality and differences are obvious in the region. For instance, in the city of Mocímboa da Praia—one of the principal cities of Cabo Delgado—there are Makondé neighborhoods where signals of wealth are evident—expensive roofs and doors—while Mwani neighborhoods are marginalized. The current president Philippe Nyusi is himself a Makondé from the region. However, his successful career does not represent the reality for youth in Cabo Delgado, who are marginalized regardless of their religion. It is worth mentioning that before the discovery of huge oil and gas resources, the region was one of the poorest of the country, where the delivery of basic public services was very weak. Hence, experts argue that, although the insurgency came in the guise of religious radicalism, deep structural concerns persist in the region.

The insurgents claim to be of Muslim faith and speak the local languages of Cabo Delgado (Kimwani, the language of the Mwani, and Swahili, the common language). A large majority of the leaders of the movement belong to a sect installed in the region in 2014 and identify themselves as the followers of the Kenyan Imam and preacher Aboud Rogo Mohammed, who was killed in 2012 in Kenya. The means of subsistence used by the insurgents are unclear, but different sources linked the survival of Al Shabaab to transnational drug trafficking networks and involvement in illicit activities.

The situation in Cabo Delgado is one of complex social, economic, and ethno-religious dynamics. A deep feeling of social injustice and discrimination along religious and ethnic lines has fueled the perception of the state's failure to deliver public goods. In fact, when the insurgency first started, the targets were government buildings and administrations. Attacks on churches came at later stages. The jihadists, affirming their willingness to impose Islamic rule in the region, find their support among unemployed and marginalized young people, who are easily radicalized.

## A Case of Pre-resources Curse

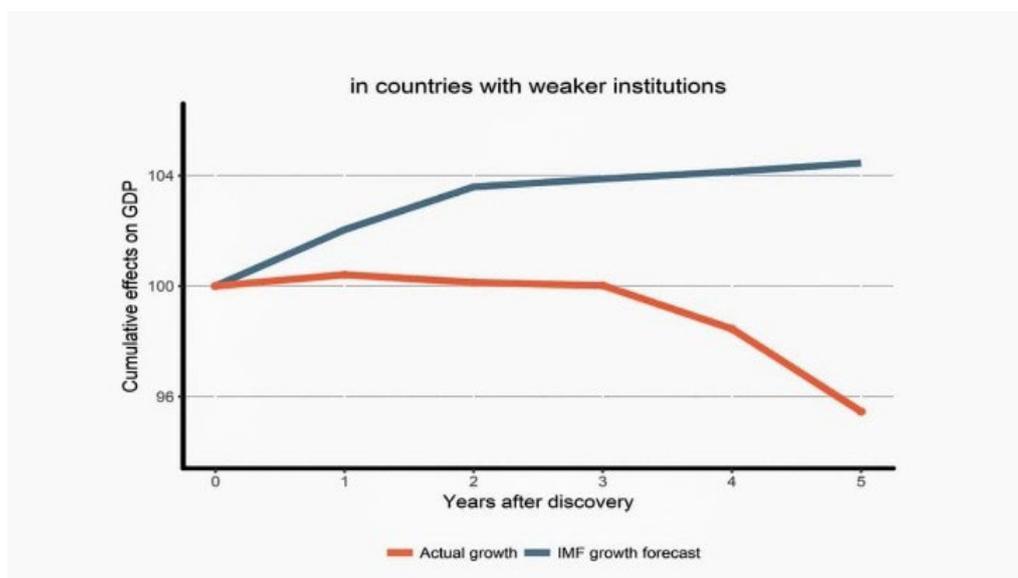
The discovery of a huge ruby deposit and a giant gas field in Cabo Delgado in 2009-2010 raised hopes of better living conditions for Mozambicans in general and the inhabitants of Cabo Delgado in particular. However, these hopes were quickly dashed, raising concerns about corruption and monopoly of resources by a small fraction of the governing elite. Behind those concerns are the economic and political records of the ruling party. For many years, Mozambique was considered by international donors, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to be a trustworthy country that managed to transition out of a violent civil war, thanks to the peace agreement of 1992. The country recorded positive indicators. The GDP growth rate was 7.2% from 2000 to 2016 and the poverty rate fell from 60.3% in 2000 to 48.4% in 2015. Mozambique received substantial amounts of aid from international donors accounting for more than half of the country's budget until 2009. Indicators of poverty, education, and health improved and the country was labeled a success story in the region. However, in parallel to an improved economic situation on the surface, structural problems persisted. In all elections, FRELIMO was declared the winner and hence has ruled the country since 1975 as the only governing party. The transition from communism to capitalism was very quick and the government proceeded with massive privatization. Over 1400 transactions occurred from mid-1980 throughout the 1990s<sup>7</sup>. RENAMO responded to these massive changes with growing criticism of and opposition to the government. Tensions persisted around issues related to the integration of RENAMO militants into the administrative and economic structures of the country. The ruling party insisted on the necessity of disarmament of RENAMO militants, but with no clear economic and social alternatives.

