

FROM COLONIAL RULE TO NATIONHOOD: AMÍLCAR CABRAL'S THOUGHT IN THE FACE OF THE MOZAMBIQUE PEACE ACCORDS

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Abstract

This research investigates, in a critical and interpretative way, how Amílcar Cabral's political thought could dialogue with the Mozambican peace process, culminating in the Peace Accords (Rome, in 1992, and Maputo in 2014 and 2018). Starting from an in-depth analysis of the central categories of Cabralismo - especially liberation as a continuous process, the centrality of political consciousness, revolutionary ethics, and the relationship between popular power and



the state - the study confronts these principles with the historical, social, and political dynamics that shaped the end of the civil war in Mozambique. Through the question "what would Cabral say about the Peace Accords without Mozambique", the research seeks to understand the extent to which the Peace Accords, inserted in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs under the tutelage of multilateral institutions, respond or enter into tension with Cabral's vision of structural transformation and post-colonial emancipation. Through an interdisciplinary approach that combines African political theory, contemporary history, and critical discourse analysis, a hypothetical but grounded reading of what Cabral might have said about national reconciliation, the role of parties, social reintegration, and the challenges of building the Mozambican nation characterized by twenty-one ethnic groups in the post-decolonization period is proposed. The research concludes that Cabral's thought offers relevant conceptual tools to reassess the limits and potentialities of negotiated peace in Mozambique, illuminating contemporary debates on sovereignty, democracy, and social justice in the African context.

Keywords

Peace Agreements, Amílcar Cabral, Frelimo, Independence, Mozambique, Nation, Peace, Renamo.

Resumo

Este trabalho investiga, de forma crítica e interpretativa, como o pensamento político de Amílcar Cabral poderia dialogar com o processo de paz moçambicano, culminando nos Acordos de Paz (Roma, em 1992, e Maputo em 2014 e 2018). Partindo de uma análise aprofundada das categorias centrais do Cabralismo - especialmente a libertação como processo contínuo, a centralidade da consciência política, a ética revolucionária e a relação entre o poder popular e o Estado - o estudo confronta estes princípios com as dinâmicas históricas, sociais e políticas que moldaram o fim da guerra civil em Moçambique. Através da questão "o que diria Cabral sobre os Acordos de Paz sem Moçambique", a investigação procura compreender até que ponto os Acordos de Paz, inseridos nos programas de desarmamento, desmobilização e reintegração (DDR) sob a tutela de instituições multilaterais, respondem ou entram em tensão com a visão de Cabral de transformação estrutural e emancipação pós-colonial. Através de uma abordagem interdisciplinar que combina teoria política africana, história contemporânea e análise crítica do discurso, propõe-se uma leitura hipotética, mas fundamentada do que Cabral poderá ter dito sobre a reconciliação nacional, o papel dos partidos, a reintegração social e os desafios de construir a nação moçambicana caracterizada por vinte e um grupos étnicos no período pós-descolonização. A obra conclui que o pensamento de Cabral oferece ferramentas conceituais relevantes para reavaliar os limites e potencialidades da paz negociada em Moçambique, iluminando debates contemporâneos sobre soberania, democracia e justiça social no contexto africano.

Palavras-chave

Acordos de Paz, Amílcar Cabral, Frelimo, Independência, Moçambique, Nação, Paz, Renamo.

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Introduction

Amílcar Lopes Cabral was born on September 12, 1924. He was born in the city of Bafatá, Portuguese Guinea (located in present-day Guinea-Bissau), the son of Cabo Verdean parents. In 1956, he was the founder of the PAIGC or African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde. He was also one of the founding members of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) later that same year, along with Agostinho Neto, whom he met in Portugal, and other Angolan nationalists (Tomás, 2021). The goal of the conflict was to achieve the independence of both Portuguese Guinea and Cabo Verde. Throughout the conflict, as the movement conquered territory from the Portuguese, Cabral became the de facto leader of much of what would become Guinea-Bissau.

Lopes & Barros (2019) recall that "The PAIGC stood out as a movement that fights for the liberation of not one, but two colonies (that is, not only Guinea-Bissau, where the war was taking place, but also the nearby archipelago of Cabo Verde), pursuing both the disintegration of imperial ties and a unitary political project that encompasses geographically separated territories. As Colm Foy said: 'Despite the world's concerns about the Vietnam war, tiny Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde have captured the imagination of the international community'.

¹ Declaration of Interests - The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest relating to the research, authorship, or publication of this chapter. For the sake of transparency, co-author Ivone Soares has served as a member of the Mozambican Parliament representing RENAMO since 2010. The views and analyses presented in this chapter are the sole responsibility of the authors and were developed in accordance with academic standards of scholarly independence and research integrity.

² Acknowledgment - The authors acknowledge the use of Microsoft Copilot in assisting with the formatting of references and the standardization of source citations in this work.



