

**INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE BORDER AREA
OF MOZAMBIQUE AND TANZANIA (IPPS):**

**WOMEN'S ROLES IN CONFLICT CONTEXTS IN THE BORDER REGION OF
MOZAMBIQUE AND TANZANIA**

**Research On
Women's Agency, Roles, Vulnerabilities and Potential Risks of Recruitment and
Radicalisation in the Conflict Context in Northern Mozambique**

Final Report

Maputo, 31 December 2024

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List of Acronyms

ADIN	Integrated Development of the North of Mozambique
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FDS	Defence and Security Forces
FOFeN	Forum of Feminist Organizations of Niassa
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NAPWPS	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
P/CVE	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PREDIN	Resilience and Integrated Development of the North of Mozambique Program
PRM	Police of the Republic of Mozambique
REN	Niassa Special Reserve
RENAMO	National Resistance of Mozambique
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Executive Summary

The insurgency that has been taking place in Mozambique, in the province of Cabo Delgado, since October 2017, led by the Islamic State Mozambique, locally known as Al-Shabaab, quickly spread to the other two provinces in the northern region, Niassa and Nampula. In addition to receiving Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), these last two provinces also serve as recruitment points for men and women to reinforce the group. In the case of Niassa, armed attacks were recorded, although located and sporadic.

While the root causes are yet to be addressed, the impacts of the conflict, especially on women's and girl's lives, demonstrate that it is necessary to understand the conflict from a gender perspective, particularly in cross-border areas, exploring the processes of recruitment and radicalisation. This exercise will, therefore, allow us to understand the pathways to exit violent extremism and strategies for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).

The research proposed aims to analyse women's agency and role in the conflict context in Northern Mozambique, as well as their vulnerabilities and potential risks of recruitment and radicalisation at the border region of Niassa, bringing a gender and cross-border perspective. The research is conducted under the project “Inclusive Participation in Peace and Security in the border area of Mozambique and Tanzania (IPPS),” aiming to feed into Outputs 1 to 3 for an improved understanding of recruitment dynamics, capacity development for security actors and regional dialogue; and improved youth and women resilience at the local level, respectively.

The research covered three districts in the border region of Niassa province: Lichinga, Lago, and Sanga. These districts are considered transit points for violent extremists from the Tanzania and Malawi borders. They are also vulnerable to recruitment due to, among other things, the presence of many foreigners and accessibility problems, mainly where lucrative mineral resources occur. The research gathered qualitative data through multiple sources of data and information, including a desk review, 16 key informant interviews, five focus group discussions encompassing 62 participants, and systematic observations.

Summary of research findings:

- 1) In general, whether government authorities, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) or communities reveal no record or knowledge of women recruited for the conflict in Cabo Delgado. However, in some districts, such as Lichinga and Sanga, it is recognised that young men are recruited to Cabo Delgado, and some women follow the same fate as wives. While in Cabo Delgado, women perform reproductive/domestic functions.
- 2) From the perspective of government entities, extremist terrorist groups' recruitment strategies would not be successful in Niassa, given the effectiveness of prevention mechanisms (awareness, surveillance, and denunciation). For the government authorities, proper information about the effects of terrorism on individual and collective life is, in itself, a means of deterring women from giving in to enticement,

- even in the face of socio-economic needs. However, women lack information about women's recruitment strategies, which may contribute to their recruitment.
- 3) The poor dissemination of information about violent extremism to communities, in general, and to women, in particular, may be due to different reasons, including i) the perception that violent extremism is a distant event and not a direct and close threat, on the one hand. On the other hand, women still lack a broad understanding of the root causes of violent extremism, thus making it difficult for them to identify what is a risk for recruitment, radicalisation and violence outbreaks. ii) the secrecy of state institutions regarding violent extremism as a threat to Niassa province limits women's CSOs from integrating the issue into their activities, fearing to be connoted by government authorities as panic promoters. Existing CSOs activities on violent extremism focus on internally displaced women assistance.
 - 4) Taking into account the means of recruitment used by extremist groups, namely enticement for money and employment, on the one hand, and the context where women live, on the other hand, there is a recognition that the socio-economic needs of women, with greater emphasis on lack of employment, low living conditions and lack of business opportunities, are factors of vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation.
 - 5) The characteristics and socioeconomic conditions of some districts of Cabo Delgado affected by the attacks of extremist groups resemble the characteristics of border districts in Niassa province studied. This suggests that as long as violent extremism continues in the northern region of Mozambique, it could intensify in Niassa province, subjecting women to the same vulnerabilities and impacts that women in Cabo Delgado suffer from different forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
 - 6) Although women only see the economic advantages of living in the border area, such as doing business, selling and buying products in neighbouring countries (Malawi and Tanzania) and in resource exploitation areas such as mining areas, where they provide laundry services, beverage sales, food preparation, local authorities, in their turn, also see threats from a security point of view, primarily because of the bonds (familiarity, kinship and friendship) that women can create with malicious foreigners, leading to their trust and protection, shortage of defence and security forces agents and the porosity of borders.
 - 7) The gender relations and gender norms prevalent in Niassa, including discourses about masculinities and femininities, underestimate the active role of women in violent extremism as recruiters and active militants. Thus, although the possibility of their voluntary adherence to violent extremism is recognised, to a certain extent, the masculinisation of violent extremism and the victimisation of women dominate; that is, violent extremism is seen as a men's affair and women only suffer the consequences of this phenomenon led and executed by men. Extremist groups may explore this fact

by opening various possibilities of working with women actively if the phenomenon intensifies in the region.

- 8) Gender norms dominant in Niassa place women in a position of dependence on men and determine that they are subject to the decisions of men to join armed groups. Once married, women are subject to submit to their partners' decisions, including following them on their journey with extremist groups, should they make that decision. The strength of gender norms can preclude other strategies (such as awareness-raising talks) aimed at fostering women's resilience to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism. The financial dependence of women on men also has the same effect.
- 9) There are ethnic issues raised as stereotypes regarding the likelihood that women of certain ethnolinguistic groups would more readily accept enticement and, consequently, be recruited and radicalised by extremist groups.
- 10) The religion factor is understood as facilitating the recruitment and radicalisation of Muslim women who would quickly identify with the false Islamic ideology propagated by extremist groups, especially in regions where the majority of the population professes the Islamic religion.
- 11) Although it is recognised that extremist groups use violence against women as a tactic of war, using women in their strategic actions but also for abusive behaviour, the government entities have no specific activities aiming to address matters of GBV in conflict contexts. The women's CSO dealing with GBV in their turn, focus on domestic violence perpetrated against women by their intimate partners.
- 12) Awareness, surveillance and denunciation are the three main strategies adopted to P/CVE in the communities. Women are sensitised as mothers and wives; in turn, they sensitise their children, young men, and husbands, considered to be at-risk groups and vulnerable to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism. Therefore, women are not assumed to be either risk groups or victims, much less is their agency recognised to participate actively in terrorist groups.
- 13) Women understand that surveillance strategies are effective for resistance to recruitment; however, they may not be sustainable in the long term, given unmet socio-economic needs. Some community authorities share this thought, understanding that over time, awareness speeches can fall into disrepute, and communities may think that they are being distracted so as not to benefit from the job opportunities that may arise.
- 14) In Niassa, there is a widely recognised lack of multisectoral and multistakeholder dialogue on violent extremism, which limits the knowledge and engagement of women's CSOs on the role they can play in P/CVE.