In general terms, for a long period, the country remained dependent on international aid until gas and oil resources were discovered in the 2000s. This discovery led to what experts commonly call the syndrome of pre-resources curse, meaning that a country expecting oil and gas resources usually economically underperforms, even before the beginning of exploitation of the resources. This trend is particularly experienced in countries with weak institutions, with countries performing below the growth expectations of the IMF in periods preceding oil discoveries. This is due to the overestimation of the financial benefits expected from the discovered oil resources, leading to suboptimal behavior by public decision-makers. This can take the form of risky borrowing, like the case of Mozambique, where the government subsequently elevated its external debt to an estimated 107% of GDP in 2017.

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7. Cramer, R., (2001), « Privatisation and Adjustment in Mozambique: "A Hospital Pass"? ».

**Figure 1: Short-term growth impact of giant oil and gas discoveries in countries with weak institutions**



Source: Natural Resource Governance Institute.

A hidden debt scandal that erupted in 2016 shed light on the magnitude of corruption in the government of ex-president Armando Guebuza, whose son, Armandi Ndambi, was among the convicted suspects in the affair. Government officials, personnel from big foreign banks, and a Lebanese company were involved in the debt scandal of 2 billion dollars. The financial terms and details of the debt were kept hidden from the parliament and the community of donors, until the scandal erupted.

Against this background, in 2017, insurgencies erupted in the region of Cabo Delgado. It was not the first time that the region saw unrest and social instability. In 2007 and 2010, frustrated young people contested local leaders, calling for more economic inclusion and compliance with the laws of Islam. They contested the authority of army figures mainly belonging to the Makondé ethnic group, as they feared newly discovered resources would be exclusively managed by the central government.

There was a strong feeling of resentment and discontent about the resources of the North—marginalized and isolated for a long time—benefiting the powerful Center and South of the country. The decision of the government to expel in 2017 artisanal miners from commercial mining units further fueled local anger. Violent protests erupted in that same year.

## Regional Spillovers and Security Issues in the Region

Since the beginning of the insurrection, the Mozambican government has sought to minimize its risk, arguing it is merely a local issue. However, the growing influence of the Al Shabaab movement has proved the initial assessment was wrong. The attacks that started with the targeting of police stations and administrative buildings quickly evolved into violent raids on cities and strategic gas installations. The local government in Maputo appeared to have been taken by surprise and did not realize the magnitude of the problem. Hence, the responses were mainly ad-hoc measures that aimed to curb violence in the region, but the results were very limited. The Mozambican government called on private security firms from Russia and South Africa to stabilize the region, but both companies

delivered very limited results. The fact of calling for international intervention was badly perceived locally in Cabo Delgado, and fueled further anger. Adding to this, there were reports of human rights violations and murders of civilians allegedly carried out by the private companies. The Mozambican government sought to end the contracts with the private firms.

Against this background of uncertainty and growing violence, regional powers expressed their concerns over the deteriorating situation in Cabo Delgado, particularly after Al Shabaab declared its liaison with ISIS. Neighboring South Africa and Tanzania were particularly concerned about the crisis spilling over and affecting their security and stability. Hence, the issue was brought to discussion in several meetings of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and was added to the agenda of the African Union Security Council under South African presidency. However, Mozambique has always resisted external involvement in the conflict, particularly from South Africa, which has enjoyed in the past strong ties with RENAMO. Other countries have suggested indirect support. Portugal and the United States, for example, have offered to train officials of the Mozambican army. The SADC has also put at the disposal of Mozambique the Standby Force troops to help curb the insurgency. However, the Mozambican government has always voiced its skepticism about the SADC troops, although the joint efforts of the Mozambican army, the Rwandan and SADC troops, proved efficient in regaining control over the city of Palma, which had been taken over by the insurgents.

The following section tackles in detail the potential spilling over of the situation in Cabo Delgado to neighboring Tanzania.

## The Shared Ties Between Tanzania and Mozambique

Tanzania and Mozambique share not only a border but strong family, economic, cultural, and historical ties, which cement the bond between the two countries. Tanzania played a key role in Mozambique's struggle for independence. In fact, the country was a base for liberation movement activists. The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) was among those movements that benefited extensively from Tanzania's support for the independence of the southern African states.

Moreover, the Macondé in Cabo Delgado have traditional links with Makondé in Tanzania<sup>8</sup>. Mwani is a similar language to Swahili and Mwani speakers have traditional links to Zanzibar and coastal cities further north<sup>9</sup>. The Makua and Yao are two large Bantu tribes of Southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique<sup>10</sup>. Tanzania's Mtwara Region and Cabo Delgado are inextricably linked through ties of family, language, faith, and economy<sup>11</sup>. An effectively open border is straddled by families rooted on either side<sup>12</sup>. A common language, Swahili, binds communities, while shared faith too ignores borders<sup>13</sup>. Those elements made it easier for the insurgents on the Mozambican side to interact with their counterparts in Tanzania and vice versa, and to conduct small-scale attacks. It has also created an easy entrance for Tanzanians and other foreign fighters who take advantage of the lapse border security facilitated by a sense of brotherhood between the people of the two countries easily cross to Mozambique to join up insurrection in Cabo Delgado. For instance, in June 2019, nine Tanzanian

8. Hanlon, J., (September 2020), Looking Ahead in Cabo Delgado: How might military and Economic Intervention Shape the War? Mozambique News Reports and Clippings.

