

# **Doing Things Differently: Mediating in Mozambique**

**A Geneva Security Debate**

Geneva Centre for Security Policy

**Speech by  
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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is, once again, with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the GCSP for this 12th edition of our Geneva Security Debates entitled "Doing things Differently: Mediating in Mozambique".

For those of you who are loyal participants of these debates, please bear with me. For those new to our discussions, please allow me to give you some background information.

The Geneva Security Debates is a series of public discussions which explores pressing and current security challenges. On a monthly basis, we bring together leading thinkers, experts, and policymakers for interactive discussions on a specific challenge.

In the short term, we hope that our Geneva Security Debates will help inform, provide new insights, stimulate joint reflections, and create networks among policymakers and experts in Geneva and abroad.

In the long term, we hope these debates will allow us to shape a better and more secure global future.

Thank you for joining us for today's Geneva Security Debate.

Now, I would like to extend my gratitude to our distinguished panel Mr Mirko Manzoni, Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General; Ms Neha Sanghrajka, Senior Political Advisor at the Personal Envoy's Office; Mr Eduardo Namburete, Member of Parliament and Mediator; and Ms Katia Papagianni, Director of the Policy and Mediation Support Unit at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. In particular, I would like to thank Eduardo, Mirko and Neha for joining us from Mozambique; welcome. We are also honoured that the President of Mozambique, Filipe Nyusi, has taken the time to record a video specifically for us.

In these tumultuous times, it has become rare that we hear positive stories. Today, our speakers will share an unusual and remarkable story of how a pervasive conflict was settled and how the dialogue was instrumental and decisive in resolving large-scale violence in Mozambique. At a time when the paths to peace worldwide are becoming fractured with mistrust, competition, rivalry and an arms race, I am delighted that we have an opportunity to learn more about "what can work".

This peace process is primarily an inspiring story of the people of Mozambique and their determination to create a path to peace. It is one that I have been following closely since my first mission to Mozambique that dates back to 1993, one year after the Rome Peace Accord was signed. The mission focused on "reducing excessive military expenditures", which today would be called security sector reform. I then had the opportunity to serve as Head of Mission and Country Director at the Swiss Embassy in Maputo between 1999 and 2001 and gained a deep respect and admiration for the country.

Before we go any further, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge President Filipe Nyusi's exceptional leadership. By the way, he led the Mozambican presidency of the Security Council a couple of months ago.

During our discussion, we will show some clips of key moments during the process. There are a few "firsts" that are worth highlighting here that distinguish this peace process from others:

- These include President Nyusi as the first to enter the RENAMO military headquarters in 2017 and

- the first to secure constitutional amendments to deepen decentralisation,
- the first to achieve gender parity within the Council of Ministers and
- the first to appoint a member opposition party to the role of Ambassador Raoul Domingos, with whom I met every few months for lunch at my residence.
- Notably, in a marked change from the previous process, the parties also began implementing the agreement before it was signed.

All these 'firsts' show leadership, trust-building, risk-taking, and commitment, beginning with the parties themselves.

However, it also extends to the mediators who created an environment that enabled trust to be built and risks to be taken and the international community who assisted local and national actors to co-construct the path to peace.

Mirko and the absolutely exceptional Neha have committed themselves to Mozambique for over eight years and have seen many ups and downs, which we are keen to hear today.

When you see the photos of smiling faces, it may appear easy, and some might even say 'lucky'. Of course, there are many factors that contributed to this mediation process. In my experience as Secretary-General at the OSCE and as Swiss Ambassador engaged in many peace processes, I have observed that humility and patience are required to build trust, preparation and courage are required to take risks, and a sense of purpose and resilience are required for continued commitment.

The distinguished panel addressing you today was also able to respond to the many setbacks along the way, including the death of the former leader of RENAMO – Mr Afonso Dhlakama, in May 2018, contested elections, the emergence of a RENAMO Military Junta, terrorism, COVID and consecutive climate shocks leading to humanitarian demands. All of this demanded agility and flexibility on top of trust, risk-taking and commitment.

They could also follow through from the initial ceasefire and peace agreement to ensure it is being effectively implemented, a rare continuity.

What does implementation look like in practice? Constitutional reform to grant pension rights to ex-combatants, an amnesty law, gender-responsive disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme that granted identification documents, health screens, bank accounts and quarterly stipends, and reconciliation work.

All of these firsts and rarities may seem remarkable, but should they be exceptional? At a time when there is an increasing demand for mediation and the professionalisation of the field, and yet far too few stories of success, I invite everyone to listen to this debate with the question in mind What do we need to do differently? International norms and support have a role to play, but are also being contested. What do we need to uphold and continue, and what do we need to challenge to enable creativity and innovation?

Here credit should also be given to Switzerland, which played a significant role in supporting this process over an extended period of time and enabling continuity. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue based here in Geneva supported Neha in the early years when no immediate results were evident.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Mirko Manzoni. His persistence, commitment and skills as a mediator made it happen. I know he had to overcome resistance on many fronts, including at places you wouldn't expect it. I had regular conversations with Mirko during his mediation and knew what it took. Most of us would have given up! Not him!

Talking about leadership, there was a strong recognition of the leadership of both Mozambique and Switzerland when they were elected as non-permanent members of the Security Council in June 2022. I hope we can collectively continue collaborating towards a more peaceful and secure future regionally and globally. We will all continue to face new and emerging threats, and the difficult situation in Cabo Delgado is one that I hope will be resolved.

Without further ado, let me pass the floor to Fleur Heyworth, our Head of Gender and Inclusive Security, who will introduce our speakers and moderate the event for us today.

Thank you.

Fleur, the floor is yours.