- 15) The authorities praise the existence of women at the highest level of provincial leadership (governor and secretary of state) as a major step towards women's participation in decision-making processes on peace and conflict issues. However, for the women, this has not been reflected in an advantage, neither in responding to their needs and their socioeconomic empowerment nor in raising opportunities for their participation in decision-making processes.

Summary of recommendations

Recommendations for State and government entities:

- Promote dialogue with different *stakeholders* on violent extremism, conflict resolution, and the role that each actor, especially women, can play in P/CVE.
- Enhance a multisectoral non-securitized component of P/CVE at all levels (provincial, district and local).
- Train and inform local authorities and community leaders on effective community outreach mechanisms adjusted to the local context (relative calm and absence of violent attacks) and socio-economic challenges, which do not fall into public disrepute over time.
- Women in senior leadership positions (governor and secretary of state) should create more platforms for communication and interaction with women in districts to serve as role models and encourage women's agency and participation in decision-making processes regarding peace and conflict.
- Promote dialogue on the influence of borders in facilitating the entry and transit of subversive groups and in the recruitment and radicalisation of communities residing in border regions. This exercise would help raise awareness of the disadvantages unnoticed by communities in border regions, especially women who see only business opportunities.
- Expand spaces and platforms for listening to the specific needs of women and young people so that they know the existing opportunities to participate in decision-making processes and access resources. This can reduce vulnerability to recruitment, the feeling of relative exclusion, and the perception that foreigners or visitors enjoy jobs and resources.
- Ensure social inclusion in the implementation of social projects by adopting norms of good governance (transparency and accountability) and gender balance and raising awareness among communities about the importance of women's social empowerment in family, community, and social life.
- Ensure the empowerment of women, including IDP and women in IDP host communities, to be activists for religious tolerance in their communities and their participation in the implementation of measures to combat religious radicalisation.
- Ensure the dissemination of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS) and the implementation of its objectives and activities adjusted to the local

context and priorities for women's participation in peace and security processes, prevention of all forms of GBV, protection of women and girls' rights, and promotion of peacebuilding.

Recommendations for Civil Society Organisations

- Bring concerted programmes and actions to transmit information about women's threats and vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism.
- Train and inform local CSOs on peace and conflict issues and ensure its integration into their agenda and activities.
- Advocate for women's rights whose enjoyment would prevent their vulnerability to recruitment, among others, the right to information, education, health and decent employment.
- Promote entrepreneurship training aimed at improving women's living conditions and consequently reducing their economic dependence on men and their vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism.
- Disseminate mechanisms that promote changes in gender norms that modify men's negative behaviours or attitudes towards women, thereby reducing women's subjection to men's decisions to join extremist groups.
- Raise awareness among local communities about the social contribution of women's participation in decision-making structures to conflict resolution and peace promotion.
- Promote educational communication campaigns to remove cultural obstacles or barriers that prevent women's participation in public life and decision-making structures at family, community and social levels.
- Ensure the involvement of local CSO in implementing and monitoring the NAPWPS agenda and activities.

Recommendations for Cooperation Partners

- Continue to fund non-securitized state programs in high-risk communities to P/CVE, particularly activities aimed at minimising the identified and interrelated socio-economic causes of violent extremism, inter alia, socioeconomic exclusion, inequalities, and extreme poverty. Within the scope of this recommendation, funding for the employment kit programme carried out by the provincial directorate of youth, employment and sport can be increased, and the principles of inclusion and gender equity should be reinforced in the design and implementation of the programme.
- Ensure the finance and monitoring of the implementation of the NAPWPS at the local level and its impact on women's participation in peace and security processes, prevention of all forms of GBV, protection of women and girls' rights and promotion of peacebuilding.

- Study and identify CSOs' support mechanisms adjusted to the context and specific needs of the targeted communities, thus avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Continue to fund and monitor women's associations with social and economic empowerment programs.
- Finance initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

1. Context of the Research

1.1.Context of the Conflict in Northern Mozambique

The northern province of Mozambique comprises three provinces: Niassa, Nampula, and Cabo Delgado. On 5 October 2017, small groups of young men attacked three police stations in Mocímboa da Praia District, province of Cabo Delgado. The Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) reported these events as the actions of bandits and thieves. However, those events marked the beginning of armed conflict in the northern region of Mozambique.

The International Crisis Group report “Stemming the Insurrection in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado” (2021) goes back to 2007 to explain the armed conflict. The report evidence that in 2007 and 2010, youth in the province’s southern districts, dominated by the ethnic group Makua and militants of the ethnic group Mwani in the coastal district of Mocímboa da Praia, respectively, felt economic exclusion amid the discovery and exploitation of natural resources such as rubies and gas, and began activism with Islamic tinge, opposing prevailing Islamic religion norms and state rules and local authorities. Mozambican militants were joined by Tanzanians and other foreigners, many of whom are part of Islamist networks on the Swahili coast of East Africa. However, most of the group’s rank and file are Mozambicans, including poor fishermen, frustrated petty traders, former farmers and unemployed youth (ICG, 2021, p. 1). Morier-Genoud (2021, p. 8 & 23) also state that behind the insurgency is a religious sect that began in 2007 and transitioned from Islam to violent jihadism in the mid-2010s because of the growth and radicalisation it experienced as well as a result of the repression it suffered from mainstream Muslim organisations and, later, the state.

The young people's motivations for joining Al-Shabaab were various: poverty, unemployment, low education, personal fantasies, search for adventure, camaraderie, creation of a new order, and identity issues based on ethnicity (Forquilha et al., 2019). The money used to finance the activities of the Al-Shabaab group came from the illicit local economy (trafficking in wood, charcoal, rubies, and ivory, among other products) and donations from people with connections to the group's leaders in Mocímboa da Praia (*Idem*).

The root causes of the conflict in Cabo Delgado – a natural resources-rich province, particularly in energetic mineral resources (gas, oil, rubies, gold, graphite, marble) – are still being addressed. However, many studies have suggested a multicausal approach, pointing to causes related to internal and external factors, including economic, political, religious, and sociological factors. Guivala and Chingotwane (2022), in the study Root causes, determinants, aggravating factors and impact of the conflict in northern Mozambique: a gender perspective analysis, sum up both root causes and determinants of the conflict found in various studies. The causes include extreme poverty, economic and social inequalities, political and social exclusion, and ethnic issues. The determinants are distortion of religious and political ideologies, discontent with the management of resource exploitation, violation of the human rights of women and girls, and absence of the state in the field of security.

The Mozambican state, through the General Attorney's Office, officially linked the armed group in northern Mozambique to three international terrorist groups: Ansar al-Sunna or ISIS-Mozambique (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Mozambique), the Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP), a division of Daesh, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Locally, the group is known as Al-Shabaab.

The *modus operandi* of armed groups in Cabo Delgado includes vandalising and burning public institutions and infrastructures, civilian homes, looting and stealing from stores and farms, beheadings, rapes, threats, kidnappings, and other forms of causing terror (Guivala, 2024). Since its outbreak, extremism violence continues to provoke deaths, victims, displacements and many economic, social, and political impacts. According to Cabo Ligado or Connected Cape (2024), from October 2017 to October 2024, there were reported 1,933 events of political violence events and 5,814 fatalities from political violence, out of which 2,412 targeted civilians. Terrorism associated with natural disasters, namely cyclones Idai and Kenneth, led to approximately 1,215,752 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in northern Mozambique. IOM (2024) estimates that 583,047 persons continue to be displaced as 632,705 returned to their native villages but still need humanitarian assistance.