Amílcar Cabral proved to be an exceptional diplomat politically (Telepneva, 2017). In addition to the desired political unity with the three main ethnic groups of Guinea-Bissau (Balantas, Fulas and Mandingas), he tried and succeeded in joining the PAIGC movement (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde) in the struggle for Cabo Verdean independence in 1956. The generation that waged the struggle against Portuguese colonization in Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde would be known as the "Cabral generation", in recognition of their intellectual leadership and strategy and their personal commitment to the consolidation of unified movements (Cassam, 2014). In 1961, the PAIGC joined with Mozambican FRELIMO and the Angolan MPLA to establish the Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies (CONCP), a common party to coordinate the struggles for independence of the Portuguese colonies throughout Africa. The three groups were frequently represented at international events by the CONCP (Lyon, 1980).

While the international links of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) have been widely recognized by Cold War studies in light of the post-independence war in Angola, the efforts of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) have also received particular attention (Kaiser, 2017; Tornimbeni, 2018), as well as the support provided by Soviet Bloc states (Dallywater, 2019).

Cabral was shot dead on January 20, 1973, about eight months before Guinea-Bissau's unilateral declaration of independence. He was deeply influenced by Marxism, becoming an inspiration for revolutionary socialists and national independence movements around the world (Lopes & Barros, 2019). Cabral did not have the opportunity to celebrate the independence of any of the former Portuguese colonies. And to experience the evolution of their independence processes. But we know their struggle to find solutions supported by coordinated institutions (North, 1990) and the models for reducing tensions between different communities that often end in military confrontations.

This research adopts a qualitative approach of a descriptive and exploratory nature, using documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources, supported by a documentary analysis of a recorded interview, of about 34 minutes, in London, on October 27, 1971 with Medeiros Ferreira and Pedro George, revisited and made available in an extensive work of journalistic content in the newspaper *Expresso online* in 2022 (Soares, 2023).

The recommended approach aims to predict, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the strategic line of thought of Amílcar Cabral, supported by his thinking recorded in the context of the war of decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s. We will find several points of convergence to replicate certain problems that triggered the reasons for the war, identified by Amílcar Cabral, in many regions of the world, starting with Guinea-Bissau, as well as in Mozambique. Guinea-Bissau, a territory the size of the Alentejo region of Portugal, was the scene of the most violent war.

From colonial rule to the attempt to create the nation

As Huntington (1999, p. 28) points out, "in the post-Cold War world, the most important differences between peoples are not ideological, political or economic. They are cultural. Peoples and nations are trying to answer the most basic question facing human beings:



Who are we? And they answer this question in the most traditional way, with reference to what matters most to them. People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations and, at a broader level, civilizations. People use politics not only to promote their interests, but also to define their identity. We only know who we are when we know who we are not, and often against who we are."

The geographical boundaries of present-day African states do not reflect any African historical development. They are almost all artificial, and their formal appearance did not consider their realities. This differs from the dominant principles in Europe regarding the ideological motivation of nation-states – nationalism. Nationalism can be defined as the political expression of the desire for each nation to have its own state – a nation-state (Gellner, 1983, p. 2).

In the so-called Lusophone Africa, Angola and Mozambique for Carvalho (2010, p. 89), the new holders of power had, as one of their main tasks, the creation of a nation for the geographical space they came to dominate. In other words, it was considered that a national consciousness could be created administratively, "from above". Technically, it was called a "nation-state project." And this process remains centred on a central element linked to life: peace.

Peace was also Amílcar Cabral's goal: negotiated peace

"On July 1, 1970, Pope Paul VI granted an audience to three African poets who spoke Portuguese: Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto and Marcelino dos Santos. Paul VI created an international political fact by receiving the three leaders of the liberation movements of the former Portuguese colonies. The dictatorship of the Estado Novo was taken by surprise by this audience of the Supreme Pontiff and the news would only appear in the Portuguese press on Sunday, July 5th". In these, the evening newspaper *The Capital* also published the full "commentary" of Agence France-Presse, noting that "for the first time, the highest moral force of the West and the spiritual head of 600 million registered Catholics in the world dared to do what the most important political leaders who call themselves Catholics refused. Pope Paul VI received – and blessed – three revolutionary leaders of colour, banned and persecuted as communists and criminals by a European nation that is a secular pillar of the Church." That nation was Portugal, the country whose dictatorship refused to put an end to the Colonial War" (Soares, 2023).

Peace is the greatest resource for life. There are many reasons to seek power; But their gain through agreement, the result of communication and negotiation, can offer perennial socio-economic development. But this desire has many limitations, starting with the asymmetries that armament and mobilization tend to suggest.

Cabral defended unity as the basis of African liberation. Samora Machel³, who knew him deeply, said that Cabral had "a broader view of the struggle" and that his death was a

³ Ten years after Cabral's death, Samora Machel, the leader who proclaimed Mozambique's independence (1975), would also lose his life in a plane crash in Mbuzini, South Africa, the causes of which also raise doubts to this day.



blow to all Portuguese colonies, including Mozambique. Thus, Cabral would probably celebrate any process that reduced internal divisions and strengthened national cohesion.

Led by the United Nations (UN), several multilateral institutions and friendly countries have tried to promote peace-seeking processes embedded in the integration of all stakeholders. The persistence of conflict in many places where peacebuilding has been attempted, especially in contexts of armed or violent conflict, illustrates the pressing need and significant difficulties in establishing conditions for sustainable peace (Knight, 2008, p. 25). The difficulties in removing or eliminating the risk of relapse or recurrence of conflict are high, even in the face of the efforts of the various international actors involved in the field of *peacebuilding*.