9. Ibid

10. Olson, J., (1996), The Peoples of Africa: An Ethnohistorical Dictionary. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

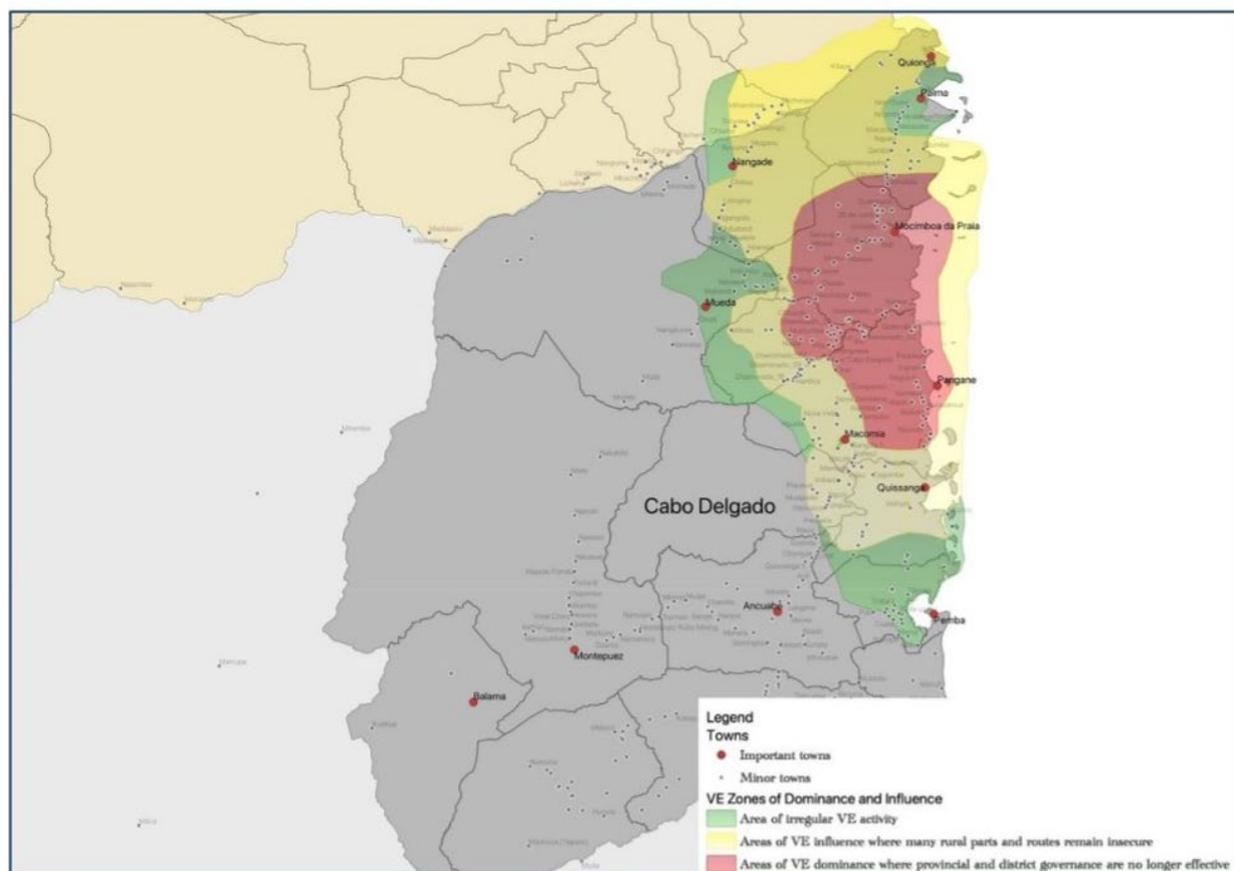
11. Cabo Ligado (March 2021), Conflict Observatory, Cabo Ligado Monthly: February 2021, ACLED, Zitamar News, and Mediafax.

12. Ibid

13. Ibid

farmers were attacked and killed by insurgents from Cabo Delgado, the first high profile attack on Tanzanians since the conflict erupted<sup>14</sup>. In October 2020, Islamic State (IS) fighters in Mozambique staged their first claimed attack into southern Tanzania, killing at least 20 people in Kitaya, Mtwara Province<sup>15</sup>. The fighters also burned down houses, destroyed an armored vehicle, and stole money and military equipment<sup>16</sup>. The two cases demonstrate how the terrorist groups in Mozambique have taken advantage of the shared historical, cultural, family, and economic ties that made it easy for them to pass through the border to conduct attacks in nearby villages in Tanzania.