The government has adopted a securitised approach to countering violent extremism in the region. The government responded militarily through the Defence and Security Forces (FDS), and later, the FDS had the support of the Rwandan police and military forces and the SADC Military Mission – the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) from 2021 to 2024. Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle in Mozambique, known as the Local Force, joined the fight against terrorism. Meanwhile, since the outbreak of the conflict, the government of Mozambique launched initiatives to respond to the socioeconomic impacts of the conflict, including the Agency for the Integrated Development of the North of Mozambique (ADIN) in 2020; the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan – of Areas Affected by Terrorism – PRCD (2021-2024), in September 2021; the Resilience and Integrated Development of the North of Mozambique (PREDIN) through the Resolution no. 31/2022 of August 3. However, there is still a lack of evidence of the effectiveness of the government initiatives in P/CVE in the region.

1.2. Conflict Dynamics in Niassa Province Border Region

Niassa, particularly the districts of Lago, Sanga, and Mecula, were recruitment sites for young people from this province to Cabo Delgado (Forquilha & Pereira, 2021). These districts are particularly notable because they border Tanzania. Several studies and authorities have pointed out that this country is the origin of some radical sheikhs who are notable for their speeches against the State and local Islamic leaders and for attracting young people to their cause (Chichava, 2022).

In November 2021, attacks by the extremist group Al-Shabaab were reported in Niassa province, Mecula district. The historical record of incidents indicates that violent extremism hit Mecula, Marrupa, and Mavago more often than other districts (Chingotuane & Ntauazi, 2024). Authorities stated that groups that attacked Niassa were insurgents in Cabo Delgado who were on the run

because of the successful repression of the joint military force operating in the province. Meanwhile, authorities had already reported the existence of young people from Niassa (Mecula and Lago districts) among members of the Al-Shabaab group. The attacks caused large population movements and displacement.

Like Cabo Delgado, the province of Niassa also has extensive reserves of rubies, gold and graphite, some occurring within the Niassa Special Reserve (REN). However, a study by Chichava (2024) notes that the exploration and management of natural resources are characterised by the following factors, among other factors that generate discontent and may fuel the armed conflict in the province:

- **Usurpation of resources by local elites and exclusion in access to natural resources:** This is particularly noticeable in areas with a predominance of former Frelimo combatants—the Lago, Sanga, and Mavago districts. In these places, former combatants dedicate themselves to mining through some associations or cooperatives, excluding and persecuting members of other opposition parties, particularly the National Resistance of Mozambique (RENAMO).
- **Conflict between REN and local communities:** Conflicts have been reported between mineral resource explorers, FDS, and REN guards in Mavago (Msawazi) and Lago (Lupilichi). Mineral resource explorers, including foreign nationals, mainly from Tanzania and some Great Lakes countries, are often victims of expropriation and accused of illegal mining and poaching. However, the same places are granted to foreign companies.
- **Exploitation of resources in areas with weak government presence:** Foreign citizens illegally exploit mineral resources in difficult-to-access areas with weak state presence. This is the case in the village of Mpapa in Lupilichi, where Tanzanians explore gold without State supervision. Chingotuane and Ntauazi (2024) also note that proximity to Niassa and the abundance of forests in Mecula and Mavago helped extremists set up camps and operate with relative freedom along the border. Niassa has also been attracting many artisanal miners associated with illegal mining, money laundering and terrorist financing through smuggling and transaction of precious and semi-precious metals such as gold, rubies, tantalite, and garnet, among others (*Ibid*, 2024, p. 22).

Although the attacks were registered in the mentioned districts, recruitment and indoctrination activities took place throughout Niassa Province, with young people being attracted by job offers in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Chichava, 2022). According to Chingotuane and Ntauazi (2024, p. 16), even if the radicalisation process failed in Niassa, the group's underground and secret operations continued to some degree. The authors also point out that, in Niassa, terrorists also seek logistical support for the armed conflict in Cabo Delgado.

2. Objectives of the Research

2.1. General Objective

- Analyse women's agency and role in the conflict context in Northern Mozambique, as well as their vulnerabilities and potential risks of recruitment and radicalisation at the border region of Niassa.

2.2. Specific Objectives

- 1) Review the conflict context and dynamics in Northern Mozambique, particularly at the border region of Niassa.
- 2) Describe the radicalisation and recruitment strategies of armed groups or terrorist organisations in the Northern Mozambique conflict at the border region of Niassa.
- 3) Discuss the gender dynamics in the context of conflict in Northern Mozambique, emphasising the women's agency and roles as active agents and their victimisation through gender-based violence at the border region of Niassa.
- 4) Identify socio-economic and other intersectionality factors contributing to the vulnerabilities of women to recruitment and radicalisation in the context of conflict in Northern Mozambique conflict at the border region of Niassa.
- 5) Discuss the measures for P/CVE in the Northern region of Mozambique, highlighting women's agency and scope for action at the border region of Niassa.
- 6) Formulate recommendations for strategies to prevent and counter the recruitment and radicalisation of women and to strengthen women's and girls' resilience and agency for effective action at the border region of Niassa.

3. Operationalisation of Key Terms and Concepts for Research

Key concepts	Definition	Operationalisation
Recruitment (Brown, 2019, p. 33)	Materials and propaganda that directly target women and girls, and men and boys, through appealing to various local gendered stereotypes and commonly held beliefs.	-Means of propaganda for recruitment: social media and the internet, personal contact, kinship -Recruiters' narratives, offers, and means of building relationship -Coercive methods of recruitment: blackmail, kidnapping, trafficking
Radicalisation (Lösel et. al, 2020, p. 55)	A process by which a person adopts beliefs that justify violence for social and political change.	-Processes of radicalisation: individual backgrounds and motivations -Collective grievances and victimisation -Distortion of beliefs, political ideologies, and ethnic and cultural differences, and -Leadership and social networks
Risk and vulnerability factors (Ibid, p. 56)	Individual or social characteristics that predict an enhanced probability of outcomes like the onset of extremism, radicalisation towards violent behaviour, or (in rare cases) terrorist acts	-Socio-economic, political, and cultural factors contributing to women's susceptibility to recruitment and radicalisation -Sense of belonging and the influence of feelings of alienation, social networks, peer pressure, and social connections