Valuing peace as a condition for true liberation

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes have become essential in post-conflict contexts. But they only began to receive due importance from the United Nations in the 1990s and began to be included in the discussions of the Security Council, preparing reports and guidelines on the subject (Peixoto, 2006, p. 3).

From this recognition, the understanding and actions of the United Nations in relation to the DDR evolved. In the Report of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations (known as the Brahimi Report) released in August 2000, a breakthrough emerges in relation to the DDR. It recognized the link between peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and socio-economic development, as well as a range of peacebuilding tools and strategies that could be part of any peace-support operation (Knight, 2008a, pp. 25-28).

These included the adoption of rapid impact projects, the creation of a fund for the DDR, which includes the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Netherlands), Finland, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Canada and Botswana (Zebra, 2021), the adoption of a doctrinal shift from civilian policing to rule of law teams, the creation of a pilot *peacebuilding* unit and the regularization of funding for the Electoral Affairs Division at the United Nations Headquarters in New York (Knight, 2008a, pp. 26-27).

Based on this recognition and the creation of instruments regulating the DDR, the United Nations has given the DDR a significant space. The United Nations considers the DDR to be an integral part of peacebuilding efforts, as it aims to solve a public policy problem, namely the post-conflict security problem that arises when combatants are left without livelihoods and support networks during the period vital to peace, recovery and development conflict. For this reason, from the 1990s onwards, the inclusion of the DDR to contribute to lasting peace has become essential in peace processes, as has the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).

International efforts for peace and security

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Peace Operations, the *Brahimi Committee*, issued its report in 2004, in which it explicitly linked the peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and



socio-economic development functions of the United Nations system, and recommended the creation of a Global Fund for the DDR (Knight, 2008a).

Barros (2025) draws attention to the fact that the integration of forcibly displaced individuals, such as refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), is a pressing issue facing low- and middle-income countries. The 2023 United Nations report on global trends in forced displacement reveals that the world has reached a new peak of 108.4 million forcibly displaced individuals, of which 82 million (76%) are housed in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2023). The relocation of such a large number of individuals imposes a significant burden on host communities, with numerous empirical studies finding evidence of negative effects on local labour and housing markets (Jennifer Alix-Garcia & Saah, 2012; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2015; Tumen, 2016; Depetris-Chauvin & Santos, 2018; Morales, 2018; Tsuda, 2022), food security (George & Adelaja, 2022) and wealth (Alix-Garcia & Saah, 2010). The shock generated by the arrival of these individuals can also lead to tension and even conflict between hosts and displaced people (Putnam, 2007; Jennings & Sanchez - Pages, 2017; Roza & Vargas, 2021; Albarosa & Elsner, 2023).

All this evidence highlights the need for effective solutions to integrate forcibly displaced individuals and local hosts, as tension between these two groups can hinder long-term socio-economic development (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Zak & Knack, 2001; Sobel, 2002; Guiso et al. 2004).

Thus, for Barros (2025), the paramount importance of reducing the tension between local hosts and displaced people has led both academics and policymakers to increasingly think about new policies to address this issue. A common approach is one focused on resources; often consists of providing public goods (Assaad et al., 2023) or social and economic incentives to promote the socio-economic self-sufficiency of displaced persons and integrate them into the local labour market (Battisti et al., 2019; Caria et al., 2020; MacPherson & Sterck, 2021; Altindag & O'Connell, 2023; Beltramo et al., 2023).

Emphasis on national unity

Mozambique is what Herbst (2000) calls a "geographically challenged" state, with the capital located in the extreme south and the largest population concentration 1500 km to the north. As in most countries in Africa, it has many ethnic and linguistic groups, with more than 20 languages spoken.

All states have developed after a minimum level of institutional cohesion (identity) that the language tool has been able to provide. And this has always been a long cultural process, which can never be considered finished.

Carvalho & Veiga (2024) recall that the largest ethnolinguistic group in Mozambique (Macua), with about 25% of the population, located in the North, where important gas and coal reserves have been identified, has the worst rates of financial inclusion (Banco



de Moçambique, 2023a, 42). In October 2017, in the coastal part of this region, some young people robbed Mocímboa da Praia (Folha de Maputo, 2017).⁴

According to Barros (2025), since October 2017, Cabo Delgado has been affected by an Islamist insurgency that has led to more than one million internally displaced people — about 40% of the province's total population — with 140,000 currently displaced to Pemba (a city with 200,000 inhabitants before the conflict). This significant increase in Pemba's population has generated significant social friction between local hosts and internally displaced persons, threatening the efforts of local authorities and their international partners to maintain peaceful coexistence.

This conflict persists, and external military support has been requested for the defence of the populations. This suggests that the base of the conflict has local support. What are the causes and possible solutions?

The general population census carried out in 2007 and released in 2010 by INE (2010) of Mozambique indicates that 21 languages are spoken in Mozambique. Table 1 shows that between 2010 and 2017, only two indigenous languages of northern Mozambique (Macua and Cinianja) grew slightly. But the official Portuguese language is the only one with national distribution and the one with the highest increase (INE, 2019, p. 82).

