

Rwanda In Mozambique: When Consistency Intimidates

Mozambique has suffered Al-Shabaab-led unrest which has displaced over 800,000 people across neighbouring countries since 2017. Last week, Rwanda deployed 1000 soldiers to Mozambique in an effort to help restore the Mozambican state's authority as the country faces mounting Islamist militant insurgency in the Cabo Delgado Province. This deployment is within the framework of a [memorandum of understanding signed between Rwanda and Mozambique in 2018](#). Some have wondered why Rwanda has taken this bold step when almost everyone else is dithering over the Cabo Delgado crisis. I suspect that having been through a similar tragedy of being disavowed by virtually all countries of the world in times of unprecedented mass human loss, Rwanda has chosen to position itself differently from the countries that preferred to emulate the colonizers' "blindness" in 1994.

The Importance of Swift Action

From 1977 to 1992, Mozambique endured 16 years of civil war that claimed the lives of over 1,000,000 people and caused over 5,000,000 Mozambicans to seek refuge across Southern Africa. It is fair to presume that the hope/prayer of an average Mozambican today is that the kind of death, dehumanization and fear that characterised the dusk of its 20th century would not mar its 21st-century history. So, when the Southern African country called for help, Rwanda answered, to the chagrin of its critics.

Rwanda owes its current stability to reconciliation efforts that required—and still demand—great empathy from its people and leadership. That same empathy allows the fervently Pan-African nation to recognize every African's entitlement to stability, peace and human dignity. In the same spirit, Rwanda

has been able to identify its own pre- and post-genocide vulnerabilities in the social and political conditions of African nations plagued with warfare. Rwanda perhaps more than any other state, relates to Mozambique in many ways, and understands that time is a luxury an entity under direct, violent and persistent attack does not have.

At first glance, Rwandan and Mozambican post-colonial histories and societal designs are very different. While Mozambique was being ravaged by a civil war that mirrored cold war politics, Rwanda was suffering decades of build-up to, and the eventual unrolling of, an ethnic genocide. However, the Rwandan and Mozambican crises both led to the death, exile and disappearances of millions of their nationals across neighbouring countries, where they live(d) as refugees, battling poverty, struggling with the challenges of community integration and worrying about the fate of a native land they might never live to see again. Both countries have had to commit to massive repatriation efforts after the mid-1990s in a bid to glue a fragmented and traumatized population back together, united in the ambition to witness their country's promising development and improvements in social welfare in order to compensate for the decades of pains and losses.

For both Rwanda and Mozambique, the aftermath of the local tragedy was the pursuit of reconciliation between communities that had known long periods of fracture. In the case of Rwanda, the core separation was (questionably) perceived to be purely ethnic, while Mozambique's was ideology-based (FRELIMO Marxists vs RENAMO pro-west anti-Communists). Rwanda is no stranger to the detachment with which foreign forces, whose main concern is the protection of their geopolitical and economic interests, treat conflicts taking place in strategically positioned African countries. This indifference, whether intentional or a result of innate inhumanity, strengthens oppressive forces every second it festers.

When the injustices against the Tutsi population of Rwanda

culminated in an extermination attempt, not even Nazi Germany, with its immense manpower and incomparable resources, could match the velocity of the Parmehutu genocidaire killing machine. The killings were gruesome and relentless, yet tolerated by the world. The international community, for the most part, acted dazed and overwhelmed by the momentum the murderous forces had gained, which was disingenuously deemed too great to halt mid-flight.

The “it’s too late to do anything now” narrative is the one the indifferent procrastinators aim for, as they hide behind bureaucratic semantics and diplomacy, due diligence and due process, to avoid getting involved where they claim not to have interests. But, for those with a conscience – therefore interest in saving human lives – when casual dehumanization flourishes across the landmines left by centuries of colonial barbarity, to sit back and wait for the explosion is either sadistic or senseless. But unlike its dedicated faultfinders, Rwanda, which has committed to the [responsibility to protect the UN principle](#) by contributing peacekeepers to Northern Mali in 2015 and the Central African Republic in 2019 under the [Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians](#), as well as [sent forces to Sudan as part of an African Union Darfur mission](#) , has proven itself to be neither cruel nor stupid.