Protective factors against political and religious extremism and radicalisation (<i>Ibid</i>)	Protective factors are characteristics that reduce the probability of radical violent acts, the willingness to use radical violence or attitudes that support or justify violence.	-At the individual level: self-control, adherence to law, illness/disease, acceptance of police legitimacy, low importance of religion -At the family level: an appreciative, positive parenting style, significant other not involved in violence -Peer group factors: non-violent peers, contact with foreigners -Community/society factors: essential attachment to Society
Gender norms (UNICEF, 2017, p. 4)	Accepted attributes and characteristics of male and female gendered identity at a particular time for a specific society or community.	-Negative masculinity narratives that feed violence -Gender-biased narratives against women's agency
Gender-roles (<i>Ibid</i> , p. 4)	Social and behavioural norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a particular sex	-Tasks assigned to men in private and public spheres -Tasks assigned to women in private and public spheres
Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism” (Orre, <i>et. al.</i> , 2024, <i>apud</i> , OSCE, 2020)	Refer to a spectrum of non-coercive efforts addressing drivers of radicalisation, recruitment, and mobilisation and dissuading individuals from engaging in ideologically motivated violence.	-Strategies for resilience to recruitment and radicalisation -Means of awareness raising for at-risk groups -Supporting networks for at-risk groups -Identifying strategies to halt trafficking for at-risk group
Victimisation of women in conflict (Lamb, 1999, p.120)	Feelings of humiliation about having been vulnerable.	-Women's experiences of victimisation -Types of Gender-Based Violence (violence against women) in conflict context
Women's agency in conflict context (Poloni-Staudinger & Orbals, 2013)	Women as active actors with the capacity to process social experience and devise ways of coping with life in conflict and post-conflict contexts. This concerns women's ability to transform gender relations, guarantee their rights, and participate in peace and security processes.	-Women's strategies to respond to violence -Ways of women's involvement in political violence -Role of women in P/CVE. -Women's participation in peace and security processes

4. Research Methodology

The research gathered qualitative data – in-depth descriptions of circumstances, people, interactions, observed behaviours, attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs from men and women who are experiencing the context of conflict in northern Mozambique – aiming to understand the “how” and “why” of vulnerabilities and risks for women recruitment and radicalisation as well as their agency in P/CVE.

4.1. Scope of Research and Profile of the Districts Studied

The research covered three districts in the border region of Niassa province: Lichinga, Lago, and Sanga. These districts were considered vulnerable to recruitment and, as transit points to violent extremists from Tanzania and Malawi borders (Chingotuane & Ntauazi, 2024, pp. 29-30). The districts are also among the most vulnerable to recruitment because of the presence of many

foreigners. Some areas have extensive forests and accessibility problems, mainly where lucrative mineral resources occur (*Ibid*, 2024, p. 41).

4.1.1. Lichinga District

The district of Lichinga surrounds the city of Lichinga with the following limits: to the north, the locality of Lussanhando; to the east, the Administrative Posts of Lione and Meponda; and to the south and east, the Administrative Post of Chimbonila. Administratively, the district is subdivided into the following administrative posts: Lussanhando, Meponda, Sanjala, Massenger, Chiuaula, and Lumile.

The local population's main activities are agriculture and fishing. The district contains the following minerals: iron, lead, beryl, rare earth, granite, corundum (ruby and sapphire), granada, ceramic clay, and red granite (Provincial Directorate of Mineral Resources and Energy of Niassa *apud* Chingotuane & Ntauazi, 2024).

Lichinga district has a population of 324,279 in 2023, of which 166,535 are women. Its illiteracy rate is 33.9%. The district has 22 hospital units, 83 school buildings, and 238 public water sources (boreholes, wells, and springs) (INE, 2024).

Chingotuane and Ntauazi (2023) classified the Lichinga district as a high priority for CVE according to threat assessment (vulnerability to incidents of violence) and target communities of GIZ intervention. According to the authors, Lichinga is vulnerable to recruitment and, as a transit point to violent extremists coming from Tanzania and Malawi borders.

4.1.2. Lago District

Lago District is located in the northern part of Niassa Province, bordered to the north by the United Republic of Tanzania, to the south by Lichinga District, to the east by Sanga District, and the west by the Republic of Malawi across Lake Niassa. Fishing and agriculture (small family farms) are the main economic activities of the district (Provincial Government, 2016). In Lago, there is also an occurrence of the following minerals: gold, copper, rare earth, heavy sands (ilmenite, rutile and zircon), coal, chromium, nickel, titanium, tungsten, molybdenum, tin, corundum abrasives, garnet, mica muscovite, thermal water, slate, clay for ceramics, rocks for construction (granite, gneiss) (Provincial Directorate of Mineral Resources and Energy of Niassa *apud* Chingotuane & Ntauazi, 2024). The district is subdivided into the following administrative posts: Metangula, Cóbue, Maniamba, Lunho, Meluluca.

The Lago district is populated by three main ethno-linguistic groups, namely the Wanyanja (Nianjas), the Wayao (Ajauas) and the N'goni, in a constant process of miscegenation and inter-ethnic fusion. The coastal area of Lake Niassa is predominantly populated by peoples of the Nyanja ethnic group, who occupy the strip of coastal lowlands and slopes of the entire jurisdiction of the Lago district (*Ibid*).

Data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2024) indicate that the district of Sanga has a population of 136,579, of which 70,882 are women, an illiteracy rate of 43.1%, 18 hospital units, 118 school buildings, and 238 public water sources (boreholes, wells, and springs).

Chingotwane and Ntauazi (2024) classified the Lago district as medium-priority for CVE according to threat assessment (vulnerability to incidents of violence) and target communities of GIZ intervention. According to the authors, Lago is vulnerable to recruitment and acts as a transit point for violent extremists coming from Tanzania and Malawi borders.

4.1.3. Sanga District

The district of Sanga is located in the northern part of Niassa Province, 60 km from the provincial capital – Lichinga. It is bordered to the north by the Republic of Tanzania (Rovuma River), to the south by the district of Lichinga, to the east by the districts of Muembe and Mavago and to the west by the district of Lago (Chipesague). Agriculture is the dominant activity, it is practised manually on small family farms (Provincial Government, 2016). In Sanga, there are also minerals such as gold, iron, tin, uranium, niobium, limestone, feldspar, construction sand, and construction rocks (granite and gneiss) (Provincial Directorate of Mineral Resources and Energy of Niassa *apud* Chingotwane & Ntauazi, 2024). The district has the following administrative posts: Unango, Lucimbese, Macaloge, and Matchedje.

The population of Sanga is mostly of Yao or Ajaua origin with matrilineal regimes, where power rests on the woman's family. Yao is the most widely spoken language, followed by Ngoni and Swahili, the latter of which is due to Tanzanian influence. Islam is the predominant religion, practised by about 90% of the population. A minority professes the Christian religion.

(Ibid).

“The population, duly mobilised by the community authorities, actively participates in the opening of tertiary roads, which has facilitated the disposal of agricultural surpluses, in the construction of schools with precarious material, houses for some Mayors of the Localities and nurses, in the conservation of water sources, in the denunciation of wrongdoers and the location of land for various socio-economic and cultural purposes, whenever necessary” (Governo da Província, 2016).

According to INE (2024), the district of Sanga has a population of 96,380, of which 49,988 are women, an illiteracy rate of 54.6%, 18 hospital units, 118 school buildings and 152 public water sources (boreholes, wells and springs).

Chingotwane and Ntauazi (2024) classified the Sanga district as medium-priority for CVE according to threat assessment (vulnerability to incidents of violence) and target communities of GIZ intervention. According to the authors, Sanga is also vulnerable to recruitment and transit points for violent extremists coming from Tanzania border.

4.2. Data Collection Instruments

Multiple sources of data and information have been used to conduct the research, including the following:

a) Desk review

This technique allowed preliminary contact with literature about women's vulnerabilities and potential risks of recruitment and radicalisation, their role in conflict contexts and agency in P/CVE, based on bibliographic and documentary research. Bibliographic research is based on books, research reports, academic articles, newspaper articles, other scientific papers and existing channels and sources, including online. Research conducted under the IPPS Project has been prioritised. Institutional reports and legal documents were also consulted.

b) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 key informants from local CSOs, community leaders, women's groups and government authorities.