Table 1. Main languages spoken by the population aged 5 years and over, in 2010 and 2017

Nº	Languages	Percentage of speakers (%)				Provinces where they are spoken
		Total 2010	Total 2017	Men	Women	
1	Macua	25,92	26,13	26,14	26,13	Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa, Zambézia, Sofala
2	Português	11,54	16,58	17,76	15,49	All provinces
3	Xichangana	10,62	8,63	8,00	9,20	Gaza, Maputo, Maputo Cidade, Niassa, Inhambane
4	Ci-sena	8,30	7,09	7,02	7,16	Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambézia
5	Lómue	7,59	7,08	6,95	7,19	Nampula, Niassa, Zambézia
6	Echuabo	6,24	4,72	4,64	4,80	Sofala, Zambézia
7	Cinianja	5,71	8,05	8,12	7,99	Niassa, Tete, Zambézia
8	Xindau	4,43	3,76	3,56	3,94	Manica, Sofala
9	Xitsua	2,96	3,76	3,58	3,93	Gaza, Inhambane, Maputo, Sofala

Source: Adapted from Carvalho & Veiga (2024)

After independence in 1975, the country was ravaged by a civil war between the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the Government led by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). The causes of conflict can be diverse, whether external or internal. Systematically, externally, the causes of civil war are related to "discontent with the ideologies adopted by the new states" in a context of Cold War geopolitical disputes (Masseko, 2019, p. 126).

⁴<https://www.folhademaputo.co.mz/pt/noticias/nacional/mocimboa-da-praia-15-bandidos-mortos-em-confronto-com-a-policia/>



Its distribution at national level suggests that the issue was not essentially an ethnic issue; thus, the DDR intended to create political, military and social conditions for the former Renamo guerrillas to lay down their arms, abandon military life and return to civilian life, contributing to a lasting peace in the country. However, the possibility of creating a virtuous cycle also implied the reintegration of the guerrillas through support in the transition to civilian life, including integration of some officers into the Armed and Defense Forces of Mozambique (FADM) and Police of the Republic (PRM); creation of economic and social conditions for reintegration and establishment of pension and social support schemes for ex-combatants.

The case of Mozambique has gained international notoriety for having been addressed by RDA programs in the search for peace and socio-economic inclusion. The first DDR in Mozambique was implemented in 1992, after the signing of the General Peace Agreement of Rome, which ended a civil war that lasted 16 years, between the government (Frelimo) and Renamo (Vines, 2013; Weimer, 2020). And the second and third DDR resulted, in part, from flaws and limitations in the design and implementation of the first DDR (Weimer, 2020), and from the institution's inability, both domestic and international, to monitor and arbitrate subsequent processes.

In Mozambique, the causes of the civil war can be combined with the transformation of Frelimo into a Marxist-Leninist party in 1977, resulting in the abandonment of the practice of participatory democracy at the population level, in favour of the policies adopted by the Frelimo-led government, such as the rebuke of various religious congregations and merchants (Masseko, 2019, p. 127). This resulted in discontent and a sense of exclusion from the people, which contributed to the increase in membership in Renamo. Thus, these factors displeased several international actors, such as the then Rhodesia and South Africa, as well as some groups of Mozambicans, including Frelimo dissidents who did not agree with the way the Mozambican state was managed. It was in this context that Renamo was created in 1976 to challenge the Marxist-Leninist policies and the type of state that Frelimo implemented in Mozambique between 1975 and 1994, a period in which Frelimo proclaimed itself a vanguard movement until the abandonment of this policy and the adoption of the multiparty policy in 1994.

The war has had devastating impacts on the country's population and economy, which has led to pressure from international actors to end the conflict. Due to international pressure, in the 1980s, peace negotiations began that culminated in the signing of the General Peace Agreement (GPA) on October 4, 1992, in the Italian city of Rome. Shortly after the signing of the GPA, the following period was characterised by an atmosphere that was both favourable and tense. The favourable environment was due to the ceasefire and the tension resulted from the climate of mistrust and mutual accusations of non-compliance with the GPA, where Renamo alleged the Government's non-compliance with protocol IV (which deals with military issues), thus continuing with continuous threats to withdraw from the electoral process that would culminate in the holding of the first multiparty elections held in Mozambique in 1994 (Lala, 2005).



The first agreement – Chissano & Dhlakama, Rome, 1992

The first DDR in Mozambique was elaborated in the 1992 Rome General Peace Agreement (GPA), specifically in its Protocol. Based on the GPA, the demobilized Renamo forces and government troops were to form an army of 30,000 troops, split in half between both former belligerents. The GPA is composed of seven protocols, of which IV addresses military issues. It is in this context that the DDR process and the creation of the Armed Defence Forces of Mozambique (FADM) are organised or agreed, composed of 24,000 for the army, 4,000 for the air force and 2,000 for the navy (Boletim da República, 1992, p. 7). Totalling 30,000 people composed of former Renamo and Government combatants, with the intention of creating "an army that was not linked to any political force and that had no role in national politics" (Lundin, 2014, p. 2).