**Figure 2: Violent Extremism Zones of Dominance and Influence in Cabo Delgado**



Source: Thomas Heyen-Dubé & Richard Rands (2021)

Economically, Cabo Delgado has relied on Tanzania as a market for agricultural produce and fish, and as a supplier of consumer goods, while Tanzanians have long leased and farmed plots on the Mozambican side of the Ruvuma River<sup>17</sup>. According to United Nations COMTRADE, during 2018 Tanzania’s exports to Mozambique were about \$59.35 million<sup>18</sup>, while in 2019 Mozambique’s exports to Tanzania were about \$11.92 million<sup>19</sup>. This demonstrates that both countries have benefited from trading with each other,

14. Cabo Ligado (March 2021), Conflict Observatory, Cabo Ligado Monthly: February 2021, ACLED, Zitamar News, and Mediafax.  
 15. West, S., (December 2020), Islamic State Fighters’ First Claimed Attack in Tanzania: Strategic Calculations and Political Context, available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/islamic-state-fighters-first-claimed-attack-in-tanzania-strategic-calculations-and-political-context/> visited on 13th October 2021.  
 16. Ibid  
 17. Cabo Ligado (March 2021), Conflict Observatory, Cabo Ligado Monthly: February 2021, ACLED, Zitamar News, and Mediafax.  
 18. Trading Economics (2021), Tanzania exports to Mozambique, available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/tanzania/exports/mozambique> , visited on 12th October 2021.  
 19. Trading Economics (2021), Tanzania exports to Mozambique, available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/mozambique/exports/tanzania> , visited on 12th October 2021.

though Tanzania seems to have gained more in terms of trade volume to Mozambique. However, in the current circumstances, these trade benefits, which are in the economic interests of both countries, could be in jeopardy if the situation in Cabo Delgado does not return to normal.

## The Implications of the Cabo Delgado Insurgency for Tanzania's Security

Because of its international nature, terrorism poses a threat not only to one country or region but can disrupt global security. In this case, regional and global cooperation to address the threats of terrorism is paramount for the attainment of national, regional, and global peace. This is because the spill-over effects of terrorism are not contained within one country, but rather go beyond, affecting other countries or entire regions. That is why the terrorist activities in Cabo Delgado province in Northern Mozambique affect not only the country itself but also its neighbor Tanzania and the whole SADC region, as far as the socio-economic repercussions are concerned. Instead of the SADC member states focusing their efforts on implementing regional development plans, as well as global and continental blueprints such as Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, they are forced to direct more resources towards peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts, and to providing humanitarian support to refugees or displaced innocent citizens<sup>20</sup>.

As noted by the International Crisis Group (2021), the insurgents' attacks in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province have claimed nearly 3,000 lives, and the total number of displaced people has risen to 330,000. Consequently, this poses a significant challenge for neighboring Tanzania, particularly when it comes to hosting refugees or displaced persons fleeing the worsening situation in Cabo Delgado. In this context, CIP Africa (2021) noted that refugees from Mozambique were profiled biographically by the government of Tanzania and returned to safer locations in Mozambique more than 400 kilometres from the hotspots<sup>21</sup>. However, close bilateral cooperation between Tanzania and Mozambique on the situation in Cabo Delgado, including frequent intelligence sharing, will do away with the need to take a restrictive approach to border policing, especially in relation to civilians seeking refuge.

In fact, new reporting on the insurgency in Mozambique suggests it is more closely connected to the Islamic State (IS), stoking fears that the indigenous insurgents may be receiving support from beyond the borders of Mozambique<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, fighters from Tanzania, many of whom are part of Islamist networks that have proliferated on the Swahili coast of East Africa are, indeed, among the militants' leaders<sup>23</sup>. But most of the group's rank-and-file is made up of Mozambicans, including poor fishermen, frustrated petty traders, former farmers, and unemployed young people<sup>24</sup>. Their motivations for joining and staying with the group are diverse but less shaped by ideology than by the desire to assert power locally and to obtain the material benefits that accrue to them via the barrel of a gun<sup>25</sup>.

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20. Kitenge, S., (10th August 2021), A needed regional solution for peace and stability in the Southern Africa region, available at: <https://shabka.org/blog/2021/08/10/a-needed-regional-solution-for-peace-and-stability-in-the-southern-africa-region/> , visited on 12th October 2021.

21. CIP Africa (2021), Updates on the Crisis in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

22. Swanfeldt, E., and Wicker, M., (21st January 2021), Mozambique: Update on insurgent operations, Babel Beacon

23. International Crisis Group (11th June 2021), Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado, Report No. 303, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/southern-africa/mozambique/303-stemming-insurrection-mozambiques-cabo-delgado>, visited on 12th October 2021.

24. International Crisis Group (11th June 2021), Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado, Report No. 303, available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/southern-africa/mozambique/303-stemming-insurrection-mozambiques-cabo-delgado>, visited on 12th October 2021.

25. Ibid

Therefore, if the fighters from the Tanzanian side use their local knowledge of the country to coordinate attacks in Tanzania together with their Mozambican counterparts, who share common ethnic and cultural roots, the country will suffer great loss. The country's efforts to prevent the radicalization of Tanzanians in its coastal and southern regions, including Tanga, Pwani, Mtwara, Lindi, and Zanzibar, could be a major blow for the terrorist group in Mozambique. These efforts will deny it recruits and other resources that recruits might bring. The efforts of Tanzania's security forces to bar foreign fighters from pass through Tanzania and joining the terrorist groups in Mozambique will be critical for the country's national security. However, for this to be possible, intelligence sharing of terror suspects among SADC and EAC members will be essential. This should include addressing mistrust and ego among intelligence services, which might obstruct joint efforts to combat terrorism.