Place	Target groups	Key informants
Lichinga City	Civil Society Organizations	Focal Point (PF) of the Women and Peace Movement for the districts of Lichinga and Lago
		Program officer of the Forum of Feminist Organizations of Niassa (FOFeN)
		Coordinator of the IMANI Association (a member organisation of FoFEN)
		Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement in the Muslim Women's Organization
		Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa
	Government authorities	Provincial Director of Youth, Employment and Sports
		Representative of the Provincial Director of Gender, Children and Social Action
Subtotal		07
Lago District	Civil Society Organizations	Focal Point of the Lago District Women's Network
		President of the Umoja Association (Administrative Post of Cóbue)
	Government authorities	Representative of the Head of the Administrative Post of Cóbue
		Councillor for the Social Area of the Municipal Council of the Town of Metangula
		Director of the District Service for Health, Women and Social Action (SDSMAS)
Subtotal		05
		Head of the Administrative Post of Matchedje

Sanga District	Government authorities	President of the Community Court of the Administrative Post of Matchedje
		Head of the Administrative Post of Macaloge
		Community leader (Regulus) of the Administrative Post of Macaloge
Subtotal		04
Total Interviews		16

c) Focus Group Discussions

A total number of 62 participants attended five focus group discussions conducted in the three districts. The discussions aimed to discuss the subject under study based on participants' experiences, knowledge, perceptions, interests, and expectations.

Place	Target groups	Group Composition	Number of participants
Lichinga City	Students of the Applied Geography and Territorial Management Course at Rovuma University	Mixed group (4 women and 7 men)	11
Subtotal			11
Lago District	Women leaders of savings groups in the Municipality of Vila de Metangula	Group of women	19
	Women from Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Cóbuè	Group of women	13
Subtotal			32
Sanga District	Women from the Savings Group of the Administrative Post of Matchedje	Group of women	08
	Women of the Savings Group of the Administrative Post of Macaloge	Group of women	11
Subtotal			19
Total FGD			62

d) Systematic Observation

This technique consisted of listening to participants (without interviewing them) and observing behaviours, interactions, especially in focus groups, and other facts (socio-economic conditions) that supported the information collected using different techniques and contributed to answering the research objectives and questions.

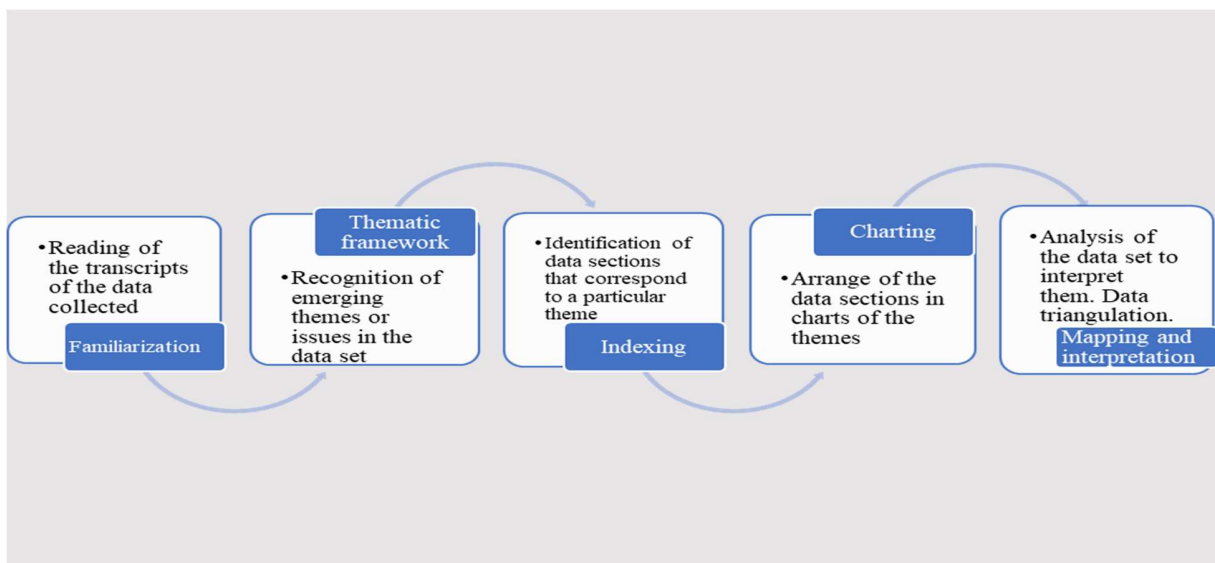
4.3. Sampling Techniques

Research participants have been chosen based on the following non-probability sampling techniques:

- Government officials, CSO and associations and community leaders qualified as key informants purposefully selected due to their activity area or the nature of their functions (**purposive sampling**), considering their knowledge, experience, and specialisation in the subject under study (**expert sampling**).
- Women and men (young and adult) available and willing to participate in the focus group discussions (**convenience sampling**) were selected to adequately represent both groups, regardless of their proportion (**non-proportional quota sampling**); some were indicated by the first participants in the same category to be contacted (**snowball sampling**).

4.4. Data Analysis Techniques

For data analysis and interpretation, five stages of qualitative information analysis will be used, according to Srivastava & Thomson (2009), namely:



4.5. Ethical Considerations

The research safeguarded the principles of voluntariness and informed consent. To this end, the target groups were explained the objectives of the research and asked to make their informed decision on freedom of choice concerning the following aspects:

- To participate or not to participate in the research.
- Be identified throughout the entire survey or only in some parts of the survey. That is, anonymity could be total or partial. None of the participants chose anonymity, except two participants in some questions.

- Of not answering some questions that caused discomfort or they understood they had no knowledge or opinion.
- Finish the survey if the agreed-upon time (1 hour for the interview and 1 hour and a half for the Focus Group Discussion) was exceeded.
- To be recorded or not. In cases where the informant accepted the recording, which would support the interview transcription, it was explained that the recording would be destroyed after this exercise. Only two interviewees were recorded.

During the interview, the interviewees were free to name the violent extremism phenomenon in the northern region at their convenience. Therefore, while the study adopts the concept of violent extremism, where sources or key informants are cited, terms like war, the Al-Shabaab, terrorism, insurgency, and conflict can be found.

5. Research Findings

This section is divided into subsections according to research topics, including triangulation of different field data sources and literature review.

5.1. Strategies for Women and Girls' Radicalisation and Recruitment and Their Role in Conflict

A study by Chingotuane and Ntauazi (2024) surveyed 297 people distributed proportionally among Lichinga, Sanga, and Lago districts. The study found that the population obtained information about violent extremism and terrorism/conflict in Cabo Delgado through radio and television news (41.67%), PRM district commander (26%), community leaders (24.67%), government officials (district administrators) (23.67%) and religious leaders (22.33%). The study also revealed that among social groups more susceptible to accepting radical ideologies and participating in extreme violence, there are adult women (as per the opinion of 19.33% of participants) and young women (according to 16% of participants). However, 21.67% of participants think that adult women would never join a terrorist group, and 17.33% of participants think the same about young women. Data from interviews and FGD in this study found the following:

- 1) In general, whether government authorities, CSO or communities reveal no record or knowledge of women recruited for the conflict in Cabo Delgado. However, in some places, such as Lichinga and Sanga, it is recognised that young men are recruited to Cabo Delgado, and some women follow the same fate as wives. While in Cabo Delgado, women performed reproductive/domestic functions that they used to do in their families and communities.