At the end of the process, in February 1995, the FADM was composed of only 12,195 people, of whom 8,533 were from the former government troops and 3,662 from Renamo, which displeased Renamo (Coelho & Macaringue, 2002, p. 67). Several reasons led to this numerical discrepancy, resulting from the exclusion of former Renamo combatants. The poor organization of the new employment conditions, the delays in the demobilization process, the long periods without payment of soldiers, the fatigue of war, as well as the desire not to be associated with what public and international opinion considered a killing machine, led people to opt for exclusion (Lala, 2005, p. 2). In this situation, people were, on their own initiative, demobilizing and reintegrating into society, which was reflected in the low number of former Renamo combatants integrated into the FDM, compromising the success of the peacebuilding process due to their inadequate integration into communities with dignity.

It was later agreed that a United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) force with a maximum of 7,500 personnel would oversee the transition period. Multi-party elections should take place once demobilisation is complete and voters are registered. In addition, the GPA established that the cessation of the armed conflict would consist of four phases: the ceasefire, the separation of forces, the concentration of forces for a new army, and demobilization. Disarmament would also be an integral part of this process (Reppell, Rozen, & Carvalho, 2016, p. 6; Tassi, 2015, p. 25; Vines, 2013, p. 378).

The main objective of ONUMOZ, created in December 1992, was to create the necessary conditions for the successful holding of the 1994 elections. Once this goal was accomplished, the mission withdrew – as planned – leaving a team in the country to support national development and help the people whose lives the conflict destroyed (Reppell, Rozen & Carvalho, 2016).

According to Carvalho et al, (2026), with peace established, the country experienced asymmetric economic growth supported by the cane of international assistance. In 1994, the first multi-party general elections were held, both presidential and legislative. In 1998, the first local or municipal elections were held in a multiparty context (Brito, 2013, p. 28). However, the benefits of this growth were not felt by the majority, and more than half of the population remained below the poverty line, in addition to the fact that electoral processes were always contested, classified as fraudulent, especially by the opposition and RENAMO.



This contributed to Renamo's renegation on the GPA, and in 2013, in defiance of the results of the local elections and the failure to advance its proposals to reform the electoral law, RENAMO launched a military insurgency in central regions of the country (Maputo Accord, 2023).

The second agreement – Guebusa & Dhlakama, Maputo, 2014

As a result of the reality of the armed conflict in Mozambique, the Agreement on the Cessation of Military Hostilities was signed on 5 September 2014 between the late Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, and the former President of the Republic, Armando Guebuza.

This date was negotiated in Nampula, August 31, 2014, by Renamo deputy Ivone Soares and the president of the republic of Mozambique, Armando Guebuza (Lusa, 2014), "marking Dhlakama's departure from Gorongosa, in the centre of the country, where he had been taking refuge for many months to start the electoral campaign".

The agreement was intended to end armed violence and lead to general elections on 15 October 2014. To follow up on the Agreement, the Military Team of International Observers for the Cessation of Military Hostilities (EMOCHM) was created with the aim of ultimately carrying out Renamo's DDR. However, their mission failed, as Renamo did not present the list of combatants that would be covered by the DDR, and in 2015 the conflict was renewed, with Renamo attacking the FADM in Moatize (Nhamuave, 2024, p. 20-22). Thus, the DDR was not implemented due to the failure of the very agreement that provided for the DDR and the prevention of a return to violence.

After the resurgence of the conflict, it was necessary to resume negotiations, which occurred in 2016. The new process had as mediators the Catholic Church, represented by the Apostolic Nuncio Edgar Peña; the European Union, represented by Mario Raffaelli and the Community of Sant'Egidio; South Africa, represented by Ambassadors Mandlenkosi Memela, Thanduyise Chiliza and George Johannes; the former president of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete; former President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, and Jonathan Powell (Inter Mediate), both represented by Neha Sanghrajka (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue) (Maputo Accord, 2023). However, there has been no significant progress on the Agreement. Even with the intervention of international actors, the parties only agreed on a constitutional reform that included decentralization and the existence of elected governors.

At the end of 2016, and after several attempts to ensure lasting peace and stability, President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo President Afonso Dhlakama agreed to take a different approach and engage in direct negotiations. These were preceded by non-direct contacts conducted by the Swiss ambassador to Mozambique, Mirko Manzoni, the mediation advisor of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Neha Sanghrajka, and Jonathan Powell, from Inter Mediate, until the establishment of direct contact (Maputo Accord, 2023). This resulted in some breakthrough in the negotiations, represented by Dhlakama's announcement of a week-long ceasefire on 27 December 2016, followed by two subsequent extensions. Although it was a short period of ceasefire, it represented a breakthrough, a hope of establishing an agreement, because it meant that, after so many



discussions, there was beginning to be consensus on some points, because of relative but concrete concessions in the negotiations by the parties.

The negotiation model was adjusted to the profile of the negotiating parties, supported by trust in the mobilizing agents (Carvalho, 2019).

With the death of Afonso Dhlakama on May 3, 2018, negotiations with the charismatic leader ended. And nothing else was the same.