Consequently, cooperation between the Tanzanian government, civil society, and the SADC Counter Terrorism Centre, to be based in Tanzania once it starts its operations, will boost the country's security organs in addressing terrorism. A Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre will be a big win for the country and the entire SADC on counterterrorism and violent extremism in general<sup>26</sup>. It will help the member states, particularly Tanzania, to coordinate and enhance their individual and collective capacity alongside other SADC countries to conduct defensive, offensive, and short-term and long-term initiatives to combat terrorism and its root causes<sup>27</sup>.

The use of soft power offered by civil society to raise awareness and implement programs that target violent extremism will complement the country's security organs' hard power efforts, considering how closely they work with local communities. Targeting the root causes in the communities, especially socio-economic grievances, and political and religious radicalization of marginalized groups especially children, young people and women will be critical towards stabilization of Mozambique as well as address spill over effects to neighboring Tanzania and the SADC region at large. Hence preventing marginalized groups from falling into traps of offline and online recruitment by terrorist organizations, particularly Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah (ASWJ) also known as Ansar al-Sunna which has consolidated their hold in Cabo Delgado with links to both the Islamic State (ISIS) and Al Shabaab of Somalia will be critical going forward.

In the words of Ms. Fauziya Abdi Ali, the president of Women in International Security (Kenya), "there is the need to find what the extremist groups do right to be able to attract the people to move to them to know what needs to be done to counter them"<sup>28</sup>. The Tanzanian government should critically analyze what exactly the terrorist groups in Cabo Delgado use as leverage to influence people from Tanzania, especially those in the coastal and southern regions, to join them.

According to Borum (2004), among the key psychological factors in understanding whether, how, and which individuals in a given environment will enter the process of becoming a terrorist, are motive and vulnerability<sup>29</sup>. By definition, the motive is an emotion, desire, physiological need, or similar impulse that acts as an incitement to action, while vulnerability refers to susceptibility or liability to succumb to persuasion or temptation<sup>30</sup>. The Tanzanian government and its security apparatus have major roles

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26. Kitenge, S., (10th August 2021), A needed regional solution for peace and stability in the Southern Africa region, available at: <https://shabka.org/blog/2021/08/10/a-needed-regional-solution-for-peace-and-stability-in-the-southern-africa-region/> , visited on 13th October 2021.

27. Ibid

28. Kitenge, S., (3rd February 2020), Global Problem: Local Approaches to Prevent Extremism, available at <https://www.policycenter.ma/opinion/global-problem-%E2%80%93-local-approaches-prevent-extremism#.YWbsQ9pBw2x> visited on 13th October 2021.

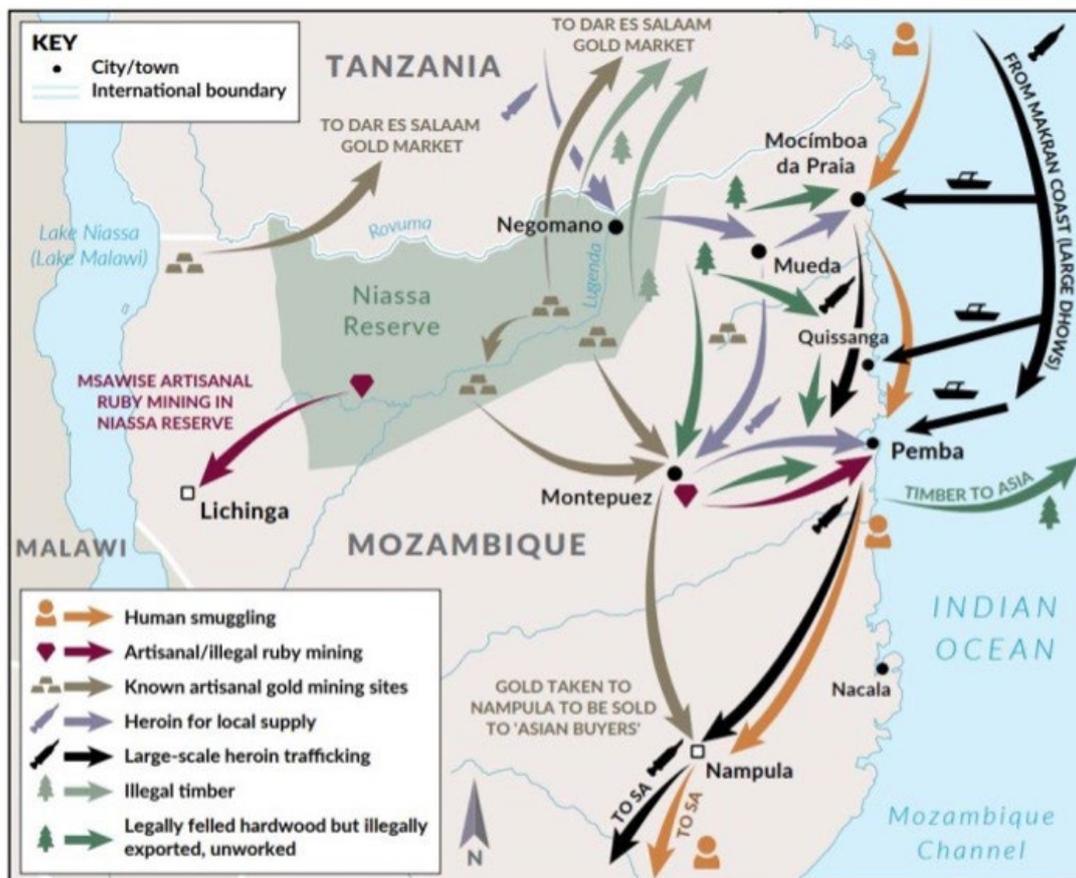
29. Borum, R., (2004), Psychology of Terrorism, University of South Florida.

30. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

to play in addressing both the motives and vulnerabilities of its people, which might lead them to fall victim to the influence of terrorist groups in Cabo Delgado. These motives and vulnerabilities can be triggered by issues such as unemployment, frustration, extremist ideologies, moral dilemmas, grievances, retribution against perceived injustice, and desire for personal notoriety. Conducting both soft and hard power operations in hot-spot areas in Tanzania's coastal and southern regions will mitigate the risk that its national security is compromised by the ongoing crisis in Mozambique.

Enhancing border security and curbing illegal migration will be vital for Tanzania's national security. The use of technology, such as artificial intelligence software, drones, and sensors, to conduct surveillance, and frequent land and sea border patrols, will contribute towards addressing the crisis. These efforts will inhibit the illegal transportation of resources that are smuggled out to finance terrorist operations in Cabo Delgado and beyond. This is simply because illicit trade is likely financing insurgent operations and providing possible logistical links to extremist groups in the Middle East<sup>31</sup>.

**Figure 3: Major Illicit Flows Passing Through Northern Mozambique**



Source: Compilation of GI-TOC fieldwork

31. Swanfeldt, E., and Wicker, M., (21st January 2021), Mozambique: Update on insurgent operations, Babel Beacon

**Figure 4: Conditions and Catalysts of the Cabo Delgado Insurgency**

Conditions	Catalysts
<p><b>Poor Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political marginalization</li> <li>Lingering effects of prior conflicts</li> <li>Security sector vulnerabilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Poor Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armed crackdown on religious splinter group</li> <li>Mishandling of initial insurgency</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Marginalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corruption or cronyism</li> <li>Lack of jobs leading to delayed social advancement</li> <li>Underinvestment in service provision</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic Marginalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simultaneous disruption of multiple local industries due to natural disasters and industrial consolidation</li> <li>High expectations for local benefits from LNG development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ethnic, Class, and Religious Tensions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generational divide in Muslim population</li> <li>Influence of foreign funded Wahhabi education</li> <li>Prior connection to East African Islamist networks</li> <li>Fragmentation of Makondé, Makuhwa and Mwani speakers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ethnic, Class, and Religious Tensions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input from Tanzanian Salafi-jihadi network</li> </ul>

Source: American Enterprises Institute (February 2021)

As described in Figure 4, issues including poor governance, economic marginalization, and ethnic, class, and religious tensions, have created an enabling environment for the insurgency groups to flourish in Cabo Delgado. These issues or conditions give the insurgents talking points to resonate with the local population and advance their agenda by radicalizing them to join their cause. Addressing these issues through soft power at the grassroots level will complement current hard-power efforts to counter both violent extremism and terrorism in the long run.

## The Insurgency’s Implication for Tanzania’s Implementation of AfCFTA

Recently, Tanzania’s national assembly ratified and officially adopted the African Continental Free Trade Area Treaty (AfCFTA) into law. The benefits that come with the treaty, giving easier access to a mega-market of 55 African countries, are undoubtedly crucial for Tanzania’s economic diplomacy policy. Estimates by UNECA suggest that AfCFTA will boost intra-African trade by 52.3% once import duties and non-tariff barriers are eliminated<sup>32</sup>. It will also cover a GDP of \$2.5 trillion<sup>33</sup>. In addition to increased trade flows, both in existing and new products, the AfCFTA has the potential to generate substantial

32. Lin, M., (1st March 2021), The benefits of AfCFTA to the African Economy, available at: <https://borgenproject.org/the-afcfta/> visited on 14th October 2021.

33. Ibid

economic benefits for African countries<sup>34</sup>. These benefits include higher income arising from increased efficiency and productivity from improved resource allocation, greater cross-border investment flows, and technology transfers<sup>35</sup>. AfCFTA will also be a mechanism to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services. However, the ongoing insurgency will make it harder for Tanzania to fully benefit from this treaty in terms of trade with both Mozambique and other Southern Africa countries via its southern borders. The country will have to install strict border security measures that might not be in line with the principles of the free movement of people, goods, and services.

On the other hand, the treaty itself might create security concerns along the Tanzania/Mozambique border, if Tanzania opts not to take strict measures as part of its commitment to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, and services as advocated by the AfCFTA Treaty. This is simply because the terrorist groups from Cabo Delgado might take advantage of the situation to cross the border and execute terror attacks, or smuggle illicit resources and radicalized fighters into the province.