"We have a young man who went to work in Mecula, then went to Cabo Delgado and took his wife and children. She came back and informed us. She disagreed but was forced to be part of it. That tradition of ours that in the family, the one who has the voice is the man; therefore, she must submit to what the man says". – *António Omar (Sheik Abdala), Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

"According to the witnesses recovered and returned to the community, in the terrorist group, the women performed jobs that generated sustenance but that did not benefit them. They received visits from people

who did not know where they came from and where they were going. They cooked and prepared groceries for these men. The business they did benefits men." – *Elias Caetano Pedro, Head of the Department of Human Resources Administration; Representative of the Provincial Director of Gender, Children and Social Action, interviewed on 26.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

2) From the perspective of government entities, the recruitment strategies of extremist terrorist groups would not be successful in Niassa, given the effectiveness of prevention mechanisms (awareness, surveillance and denunciation – the study elaborates on these strategies in the next section). For the government authorities interviewed, proper information about the effects of terrorism on individual and collective life is, in itself, a means of deterring women from giving in to enticement, even in the face of socio-economic needs. However, the women participating in the study highlight a lack of information about women's recruitment strategies, which may contribute to their recruitment. The poor dissemination of information about violent extremism to communities, in general, and to women, in particular, may be due to different reasons, including the following:

- i) Although there is fundamental information about the existence of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado disseminated through the media, social networks and, mainly, the government authorities at the provincial and district levels, and community leaders, violent extremism is approached as a distant event and not as a direct and close threat in the districts studied, on the one hand. On the other hand, women still lack a broad understanding of the root causes of violent extremism, thus making it difficult for them to identify what is a risk for recruitment, radicalisation and violence outbreaks.

"We have already heard about violent extremism in Cabo Delgado from local leaders and the presidential entourage. In these meetings, they only address the situation of Al-Shabaab, but they have never said who they are and what they want. They have never said that Al-Shabaab groups also call women." – *Amina Omar, President of the Community Court in Matchedje Administrative Post, interviewed on 27.11.2024, in Matchedje, Sanga District.*

"I only follow that there is war in Cabo Delgado, but I have no details. I heard this information from the administrator. They said to do control and surveillance because we are on the border, and after Cabo Delgado Al-Shabaab can enter here. We talk to people to ask where they come from, what they are coming to do at our Post and where they are going". – *João Aly Azizi, Community leader (Regulus) at the Administrative Post of Macalogue, interviewed on 28.11.2024.*

"When the community participates in the rallies (with the Provincial or District Government, Administrator, Head of Post) on commemorative days, we tell them not to join the insurgency and to file a complaint if there is any suspicion. We took the initiative because we realised that the province of Cabo Delgado is suffering. The form of prevention is to sensitise the community. For women, we don't address anything specific." – *Samuel Benjamim, Secondary School Director and Representative of the Head of the Administrative Post of Cóbue interviewed on 23.11.2024, in Cóbue, Lago District.*

- ii) Women also lack detailed information on violent extremism because women's organisations do not address the issue of violent extremism in their activities while working with women in communities in the studied districts because they consider it an extremely sensitive security issue and understand that government authorities can repress their work. The secrecy of state institutions regarding violent extremism as a threat to Niassa province limits women's CSO from integrating the issue into their activities, aiming to contribute to reducing women's vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation to extremism. Even if they have general information about the phenomenon, the organisations do not approach it for fear of being connoted by government authorities as panic promoters when addressing a sensitive subject. However, there were activities carried out when there was a real threat in Niassa, financed by different NGO initiatives (CIVSAN, We Effect and Programa Agir) and implemented by the local organisation, FOFeN, taking into account the new context, from awareness-raising through the distribution of posters and radio programs, reception and integration of IDP in the host communities and psychosocial assistance. These activities have focused on Majune, the road to Mecule and Mavago. However, there is also work in progress with displaced women in Marrupa, which consists of the distribution of hygiene products and kits of necessities.

“When terrorism came in, we did not address the issue with women because there are subjects in which we need a study to see if there is space to talk or not, because we run the risk of being asked where we got information. We cannot spread this kind of information; we can be sought out by several people wanting to know what you have been spreading. Suppose women are told to talk about it. In that case, they can contribute valid ideas because they know about war and its impacts.” – *Helena Paulo, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement for the districts of Lichinga and Lago, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

- 3) Taking into account the means of recruitment used by extremist groups, namely enticement for money and employment, on the one hand, and the context where women live, on the other hand, there is a recognition that the socio-economic needs of women, with greater emphasis on lack of employment, low living conditions and lack of business opportunities, are factors of vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation, if the process intensifies in the region.

“Those (terrorists), when they want to enter, come with a goal. They show up with money. If I, here in Lago, am not doing anything because I do not have money, if they show me money, I can fall into the trap”. *Clara Ngoloca, a participant in the Focus Group of Women Leaders of Savings Groups of Metangula, in Metangula, Lago District on 25.11.2024.*

“The people are different; the name and the needs are different. The person who goes hungry can fall into the trap. Knowing that I can die, but I am going to leave something for my children, I can join”. *Joana Omar, a participant in the Focus Group of Women Leaders of Savings Groups of Metangula, in Metangula, Lago District on 25.11.2024.*

“We can easily join because we need money. If they arrive organised, we can receive it”. *Ella Zerizeni, a participant in the FGD of Women of Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Còbuè, Lago District on 23.11.2024.*

“Because of poverty, women can get into terrorism”. *Miliam Mbeu, a participant in the Focus Group of Women of Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Còbuè, Lago District on 23.11.2024.*

5.2. Factors Contributing to Women's Radicalisation and Recruitment to Conflict in the Niassa Border Region

Socioeconomic and political factors

- Lack of business and employment opportunities
- Difficulty in accessing the passport
- Difficulties in accessing other districts due to the state of access roads and cost of transportation
- Location of the district (border area): Likelihood of creating ties with foreign merchants and customers

Cultural and religious factors

- Marriages/kinship
- Patriarchy
- Masculinities

5.2.1. Socioeconomic and Political Factors

Regarding the factors contributing to women's radicalisation and recruitment to conflict in the Niassa Border Region, the study found the following:

- 1) The characteristics and socioeconomic conditions of some districts of Cabo Delgado affected by the attacks of extremist groups – wealth in natural resources, location and presence of foreign citizens in the exploitation of resources, ethnolinguistic diversity, social inequalities, poverty, among others – resemble the characteristics of border districts in Niassa province studied. This suggests that as long as violent extremism continues in the northern region of Mozambique, it could intensify in Niassa province, subjecting women to the same vulnerabilities and impacts that women in Cabo Delgado suffer from different forms of gender-based violence, forced displacement, the impacts of the humanitarian crisis, and negative coping strategies, such as child marriage and forced prostitution.
- 2) Poverty and lack of socioeconomic opportunities put women at risk of falling into the traps of extremist groups' recruitment strategies, including enticement for money, employment

and marriage. Marriage is one of the few alternatives women have to ensure their livelihood and improve their living conditions. In this way, they are vulnerable to involvement with strangers who want to penetrate the community for information seeking, recruitment, and radicalisation that can culminate in the perpetration of terrorist acts.