After a period of pause in negotiations, due to the death of Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama, General Ossufo Momade, on January 17, 2019, became the new president of RENAMO, which resulted in the resumption of negotiations. Ossufo Momade held two rounds of direct talks with President Filipe Nyusi, namely in 2019, which resulted in the signing of the Maputo Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement on August 6, 2019. The Agreement focuses on four main objectives: decentralization, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, thematically structured in two provisions or pillars, with a joint working group and international experts in each of them: Pillar I on Decentralization and Pillar 2 on Military Affairs (Weimer & Bueno, 2020, p. 74).

The Maputo Agreement committed both parties to cease political and military hostilities and to implement decentralization. The dialogue was facilitated by Ambassador Mirko Manzoni as the personal envoy of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to Mozambique in 2019 (Maputo Accord, 2023).

The Maputo Agreement includes a Memorandum of Understanding on military issues, signed by Nyusi and Momade in August 2018, and Momade did not yet enjoy the status of president of RENAMO. This Memorandum of Understanding established a set of principles on guiding actions and objectives for the integration of Renamo officers into the structures of FADM and the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM), and for the DDR (Maputo Accord, 2023).

The Memorandum also creates a Military Affairs Commission, composed of representatives of Frelimo and Renamo, supported by three technical subgroups, namely: Joint Technical Staff Group; Joint Technical Group on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration and Monitoring and Verification Group, which includes an international component, composed of senior military advisers, to provide technical assistance and ensure the credibility of the DDR process (Weimer & Bueno, 2020, p. 72-74).

For the implementation of the DDR, Renamo had the mission of presenting the names of the combatants who would be covered by the agreement. Thus, Renamo presented a list of 5,221 names of demobilized demobilizers for two types of support for officially registered combatants: a reintegration package with an estimated value of about US\$1,000, consisting of tools, clothing, seeds and other items of personal use to be made available in the 12 months following their demobilization, with monthly payment in cash (Weimer & Bueno, 2020, p. 72-74).

At the same time, for effective monitoring, the DDR would be implemented in the short term, because of the Provision or Pillar II on Military Affairs of the Agreement, under the coordination of a Peace Secretariat. This Secretariat collaborated in the negotiation process between the President of the Republic and Frelimo and the President of Renamo and was



initially managed and financed by the Swiss Embassy in Maputo and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), which represents the technical team of the main mediator.

The Secretariat was responsible for convening working group meetings, drafting reports, hiring international experts, among other functions and functions, including reporting to the Contact Group (representatives from Botswana, China, Norway, Switzerland, the UK and the US), which oversees and legitimises the peace process internationally and also manages the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), set up to finance the DDR process (Weimer & Bueno, 2020, p. 72-74).

And a third agreement – Nyusi & Momade, Maputo, 2018

Another agreement later, the Maputo Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, was signed on August 6, 2018, by Mozambican President and Frelimo President Felipe Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade. The Agreement focuses on four key objectives: decentralization, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, thematically structured in two provisions or pillars, with a joint working group and international experts on each of them: Pillar I on Decentralization and Pillar 2 on Military Affairs (Weimer & Bueno, 2020, p. 74).

The Maputo Agreement committed both parties to cease political and military hostilities and to implement decentralization, with the support for its implementation and facilitation of dialogue between the two parties given by Ambassador Mirko Manzoni, as personal envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, to Mozambique in 2019 (Maputo Accord, 2023). In this way, the Agreement is essentially based on the DDR, as it was due to the deficiency of the DDR process and the existing political intolerance in Mozambique, with elections without transparency, that space was opened for this moment of post-electoral instability and violence.

According to Weimer & Bueno (2020), the 'Definitive Peace Agreement' or Maputo Agreement focuses mainly on the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration of Renamo's armed wing and defines Renamo's responsibilities in this regard. It also incorporates the Memorandum of Understanding of August 2018, which, among others, formally puts an end to the armed clashes between the two belligerents.

Between 1992 and 2022, although peace was maintained in Mozambique, several electoral processes were held regularly, and their fragility was evident when military clashes broke out in 2012 and again in 2021, with the emergence of the RENAMO Military Junta. Table 1 summarizes the three peace agreements in terms of the type of conflict, their leaders in the negotiation process, the specific objectives of each agreement, and the subsequent political impact.



Table 2. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs in Mozambique

Item	1992	2014	2018/2019
Type of conflict	National Civil War	Localized conflict (Center)	Recurrent low-intensity conflict
Leaders	Chissano & Dhlakama	Guebuza & Dhlakama	Nyusi & Dhlakama/Momade
Scope	Comprehensive, structuring	Punctual, electoral	Structural (DDR + decentralization)
Immediate result	End of the civil war	End of hostilities 2012–14	Deeper reconciliation process
Political impact	Introduction of multi-party politics	Guarantee of electoral participation	Reconfiguration of provincial power

Despite some differences between the DDR programs implemented in Mozambique, it is clear that, in essence, the common goal is to ensure peace through the silencing of weapons, reorientation and social and economic support in the reintegration of ex-combatants into society, and these seek to function as a public policy for peace, or, in broader terms, as an instrument framed in *peacebuilding efforts* (Reppell, Rozen, & Carvalho, 2016).

The centrality of communities as a political solution

Cabral insisted that liberation is only true when the people actively participate in the construction of the country. I would probably evaluate the Peace Accords by asking:

Q1 – Are the Mozambican people really involved?