According to the PSC Report by the Institute of Security Studies (2019), insecurity has the biggest potential to impede the implementation of AfCFTA by restricting the intra-regional mobility of persons, capital, goods, and services<sup>36</sup>. The report further argues that AfCFTA could also enable organized economic criminals to smuggle cheap goods into the trade area, thereby further undermining the achievements of the intra-African trade agenda<sup>37</sup>. In the case of Cabo Delgado, the terrorist groups may also take advantage of the privileges of AfCFTA to smuggle resources to finance their operations, as well as penetrate Tanzania to conduct attacks if deliberate measures to counter them are not taken. Therefore, instead of Tanzania reaping the benefits of this initiative, it will end up reaping the spillover effects of insecurity from neighboring Mozambique.

## Conclusion

The extent and nature of the ties that link Mozambique to Tanzania could pose serious security concerns for the latter. The fact that the insurgency in Cabo Delgado has reached its fifth year signals a real need for action to curb the terrorist threat that goes beyond the frontiers of Mozambique. Language, culture, and faith are all factors that make the terrorist patterns in Cabo Delgado transnational and multifaceted, threatening the peace of its immediate neighbors. At a time when Tanzania is engaged in serious efforts to identify and mitigate the risks of radicalization in the country, the situation in Cabo Delgado has triggered fundamental questions about the cross-border and regional character of terrorism, which threatens the security of the country and puts in jeopardy its potential to benefit from the opportunities of AfCFTA. In view of the challenges that come with the liberalization of the movement of people and goods across the highly sensitive shared border with Mozambique, coordination efforts and actions between both countries are needed to mitigate the pressing security threats.

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34. Abrego, L., and Zamaroczy, M., et al (May 2020), The African Continental Free Trade Area: Potentia; Economic Impact and Challenges, IMF, available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/Issues/2020/05/13/The-African-Continental-Free-Trade-Area-Potential-Economic-Impact-and-Challenges-46235> visited on 14th October 2021.

35. Abrego, L., and Zamaroczy, M., et al (May 2020), The African Continental Free Trade Area: Potentia; Economic Impact and Challenges, IMF, available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/Issues/2020/05/13/The-African-Continental-Free-Trade-Area-Potential-Economic-Impact-and-Challenges-46235> visited on 14th October 2021.

36. ISS Africa (2019), Africa's free trade initiative could bolster continental peace, PSC Report, available at: <https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/africas-free-trade-initiative-could-bolster-continental-peace> visited on 14th October 2021.

