

COUNTRY PROFILE Mozambique

Mozambique is viewed by many as one of the successes in southern Africa. Armed conflict badly affected Mozambique in the latter half of the 20th century. After a liberation war and then independence in 1975, there followed a civil war fomented by Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa that did not end until Peace Accords were signed in 1992. Strong economic growth rates have been a feature of Mozambique's economy since then, although how much the poor are really benefiting from this is questioned. Millions of Mozambicans remain in poverty and the country is the second poorest in the region. Mozambique has much potential, but is currently still dependent on international donors for significant amount of its budget.

SUMMARY FACTS

Population: 22.4 million, UK: 61.2 million
Capital: Maputo
Area: 812,379 sq km (313,661 sq miles), UK: 243,610 sq km (94,060 sq miles)
Major languages: Portuguese, Makua-Lomwe, Tsonga, Shona, Swahili
Major religions: Christianity, Indigenous beliefs, Islam
Life expectancy at birth: 48 years (UN 2008), UK: 79 years
Under-five mortality rate: 130 per 1,000 live births (UN 2008), UK: 6 per 1,000 live births
HIV prevalence: 12.5% aged 15-49 (UN, 2007), UK: 0.2% aged 15-49
Adult Literacy Rate: 44% ages 15 and older (UN, 2008), UK: >99%
GDP per capita: US\$802 (UN, 2008), UK: US\$35,200
Monetary unit: 1 Metical = 100 centavos
Main exports: Seafood, cotton, aluminium, sugar, timber
CO2 emissions share of world total: < 0.1%, UK: >2%
Population without access to an improved water source: 58% (UN, 2006), UK: 0%
Population using improved sanitation: 31% (UN, 2006), UK 100%
Government: Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO)
President: Armando Guebuza
Year Women received right to vote: 1975, UK: 1918, 1928 (equal rights)



Sources: UN Statistics, UNICEF

History

The area today known as Mozambique was first inhabited by hunter-gatherers known as San, who lived in much of southern Africa for thousands of years. From the **1st century AD** Bantu-speaking people from western Africa began migrating south due to environmental stress and population increase, and by the **11th century** they had migrated through the Zambezi River valley and into the plateau and coastal areas of present-day Mozambique. The Bantu-speaking groups brought farming and ironworking to the region, and largely displaced the San who had lived there previously. In the following centuries the Bantu-speakers formed numerous political entities in the area, the most notable of which are the Yao and Maravi kingdoms. Connections were developed with Arab, Persian and Asian traders, who settled on the eastern African coast.

The first Europeans to settle and trade on this coast were Portuguese: Vasco de Gama reached the region in **1497**, while on his way to India, and in the following century the Portuguese began trading and settling. During the **17th century** the Portuguese competed with the Arabs in the slave, gold and ivory trades, and set up agricultural plantations. By the **18th century** Portuguese traders superseded Arabs as the controllers of trade in the area, and ports along the coast became regular stopping points for ships on the way to the East Indies. Although Portuguese influence gradually spread to the interior through individual settlers, this was mainly limited to the Zambezi valley as the African peoples strongly resisted the expansion. At the end of the **19th century** responsibility for the administration of Portuguese East Africa was given to commercial companies, such as the Mozambique Company (established in **1891**), that were awarded large tracts of land to use for plantations or mining.

A coup in Portugal in **1926** led to the imposition of a right-wing dictatorship in Lisbon, known as the Estado Novo ('New State') and led by António de Oliveira Salazar. This new regime took a more direct interest in Portugal's overseas territories, and as the private companies' charters ended, the regions they administered were merged into a colony directly controlled by Lisbon. In **1951** the colony became an Overseas Province of Portugal.

African resistance to Portuguese rule grew stronger in the late **1950s** as British and French colonies elsewhere in Africa began to win their independence. Various liberation movements were formed and in **1962** several groups merged to form the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), led by Eduardo Mondlane. In **1964** FRELIMO initiated a campaign of guerrilla warfare against Portuguese colonial rule. The Portuguese dictatorship in Lisbon responded with a major military effort and sent large numbers of Portuguese troops to the colony. Salazar was already fighting similar insurrections in Portugal's other African colonies – Angola, Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde – and this policy became increasingly unpopular back home. In **1974** the Estado Novo regime was overthrown by a left-wing military coup. The new government in Lisbon rapidly granted its colonies independence, starting with Portuguese Guinea in **1974**. Portuguese East Africa followed in **July 1975**, and took the new name Mozambique.