“Many of those who were victims were lured into marriages. The men entered the families with appeals claiming that they intended to marry. Then, it was noted that the women were taken to Cabo Delgado. We have cases of women who were recovered and returned. They testified that their jobs were not homemakers. (...) when a suitor comes that they do not know and have never met, the parents look only at what he has; they never ask who the person is and what he wants. Therefore, it is a social and economic factor (the need of these families)”. – *Elias Caetano Pedro, Head of the Department of Human Resources Administration; Representative of the Provincial Director of Gender, Children and Social Action, interviewed on 26.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

“With marriage, men enter the family more easily and study how the community lives in conversation with their wives, family members and close ones. So men collect the information, and when the time comes to do the [subversive] actions, they use that information. Marriage means that, directly or indirectly, the woman ends up joining terrorist groups because she must live according to her husband's habits. From the moment she enjoys the gains from her husband's participation in the terrorist group, she is also part of it. But she can also enter threatened by her husband.” – *Graça Caetano Luís, Focal Point of the Women's Network of the District of Lago, interviewed on 22.11.2024, Metangula, District of Lago.*

- 3) In administrative posts in border areas, where it is difficult to access the provincial capital, women see an advantage in living there because of socioeconomic activities such as renting houses and doing business with foreigners and in neighbouring countries (as is the case of Malawi for residents of the administrative post of Còbuè in Lago district, and Tanzania for the residents of the administrative posts of Macaloge and Matchedje in the district of Sanga). The women participating in the FGD do not foresee risks from living in border areas. The authorities are also not sensitising because this proximity (and dependence on some essential services, as is the case of the dependence in the Malawi hospital for the residents of Còbuè) reduces the pressure on the government concerning the provision of essential services. However, women continue complaining about problems such as a lack of drinking water and staff shortages in health units.

“Women find opportunities to do business in Tanzania because it is easy. But due to the lack of passports, the border crossing is difficult when new teams are at the tax posts”. – *Amina Omar, President of the Community Court in Matchedje Administrative Post, interviewed on 27.11.2024, in Matchedje, Sanga District.*

“The border is an advantage because the hospital is in Malawi”. *Serafina Sabonete Benjamim, a participant in the Focus Group of Women of Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Còbuè, Lago District on 23.11.2024.*

“The border helps us to resell our products in Malawi: tomatoes, charcoal, firewood, cabbage. We enter with a guide; the passport is expensive; we don't have it.” – *Natália João, a participant in the FDG of Women of Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Còbuè, Lago District on 23.11.2024.*

“The advantage of living on the border is that we cross the border and can take advantage of business opportunities on the other side. The disadvantage is that they require a passport at the border.” – *Fátima Aly, participant of the FGD of the Women's Savings Group of the Administrative Post of Matchedje, Sanga District, on 27.11.2024*

- 4) While life at the border brings economic benefits, dependence on neighbouring countries may also be a risk factor. For example, the Administrative Post of Cóbue is close to Malawi and Tanzania. Many fishermen, including Malawians and Tanzanians, help women buy fish and later sell it in those countries. Women also develop economic activities in the Ntumba neighbourhood, with about 250 foreigners who mine there. Malawians have farms on the Mozambique side and marry national women. However, in September, a Malawian citizen was killed in the Ntumba neighbourhood. The local authorities (neighbourhood, locality, Administrative Post, district and provincial government) did not take notice. The information came from the district command of the PRM after passing from the Mozambican embassy in Malawi. In retaliation for the death of the Malawian, they turned off serums and machines and denied assistance to Mozambicans at the local hospital, including women.
- 5) Although women only see the economic advantages of living in the border area, such as doing business selling and buying products in neighbouring countries (Malawi and Tanzania) and in resource exploitation areas such as mining areas, where they provide laundry services, beverage sales, food preparation, local authorities, in their turn, also see threats from a security point of view, primarily because of the bonds that women can create with foreigners, shortage of defence and security forces agents and the porosity of borders.

“In general, there are cases that the border is a risk. Chiwinde is a neighbourhood and river located in Witi, in the Administrative Post of Cóbue, which forms the border between Mozambique and Tanzania. Security is not strong. There is no migration service; there is only border guard police and with little staff. There is no control beyond the post” – *Samuel Benjamim, Director of the Secondary School and Representative of the Head of the Administrative Post of Cóbue, interviewed on 23.11.2024, in Cóbue, Lago District.*

“The disadvantage [of being close to the Tanzanian border] is that in the context of terrorism, we don't know who is coming and, therefore, must be vigilant. We are always in communication with the local leadership from the base to know who is coming and what they are coming to do to prevent something strange from happening. The search for economic opportunities in neighbouring countries can cause women to create bonds with malicious foreigners.” – *Rosário Gustavo Mustafa, Head of the Administrative Post of Macaloge, interviewed on 28.11.2024, in Macaloge, Sanga District.*

“Bordering some countries and having women who trade cross-border, this is a risk. In this interaction, enticement can happen to the extent that people get to know each other because of trade and can feed some function on terrorism. It is up to women to know the people they are in a relationship with and avoid getting involved or collaborating with people with obscure goals.” – *Augusto Luave, Director of the District Service for Health, Women and Social Action, interviewed on 25.11.2024, in Metangula, Lago District.*

“The presence of foreigners is a risk because some ask our women to marry them, and as they usually have some economic power, our sisters end up accepting. Therefore, there is a risk because we do not know the objectives of all foreigners”. – *António Omar (Sheik Abdala), Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

- 6) Although it is recognised that foreigners hold the resources used for enticement, recruiters are national/local, know young people and their needs, and have influence locally. They may be acquaintances who have some relationship with the recruits and are the ones who make the initial contact. However, some sources agree that dialogue is still needed to help understand the influence of borders on violent extremism.
- 7) In all the districts the study focused on, there are savings groups, mainly informal and the majority without support from CSOs (one of the activities of the Rotating Credit financed by Foundation for Community Development and implemented by FOFeN grants 300 meticals for women to start a profitable activity and start saving, in Macaloge there are also savings groups supported by the MASC Foundation). Although women can join a group with values such as 10 metical per week, they still cannot join any group due to a lack of money. This creates a sense of relative exclusion and deprivation as well as increasing inequalities between women.

5.2.2. Social, Cultural and Religious Factors

- 1) The gender relations and gender norms prevalent in Niassa, including discourses about masculinities – the man is the breadwinner, has physical strength, is courageous, can perform high-risk jobs such as armed attacks, can be physically absent from the home, ensuring his livelihood remotely – and femininities (the woman is the man's "adjunct", is the caregiver of the family, has less physical strength, cannot leave home) underestimates the active role of women in violent extremism, as recruiters and active militants. Thus, although the possibility of their voluntary adherence to violent extremism is recognised, to a certain extent, the masculinisation of violent extremism and the victimisation of women dominate; that is, violent extremism is seen as a men's affair and women only suffer the consequences of this phenomenon led and executed by men. Extremist groups may explore this fact by opening various possibilities of working with women actively if the phenomenon intensifies in the region.