37. *ibid*

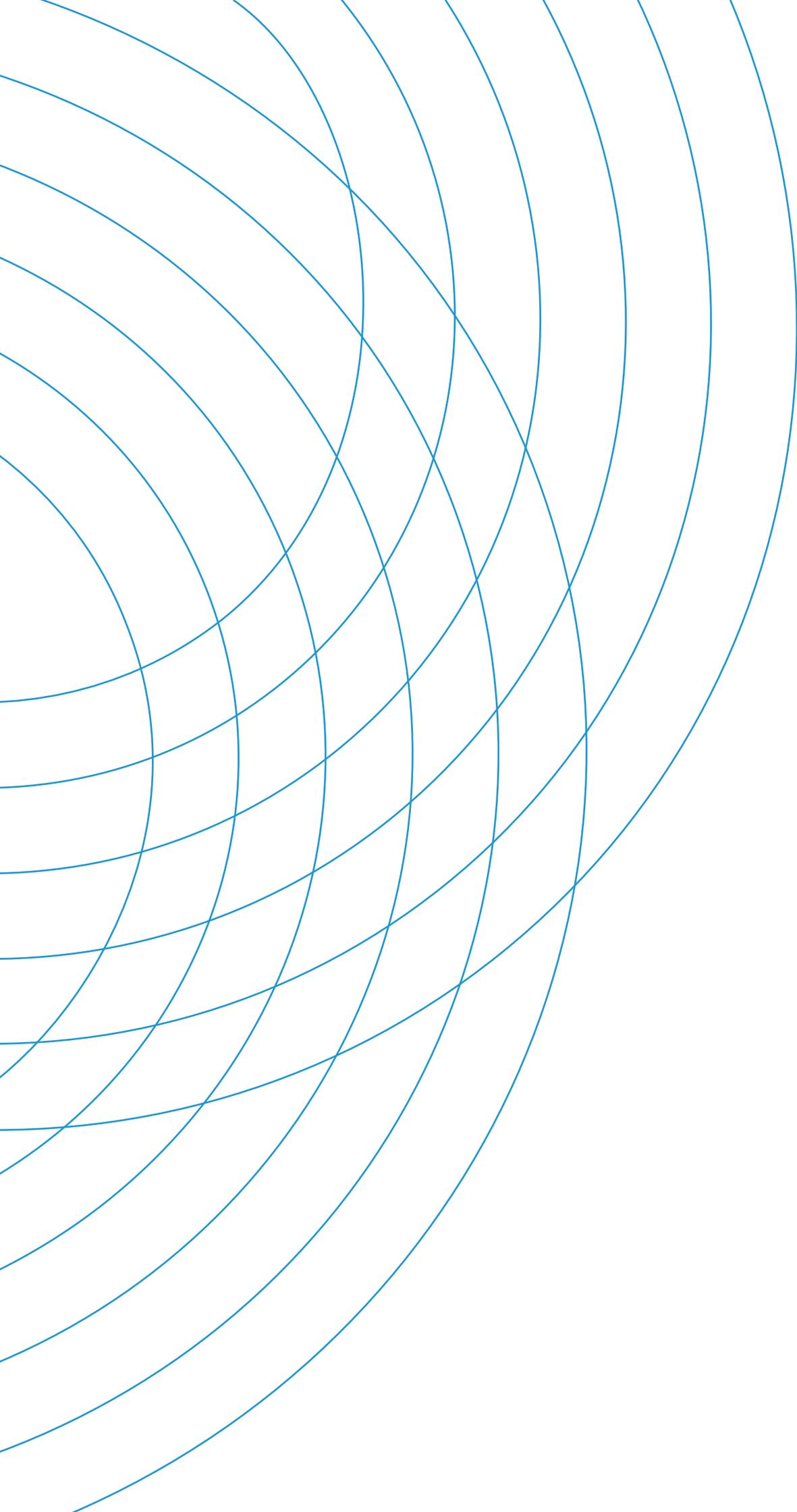
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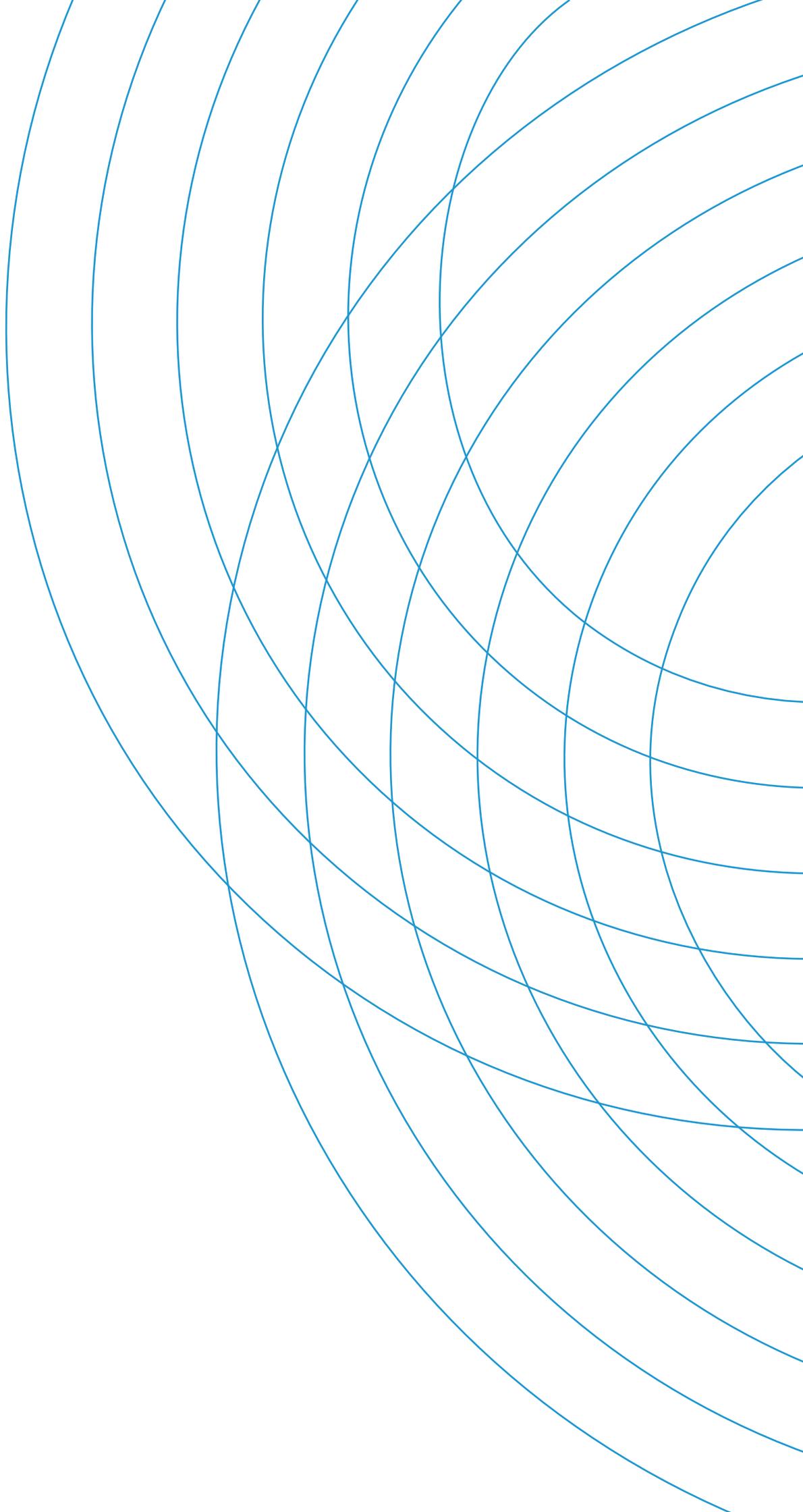
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- Figure 1 : Source : Natural Resource Governance Institute.
- Figure 2: Source: Thomas Heyen-Dubé & Richard Rands (2021)
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