Portugal's withdrawal from Mozambique was negotiated exclusively with FRELIMO and the constitution that came into effect with independence stated that the President of FRELIMO would become the President of Mozambique. Eduardo Mondlane had been assassinated in **1969** and his successor, Samora Machel, became the first President of Mozambique.

Machel rapidly established a one-party state, allied with the Soviet Union, and banned all rival political activity. The Portuguese settlers rapidly departed from

Mozambique, often leaving a wrecked infrastructure. FRELIMO's policies were not wholly welcomed by the country's rural population as the party's adoption of Marxist-Leninist doctrines led to family farming being replaced by collective state farms.

Early on in his rule Machel declared his support for the liberation movements in Rhodesia and South Africa, and let them use Mozambique as a refuge and to some extent a base. In **March 1976** FRELIMO closed Mozambique's border with Rhodesia, severed rail links, and nationalized Rhodesian-owned property. Rhodesian intelligence services set up an anti-FRELIMO guerrilla movement called the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). RENAMO conducted extensive, brutal guerrilla campaigns within Mozambique and sabotaged bridges, rail links and pipelines throughout the country from the **late 1970s**, and by the **mid 1980s** FRELIMO had lost effective control of significant areas of the country.

RENAMO lost its support from Rhodesia when that country became Zimbabwe in **1980**, but South Africa continued to assist RENAMO until the Nkomati Accord was signed in **1984**. Under the terms of the Accord, signed by both FRELIMO and South Africa, Mozambique would no longer provide a refuge for African National Congress (ANC) exiles and South Africa would end its military support for RENAMO.

The activities of RENAMO continued in the latter half of the decade, regardless of the scaling back of South African support. The Government's communal farming policies, the closure of the border with Rhodesia and the decade-long civil war had been economically disastrous for Mozambique and RENAMO were able to garner support from a significant minority of the country's disgruntled population.

On **19 October 1986**, President Machel and 33 other passengers were killed when their plane crashed into the mountains along the South African border while returning to Maputo from Zambia. Although an international investigation blamed the crash on negligence by the crew, Mozambican officials accused South Africa of using a radio beacon to lure the aircraft off course. In November, Joaquim Chissano was elected as President of FRELIMO, and became President of Mozambique.

In the **late 1980s** the FRELIMO leadership decided that peace depended on the ending of Mozambique's system of one-party rule. In **1989** they abandoned Marxist-Leninist doctrines and the first peace talks in 13 years were held in Rome. Chissano announced that opposition parties would be allowed to compete openly and legally for the first time and peace talks between the warring parties continued. The civil war ended in **1992** with the signing of the Rome General Peace Accords, which included an agreed plan for multi-party elections with RENAMO standing as a legal party. A million Mozambicans are estimated to have perished during the civil war, while 1.7 million took refuge in neighbouring states and several million were internally displaced.

UN peacekeeping forces entered the country to help implement the terms of the accord, and they remained until after the first elections were held in **1994**. Chissano retained the Presidency with 53 per cent of the votes, compared with 34 per cent for Afonso Dhlakama leader of RENAMO. FRELIMO held the National Assembly by a narrower margin with 129 seats to RENAMO's 112.

By **mid 1995** most of the Mozambican refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries had returned to the country, and many of those who were internally displaced returned to their areas of origin. Also in **1995**, Mozambique became a member of the British Commonwealth: the first to be admitted without having any former colonial or constitutional links with the United Kingdom. The exception was made due to Mozambique being surrounded by members of the Commonwealth – at

the time South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe were all members.

In **1998** the country held its first local elections but RENAMO boycotted them, citing flaws in the registration process. However, Dhlakama was adamant that there will be no return to military action, and the government resolved to accommodate the opposition's procedural concerns in time for the second multiparty general election in **1999**. The electoral law was rewritten and passed by consensus in **December 1998** by the National Assembly. A highly successful voter registration, financed largely by international donors, followed and provided voter registration cards to 85 per cent of potential electors.