The troubled announcement of Mozambique's presidential elections in October 2024 was the epitaph of a process of national reconciliation between political institutions and the Mozambican people. The demonstrations, the reactions of the police to the demonstrations and the use of marginal areas of the population for banditry highlight the fragility of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs promoted in Mozambique from 1975 to 2025.

Q2 – A: Is peace improving the lives of rural and urban populations?

According to INE (2023a, p. 1), the youth population is becoming illiterate, with young women being more illiterate than their male counterparts. A third of the young population is illiterate and, of those who have some education, 18% have a higher education level and only 1.5% have higher education. And provincial inequalities in absolute and relative youth growth persist and tend to worsen, with central and northern regions hosting a large percentage of the youth population and a faster growth trend, but more illiterate and with less access to basic social services such as education and health, especially sexual and reproductive services, than its counterpart in the southern region of the country (Carvalho & Veiga, 2024).

Q3 - Is there social justice and redistribution of resources?



In 2017, the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2023b) reported 27.9 million inhabitants, of which 51.7% were women, 67% lived in rural areas, with about 52% distributed across the four northern provinces (Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Zambezia), and about 25% in the four southern provinces (Maputo, Maputo City, Gaza and Inhambane). About 65% of the population was under 25 years old – they were born after the General Peace Agreement, signed in 1992, that is, they do not have the trauma or the memory of the scourge of a civil war.

Bueno (2019) argues that Mozambique's formula for success lay in its original combination of amnesty at the national level with traditional healing and purification rituals at the community level. For the author, the understanding was that, while the former allowed the past to remain in the past – preventing further political polarization – the latter was fundamental for a new beginning. Through rituals, people affected by the civil war reintegrated into their families and communities and began new lives as civilians (Bueno, 2019, p. 427). The author considers that there was a lack of reconciliation in the design and implementation of post-conflict pacification programs/laws in Mozambique. The DDR analysed its traditional aspects, but did not consider a long-term element, which is reconciliation (Bueno, 2019) and economic empowerment that enable the empowerment of communities (Carvalho & Veiga, 2024) and, subsequently, of society as a pillar of national construction.

The evolution of the Mozambican socio-political structure will therefore reveal these gaps in the pacification of the country. In fact, it is said that the initial accommodation of Renamo and its supporters during the Chissano government (1992-2005) did not evolve into a reconciliation. On the contrary, the initial developments were practically reversed during the term of President Armando Guebuza (2005-2015), deteriorating until the reappearance of the armed conflict in 2012. In their own way, Frelimo and Renamo maintained elements of differentiation between them, keeping the barriers between "us and them" practically intact. This separation can be detected in the socioeconomic, political and military spheres of Mozambican society.

The failures of the process of seeking lasting peace in Mozambique

Lala (2005) also considers that the international community, desperate to avoid the mistakes made in the DDR processes elsewhere, such as Angola, which led to the relapse of the conflict, avoided pressuring the parties to disarm in Mozambique. For example, disarmament was not conducted diligently, as Renamo continued to maintain arms depots and depots throughout the country. Reintegration was the most neglected part of the entire program. Former combatants have not received adequate guidance and support for much broader and long-term integration into society. DDR focused on the short-term objective, which is more inclined towards reinsertion.

Some of the consequences of the DDR's "haste" in Mozambique, for example, are pointed out by Lala (2005) and Knight (2008a), which were the increase in crime and the circulation of light weapons and light weapons in the region, with Mozambique being considered the source of most illegal weapons circulating in countries in the region, such as the South African Republic (RAS), Zambia and Zimbabwe in 1998. Similarly, the high



crime rate in the region in general may be associated with the DDR process in Mozambique, which both the demobilized and the availability of weapons outside the control of the authorities followed (Lala, 2005; Knight, 2008a).

The approach of Alusala & Dye (2010) suggests that reintegration remains a major challenge that requires large resources in post-conflict stabilization processes. For these authors, the short duration and modest funding for many reintegration interventions made it difficult to help ex-combatants acquire employable skills. In addition, the fact that many DDR programmes focus on narrow objectives has meant that little assistance has been provided to the most vulnerable groups involved in conflict, such as women, children and people with disabilities. These groups also need support in learning skills that help them secure a livelihood (Alusala & Dye, 2010; Vines, 2013).

For Alusala & Dye (2010, p. 4), the lessons learned from the collapse of the Angolan peacekeeping operation, which failed to effectively demobilize combatants, leading to the recurrence of war after a contested election, helped shape the approach used in Mozambique. In the Angolan case, Jonas Savimbi, from UNITA, took advantage of a weak UN mandate to reignite the civil war. There was, therefore, a fear that a repeat of the Angolan scenario in Mozambique would further tarnish the image of stakeholders, discrediting *international peacebuilding efforts*.

In turn, Lundin (1998) also reiterates the importance of reintegration and reconciliation in post-conflict pacification processes in contexts such as Mozambique. Lundin (1988) argues that two fundamental aspects are often ignored in post-conflict societies. First, social reintegration, a critical component of peacekeeping operations, is often overlooked in signed peace agreements.