Why Must Consistency in Action Offend?

Rwanda’s swiftness in sending troops to Mozambique communicates a few points. The first is that Rwanda is not scared of acknowledging the obvious – however aloof those feigning blindness act. Mozambique, with its mounds of metals and minerals (uranium, gold, graphite, limestone and sea salt, to name a few), its massive liquefied gas reserves and its endless, white-sanded coastline, is a pillager’s wet dream. Consider the wealth that western nations accrued amidst the liberation wars and the resulting violent disorders on global south continents. Congo is perhaps the most obvious and closest example of this phenomenon: having almost single-

handedly fed Belgium's gold and energy supply for almost a century, Congo's instability has wildly enriched the white man that has always claimed to merely desire its development and welfare.

When potentially exposed to an outsider's thievery, it is essential to have an ally stand by your side, especially one who can fully grasp the injustice of the plundering you have suffered from similar-looking hands in the past.

It was both astounding and amusing to hear some claim that the true purpose of Rwanda's assistance was "in fact" to snatch a share of the Mozambican resource pie. What if the Mozambican leadership were not as naïve and foolish as these infantilizing conspiracies suggest? What if Mozambique called on Rwanda because it felt that mutual Pan-Africanist allyship would not result in the opportunistic thievery associated with the foreigners that intervene(d) in crises on the African soil?

Moreover, the suggestion that while the US, France and China pursue interests in Mozambique, Rwanda is the one whose involvement is ill-intentioned, is absurd and racist, especially when it comes from those unwilling to exert similar intentions on the former; only self-hating Africans would promote such a farce.

The US (through the Exxon Mobil Corporation), France (through the Total Group) and China (through the CNOOC Group) remain firmly stationed in Mozambique to defend their countries' "entitlement" to Mozambican resources, following cutthroat and exploitative trade agreements – the kind Rwanda lacks the power to arm-twist governments into – drafted upon the discovery of massive deposits of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) on Mozambican shores. Considering that the US has chosen to participate in the protection of Mozambican civilians only when the aforementioned deals faced the risk of collapse (and France and China opted to ignore the massacres altogether),

there is a blatant double standard here, and it smells like racism.

At any rate, if to strike an economic deal with a resource-rich country, even amidst unrest, is the rational and noble thing to do when non-Blacks are partaking, why should this logic not be extended to any commercial exchange resulting from Rwandan involvement? But most importantly, why should such an exchange be deemed “good trade” as far as foreigners are concerned but thievery and greed when the fellow African shows up? The notion that an African ally aims to steal while a foreigner merely wishes to carry out a fair trade is the type of indoctrination that maintains economic and political chains on African wrists.

The second message from the presence of the Rwandan defence and police force in Mozambique is that Rwanda will not tolerate terrorism, whether locally or on ally ground. In view of the global obsession Paul Rusesabagina – who [has claimed responsibility for and celebrated FLN criminal attacks that left 9 civilians dead and several more injured](#) – earned himself, when his arrest gave the western media an opportunity to chastise Rwandan leadership for employing methods western nations have pioneered using on those who plot terror against them, who can truly claim ignorance of the extents Rwanda will reach to halt terrorism?

The final conclusion to draw from Rwanda’s military intervention in Mozambique is that its modest financial resources will not constrain its integrity. The senseless outrage stems from the offensive idea that small Rwanda – with economic resources that may pale in comparison to, say, those of the dillydallying, self-declared African powerhouse – would muster the self-importance to offer help. And yet, as the foreign policies of most wealthy countries have shown, morality is hardly a feature the rich. Rwanda is a Pan-African nation that pulls from afro-communal values of regard for the African life to consistently stand on the side of the

oppressed African. Whether [coordinating the safe arrival of Libyan Refugees in Rwanda amidst a pandemic](#), committing to the pursuit of FLN terrorists even as they use the protection of the economically powerful to escape justice, or assisting Mozambique in defeating Al Shabaab terrorists, Rwanda will not dilute its integrity to appease the intimidated. From this, Rwandans, who have watched as our little landlocked nation managed to position itself as the one consistent source of help on which even larger and richer African countries can rely in times of need, will derive nothing but pride.