Mozambique's second general election was held in **December 1999** and there was high voter turnout. The presidential election was close, but Chissano defeated Dhlakama to secure a second term. FRELIMO retained control of the National Assembly. Although the opposition and some observers criticised flaws in the process, international and domestic observers concluded that the result did reflect the will of the people. In **November 2000** 40 people were killed in rioting at RENAMO protests against the **1999** elections and 82 more, many of whom were RENAMO supporters arrested for rioting, died in a jail in the north of the country. A report suggested that asphyxiation due to overcrowding was the cause of the deaths.

Earlier in the year, in **February**, devastating floods hit the south of the country around the capital Maputo after a powerful cyclone swept into Africa from the Indian Ocean. An estimated 700 people died, and nearly half a million were displaced. More flooding occurred in the Zambezi Valley in **March 2001** and 70,000 people were forced to leave their homes.

In **2002** Chissano declined to run for a third term in office, and the independence struggle veteran Armando Guebuza was selected as FRELIMO's candidate for the **2004** general elections. These elections, the third since multiparty democracy was instituted in Mozambique, occurred in **December 2004** and having pledged to address corruption, crime, and poverty, Guebuza was elected President. Dhlakama was again the defeated RENAMO candidate. FRELIMO won the National Assembly elections by a wider margin than in **1999** and RENAMO (in a coalition with a number of minor parties) were the only other group to gain seats. The 44 per cent turnout was far below that achieved in **1999** and RENAMO alleged that there was "massive fraud", and initially rejected the results. The National Electoral Commission (CNE) subsequently admitted that 1,400 vote-summary sheets, all favouring RENAMO, had been stolen. This theft equated to five per cent of the total vote, and the CNE transferred one parliamentary seat to RENAMO in compensation. International observers expressed concern about the elections but ultimately determined that, as in **1999**, the results did reflect the will of the people.

Guebuza's government continued with liberal economic reforms that had been started by Chissano, and pursued a poverty reduction agenda.

In **2006** the World Bank cancelled most of Mozambique's debt under Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) plans put forward by the G8 nations at the **2005** Gleneagles Summit.

There was a great deal of controversy in the lead up to the **2009** general elections. The Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), a new party formed by the former RENAMO member (and incumbent Mayor of Beira) Daviz Simango, was disqualified by the CNE from the elections in nine of 13 constituencies nationally. The CNE alleged the MDM were missing registration documents, and an appeal by the MDM to

the Constitutional Council was turned down. Partisan political violence also marred the election campaigns: three MDM campaigners were injured in Chokwe when their offices were looted by a FRELIMO mob, and RENAMO workers also suffered attacks by FRELIMO loyalists in Maputo, Sofala and Nampula.

The elections took place on **October 28, 2009** and election day itself was considered well-run and peaceful, largely satisfying international observers. FRELIMO won both the Presidential and parliamentary elections by a bigger margin than in **2004**. Guebuza received 75 per cent of the presidential vote, with Dhlakama receiving just 14 per cent. FRELIMO increased their National Assembly representation to 191 seats. The main change from the **1999** and **2004** election was that a third party, the MDM, won representation in the National Assembly with eight seats. International observers and the donor community both voiced concerns regarding the transparency of the country's multi-party elections, and questioned the independence from government of the CNE and Constitutional Council. Due to the electoral irregularities, Freedom House decided to remove Mozambique from its **2010** list of electoral democracies.

Population

Regardless of the influence of Islamic coastal traders and European colonisers, Mozambicans have largely retained an indigenous culture centring on small-scale farming. Most people in Mozambique live in rural areas and are employed in, or subsist via, agriculture. Four out of five Mozambicans depend on the land for their living, and the majority of those involved in agricultural work are women. Despite the reliance on agriculture most of the arable land in the country remains uncultivated, leaving room for considerable development.

There are diverse ethno-linguistic communities spread throughout the country, and many are closely linked to similar groups living in neighbouring countries. The Shangaan, for instance, live in the south of Mozambique and are closely related to the Tsonga of South Africa. Other substantial ethno-linguistic groups include the Makua in the north, and the Sena and Ndau in the Zambezi valley. Although the capital (Maputo) is in the south, the most populous region is in the north of the country, where about 45 per cent of Mozambicans live.

The people of Mozambique suffer from one of the lowest levels of human development in the world. The UN Human Development Index ranked Mozambique 172nd out of 182 countries in 2009, and only the Democratic Republic of Congo was given a lower HDI rank in southern Africa. Some estimates place half of Mozambicans below the poverty line of US\$1.25 a day, but the 2009 HDR estimates this to be much higher, at closer to 75 per cent. Literacy levels in Mozambique are the lowest in the region, with just 44 per cent of the population considered literate.