Revolutionary ethics and leadership responsibility

Cabral influenced Mozambican liberation mainly through common anti-colonial networks, liberation theory, and the circulation of cadres. Amílcar Cabral's connection to Mozambican national liberation was above all intellectual, political, and organizational, rather than a direct leadership of FRELIMO (Jones, 2020; Garcia-Ponce & Wantchekon, 2023; Lopes & Mendy, 2025; Tomás 2021). The evidence converges that Lisbon was a decisive point in this connection, because there Cabral lived with Mozambican students, including Joaquim Chissano and Marcelino dos Santos, and participated in clandestine organizations that preceded the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and other Portuguese colonies (Lopes & Mendy, 2025; Tomás, 2021).

The evidence suggests that Amílcar Cabral's thought offered a central theoretical framework to colonial liberation movements to understand national liberation in the Portuguese colonial space (Tomás, 2016). It also shows that recent Mozambican historiography insists that FRELIMO's struggle was internally contradictory rather than linear, which suggests caution against readings that reduce Mozambique to the mere application of "cabralism" (Darch & Hedges, 2021).



Table 3. Main forms of connection between Amílcar Cabral and Mozambican national liberation.

Dimension	What the evidence shows	
Political networks	Cabral articulated with Mozambicans in Lisbon	Tomás (2021)
Foundation of FRELIMO	Common clandestine organizations preceded the Mozambican movements	Tomás (2021)
Culture and liberation	Amílcar Cabral's theory provided attributes for thinking about Mozambican nationalism	Lopes & Mendy, 2025
Anticolonial War	Mozambique was part of the same escalation of repression and resistance against Portugal	Jones, 2020
International circulation	Cabral's ideas traveled between Lusophone struggles and beyond	Darch & Hedges, 2021

The literature also situates Cabral as a participant in the construction of a new political consciousness in the Portuguese-speaking world, simultaneously involving the liberation struggles in the colonies and the final crisis of the Portuguese regime (Lopes, 2025). This helps explain why its relevance to Mozambique appears less as "bilateral influence" and more as part of a shared revolutionary camp (Lopes & Mendy, 2025).

In short, Cabral was important to Mozambican national liberation because he helped form the networks, political language, and anti-colonial theory that also fuelled Mozambique. His contribution to Mozambican liberation was mainly of a common intellectual horizon, and not of direct command over FRELIMO.

Amílcar Cabral's revolutionary ethic — cantered on truth, responsibility to the people, moral discipline and the struggle against privileges — constitutes one of the most demanding legacies of African political thought of the twentieth century.

Conclusions

The analysis developed suggests that Amílcar Cabral's political thought remains a powerful conceptual tool to understand both the limits and potentialities of peace processes in Mozambique between 1992 and 2018. Although Cabral was assassinated before Mozambican independence, his principles — liberation as a continuous process, revolutionary ethics, people-centricity, national unity, and structural transformation—offer sound criteria for critically evaluating peace agreements and subsequent political dynamics.

First, the study confirms that Cabral valued peace as a condition for real liberation, understanding it not as the mere absence of war, but as the construction of material, political, and moral conditions that allow postcolonial emancipation. The text recalls that "Cabral defended unity as the basis of African liberation", stressing that any pacification process that does not address structural inequalities runs the risk of producing only a formal, and not a substantial, peace.

Second, research shows that the 1992, 2014 and 2018 agreements incorporated important elements of reconciliation and demobilisation, but repeatedly failed to fully reintegrate ex-combatants, effectively decentralise, include local communities and build trust between state and opposition. The absence of deep reconciliation — replaced by amnesties and



episodic negotiations — confirms that Mozambican peace was often treated as a technical process rather than as a social transformation, contrary to Cabral's vision of continued liberation.

Thirdly, the study shows that the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Mozambique, with twenty-one groups identified, requires an approach to national unity that goes beyond rhetoric. The persistence of regional inequalities, especially in the North, and the emergence of new conflicts — such as the insurgency in Cabo Delgado — in the early 2020s, reveal that nation-building remains incomplete. As the document states, "peace is the greatest resource for life", but it only becomes sustainable when accompanied by inclusion, social justice and popular participation.

Finally, the work concludes that Cabral's revolutionary ethics — based on truth, moral discipline, responsibility to the people and the fight against privilege — constitutes a critical reference for evaluating contemporary Mozambican political leadership. The distance between this ethical ideal and certain governmental practices highlights tensions between the liberation project and the post-independence reality. Thus, Cabralian thought not only illuminates the past, but also offers a normative framework for rethinking sovereignty, democracy, and social justice in Mozambique in the twenty-first century.

At this point, it is important to remember that "Are the Mozambican people really involved" with the development trajectory of Mozambique. The recent episodes of urban conflict in December 2024, after the last presidential elections, suggest the need to change what was wrong, identified and widely debated in Mozambique.

In summary, the work demonstrates that the Mozambican peace agreements represent significant advances, but insufficient, when confronted with Cabral's vision. Negotiated peace was necessary, but not sufficient: without structural transformation, social inclusion, and political ethics, peace remains vulnerable. Cabral therefore provides not definitive answers, but critical demands that continue to question the Mozambican state and its political actors.

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