Politics

Mozambique is a constitutional democracy. The present constitution was enacted in 1990 and amended in 2004. The amendment established a Constitutional Council to ensure strict observance of the constitution, including the electoral acts; also established was the Council of State – comprising the Prime Minister, and representatives of the opposition and civil society – to advise the President on specific matters. There have been four multi party elections since 1994. Concerns have been raised about election procedures but most observers believe the results reflect the views of those who voted. The 2009 general elections caused controversy when a number of parties, most notably the MDM, were disqualified from fielding candidates by the CNE. This led to international observers questioning the independence of the CNE and the new Constitutional Court, and Mozambique was removed from a list of electoral democracies published annually by Freedom House.

The President of Mozambique functions as the head of state, head of government and commander-in-chief of the military. The President is directly elected for a five-year term via a run-off vote, usually held at the same time as elections to decide which parties gain seats in the National Assembly of the Republic. The President appoints a Prime Minister, who is then responsible for chairing the Council of Ministers (equivalent to the Cabinet) and advising the President on governing the country. Former FRELIMO education minister Aires Ali was appointed Prime Minister in January 2010, shortly after Guebuza's 2009 election victory. The next general elections are scheduled to take place in 2014.

The National Assembly of the Republic is a unicameral parliament consisting of 250 seats, and has national responsibility for legislating in Mozambique. Provincial assemblies have some regional legislative powers.

Economy

Since the end of Mozambique's civil war, the country has achieved high, sustained levels of economic growth. Between 1994 and 2006 the annual growth rate averaged approximately 8 per cent despite devastating floods in 2000 and 2001, and a severe drought in 2002. The country is regarded as having weathered the global financial crisis well and the economy grew at 5.4 per cent in 2009. The limited exposure of Mozambique's banking system to international financial markets, combined with supportive government measures, such as fuel subsidies, helped sustain growth and minimise the impact of the crisis. Growth in recent years has been driven by foreign investment in mineral resources and donor support of agro-industry and construction.

Foreign investment, although it has increased growth rates, has not significantly reduced poverty and inequality. The benefits of growth have accrued largely to the multinational companies themselves, and foreign-owned companies still do not contribute significantly to government revenues. Economy inequality, while not as great as in Namibia or Angola, has increased in the last two decades, suggesting that there has not been a significant 'trickle-down' of wealth to the poorest in the country.

As a result of debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) programmes, Mozambique's debt stock has fallen from 25 per cent of GDP in 2005 to under 12 per cent in 2010, but the effectiveness of this relief is questionable, as the Government continues to be reliant on international donors for a significant portion of its budget.

Civil society and trade unions

Until the late 1980s civil society struggled to gain a foothold in Mozambique. There was a civil war, and the FRELIMO government saw themselves as the only really legitimate representatives of the people, and association outside the formal institutions of the state was discouraged. There were some peaceful associational organisations such as the Christian council of Mozambique (CCM) and Caritas Mozambique, both faith-based organisations.

The attitude of the state to civil society altered with the introduction of the new constitution in 1990, which provided for freedom of association. However, despite the legal guarantees, the bureaucratic hoops to be jumped through when registering civil society organisations (CSOs) are viewed by many as excessive and inefficient. Although there is no evidence of violent intolerance certain groups, especially homosexuals and those who are HIV positive, suffer discrimination.

Civil society in Mozambique is considered by some to be structurally weak, with a lack of organisation and strong leadership. These structural weaknesses in turn contribute to a lack of funding. The lack of capacity among CSOs discredits them in the eyes of donors, who instead concentrate their resources on public and governmental organisations. Most CSOs in Mozambique are located in the outlying districts and local communities, not the urban centres, which exacerbates the lack of funding as the CSOs exist outside influential networks. The weaknesses and lack of funding among CSOs mean that, thus far, Mozambican civil society has had only a limited impact on governance.

Workers in Mozambique theoretically have the right to form and join unions, and to go on strike. Legislation enacted in 2008 extended such provisions to government workers. However, the actual ability of trade unions to operate is hindered by tight regulations that apply to private gatherings. Furthermore, workers in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) are denied the right to strike because the Government classes their jobs as 'essential services', which is not in line with the International Labour Organisation's definition of what jobs constitute essential services.

Trade unionists can also face violence and discrimination from employers. In July 2007, for instance, a striker was shot dead and three others were wounded by security guards during a strike over working conditions at a sugar cane plantation in Mafambisse. A 2009 report by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) found serious violations of trade union rights in Mozambique, and suggests that anti-union discrimination is not subject to adequate legal penalties. There have also been reports that job recruitment, particularly among young workers, is conditional on non-adhesion to any trade union.

The largest trade union confederation in the country is the Organisation of Mozambican Workers (OTM), which was formed in 1983 as a directly controlled arm of FRELIMO. The OTM declared its independence from the party in 1990 and since then has maintained nominal independence. The OTM has been publicly critical of the government's market-based reforms, although sceptics claim that it remains close to FRELIMO.

Achievements

1. Peace: the transition from 16 years of civil war to peace in Mozambique has been successful. The commitment from both sides to pursuing non-violent governance has ensured peace and stability for nearly two decades since the civil war ended.
2. Reconciliation: there are still incidents of distrust between political leaders but it is apparent that a majority of Mozambicans want to learn from but not live in the past. This has been achieved without any major institutional processes (for instance a South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission)
3. Economic growth: given that Mozambique has suffered from numerous natural disasters since the turn of the millennium, it is a significant achievement that the country has maintained strong positive growth rates, even during the global economic crisis.
4. Building a base: Although economic growth hasn't yet adequately benefited the country's poor, strong growth rates have build a base that has the potential to act as a launch-pad for human development far more effectively than weak growth could.

Development Challenges

1. Corruption: Mozambique was ranked 130 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index, and corruption in both government and business is pervasive. The lack of transparency in relation to the financial affairs of both public officials and political parties is particularly problematic, and must receive attention.
2. Democracy: Mozambique has held 4 elections since 1994 which despite concerns observers have broadly accepted as democratic and reflecting the will of the people. The main concern over the 2009 elections was the disqualification of the MDM from a number of constituencies. The CNE and Constitutional court maintain MDM did not comply with electoral requirements. There is pressure, not least from international donors (foreign governments), for the CNE and Constitutional Court to have greater independence from state and greater separation of state and party. In response to the 2009 elections, Freedom House has declared that Mozambique is no longer an electoral democracy. The results of the most recent Afrobarometer survey suggest that the majority of Mozambicans believe democracy to be preferable to any other kind of government.
3. HIV/AIDS: HIV/AIDS is a serious threat to Mozambican development. Although the high incidence rates for the disease have stabilised in the north and centre of the country, infection rates have continued to rise in the south. Nationally only 30-40 per cent of those infected receive treatment with antiretrovirals (ARVs) and less than half of those infected who are pregnant receive ARVs, which are vital to prevent mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV. A further challenge for the Government is to reduce dependence on international donors for the HIV/AIDS budget: in 2008 96 per cent of HIV/AIDS spending was contributed by donors, with only three per cent coming from public funding (the remaining one per cent came from private donations).
4. Environmental sustainability and security: Mozambique is among the most disaster prone countries in the world. So called natural disasters such as floods and droughts significantly impact the lives of Mozambicans. The UN estimates that as much as 25 per cent of the population faces a high mortality risk from these events. The poor are disproportionately affected, and climate change has

the potential to increase this risk. Action particularly needs to be taken to secure water sources and address the environmental effects of population migration to the coast as a result of drought inland.

5. Education: while the literacy rate in Mozambique has greatly improved since the colonial period ended in 1975, there is still a long way to go. Under Portuguese rule, 93 per cent of the population was illiterate. After independence the government placed a high priority on expanding educational opportunities for citizens. Unfortunately school building construction and teacher enrolments have not kept up with population growth in recent years, and the literacy rate (as of 2008) was 44 per cent: still the worst in southern Africa by some margin.

For more information on Mozambique, visit the following websites:

- Mozambique Government site – <http://www.mozambique.mz/>
- UNICEF's Mozambique site – <http://www.unicef.org/mozambique/>
- 2007 Freedom House report on Mozambique – <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=8&ccrcountry=162§ion=87&ccrpage=37>
- United Nations Development Programme report into Mozambican civil society <http://undp.org.mz/en/content/download/1370/6119/file/Civil%20Society%20Index,%20Mozambique%202007.pdf>