“The woman is committed to being the man's adjunct. The woman should be on the man's side wherever he is. The woman is the protector of the man.” – *Justice Amisse, participant in the FGD of Students of the Applied Geography and Territorial Management Course at Rovuma University on 21.11.2024, Lichinga.*

“There is a social idea that women subordinate themselves to their husbands and take this to the work environment, so even in the Armed Forces, they are limited to participating in combat and developing professionally”. – *António Cassina, participant in the FGD of Students of the Applied Geography and Territorial Management Course at Rovuma University on 21.11.2024, Lichinga.*

“Women cannot participate in a war, but they can practice prayers so that men will be victorious.” – *Marcelina Lucas Simão, participant of the FGD of the Macaloge Women's Savings Group, Administrative Post of Macaloge, Sanga District on 28.11.2024*

“The idea that she always has to be with her husband. If men can't resist the temptation to join these groups, be lured and accept, there's no way their female partners can be left behind”. – *Amina Rajá, participant of the FGD of the Macaloge Women's Savings Group, Administrative Post of Macaloge, Sanga District on 28.11.2024*

- 2) Gender norms dominant in Niassa place women in a position of dependence on men and determine that they are subject to the decisions of men to join armed groups. Once married, women are subject to submit to their partners' decisions, including following them on their journey with extremist groups, should they make that decision. The strength of gender norms can preclude other strategies (such as awareness-raising talks) aimed at fostering women's resilience to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism. The financial dependence of women on men also has the same effect. More than what a woman thinks or knows about violent extremism first and foremost is her ability to survive without the financial support of her partner. Therefore, it may not be entirely true that the women who followed their partners to Cabo Delgado did not know what it was about.

“There are women whose husbands joined terrorist groups, and many of them were left without knowing the whereabouts of their husbands; others were widowed and without a source of livelihood. I don't know of any woman who has been successful as a result of her husband joining the terrorist group. In the movement, we have already received a woman who complained that she had no livelihood because her husband or son (I don't remember very well) was killed in Cabo Delgado” – *Judite Uairresse Chitanda, Muslim Women's Organization, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement, Niassa, interviewed on 19.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

- 3) There are ethnic issues raised as stereotypes regarding the likelihood that women of certain ethnolinguistic groups would more readily accept enticement and, consequently, be recruited and radicalised by extremist groups. This issue was raised by some government entities interviewed who understand that the recruitment strategies used by extremist groups, especially enticement for money, can be successful in some ethnolinguistic groups where women are more ambitious in relation to others that maintain, above all, their values and moral principles. However, this perception misses that Nyanja women (based in Metangula) have the most organised Early warning system in the province. Around 45 informal groups are working closely with local authorities in the surveillance and denunciation aiming to P/CVE.

“Often, with information about terrorism, even in the face of needs, women can resist grooming because they preserve their education. But other tribes can accept it, the Nyanjas women.” – *Information provided by the source on condition of anonymity.*

- 4) The religion factor is understood as facilitating the recruitment and radicalisation of Muslim women who would quickly identify with the false Islamic ideology propagated by extremist groups, especially in regions where the majority of the population professes the Islamic religion, as is the case of the district of Sanga where about 90% are Muslims and has Swahili as one of the predominant languages, much spoken by foreign extremist groups.

“Here, people have a low level of education and a weak grasp of religion. Those who do not understand perfectly then may think that by joining the group, they think that what they are doing is what religion encourages. If these people knew, it would be a weapon to defend themselves, but here two things are associated: lack of knowledge and poverty”. – *António Omar (Sheik Abdala), Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga*

5.2.3. How does the Provincial Government Address these Vulnerability Factors?

The data collected evidence that government entities have platforms and meetings to interact with communities, allowing them to know their everyday needs. However, provincial government activities in the field of violent extremism are almost non-existent; where they exist, they do not address structural issues that respond to the socio-economic challenges already identified in this study. Government entities whose target group is young people (women and men) and women work on raising awareness and economic empowerment but with few resources and sometimes sporadic support, which undermines the sustainability of the programs. In addition, the real impact of these programmes on the economic empowerment of the target groups has not yet been measured.

The Provincial Directorate of Gender, Children, and Social Action, in coordination with CSOs such as FOFeN and support from partners such as UNFPA, also carries out capacity-building projects, distributes employment and distributes dignity kits for vulnerable women. However, it did not have a specific project for economic empowerment in the context of violent extremism.

The Provincial Directorate of Youth, Employment, and Sports holds meetings to listen to young people and identifies the lack of employment and housing as two of their biggest concerns. In response, the Directorate promotes activities such as "Eu sou Capaz (I Can)" to retain girls in school, distribute school uniforms, train them in sexual and reproductive health and life skills, and distribute employment kits. However, in addition to the financial restrictions for more excellent coverage, there are few female beneficiaries.

“We understand that there has been little involvement of girls in planning activities, so we have sensitised our colleagues in districts to involve girls. With our funds, we are one of the first provinces to promote employment kits (culinary, beauty salon and horticulture kits). There is a tendency to grow. However, there are challenges, it is still reduced. This year, we only had 12 kits per district. More than 80% of the kits were given to men (the designers of the projects did not look at gender balance; the project already had a list of beneficiaries). By doing the groundwork, you should impose gender equality in the selection process. When the community is left to design at its discretion, there will be unequal distribution because the priority will be men.” – *João Maganisso, Provincial Director of Youth, Employment and Sports, interviewed on 26.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

Despite the restrictions, the government entity understands that the activities improve family income and knowledge about terrorism, which makes women resilient to recruitment for terrorism.

In Sanga, in the Administrative Post of Matchedje, meetings with women reveal their varied needs, such as the lack of water, business, and financing to carry out agricultural activities such as planting rice, expanding farms, buying seeds and selling vegetable gardens. In response, the local government also, in coordination with Lipilichi Wilderness, support the production and sale of vegetable gardens and has integrated eight women into the reserve project as rangers, recruited matrons in the health centre, and has secured school places for girls and hired a female teacher. According to the Head of the Post, "With this work, we are successfully managing to reduce the number of women who are unemployed" – *Daimone Assane Diamone, Head of the Administrative Post of Matchedje, interviewed on 27.11.2023 in Matchedje, Sanga District.*

“Concerning open and inclusive governance, women present more needs or challenges than the government has and coincide with what is planned. They present issues that have to do with water, health and involvement in governance activities. We seek to present the concerns to the competent authorities. However, since I've been here (2 years), there has still been no government funding for women's specific activities”. – *Rosário Gustavo Mustafa, Head of the Administrative Post of Macaloge, interviewed on 28.11.2024, in Macaloge, Sanga District.*

Despite these statements, in general, women resent a lack of support and assistance from the Government. In some cases, there are reports of nepotism and partisanship in the distribution of opportunities.

“We have many projects but do not have help and assistance. We are just sensitised to go ahead”. – *Joana Omar, a participant in the FGD of Women Leaders of Savings Groups of Metangula Distrito de Lago on 25.11.2024.*

“The government does not help; it just listens to us and then does nothing. Organisations also appear, and then nothing happens.” – *Inês Minongossa, a participant in the FGD of Women's Rotating Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Cóbue, Lago District, on 23.11.2024.*

“What we want most is business, but it is far from being achieved because from here the city is far away and it is necessary 3 thousand meticals for transport. After crossing the border, we are required to have a passport. We have already informed the authorities; they promised to bring an entourage to deal with passports.” *Zeinabo Ussene, participant of the FGS of the Women's Savings Group of the Administrative Post of Matchedje, Sanga District, on 27.11.2024*

“Some women do commerce, and others do not. There is no assistance; there are no opportunities. Therefore, they cannot even enter the savings groups” *Marcelina Lucas Simão, participant of the Focus Group of the Macaloge Women's Savings Group, Administrative Post of Macaloge, Sanga District on 28.11.2024*

“The government should avoid partisanship in funding projects because that breeds revenge. Local youth are excluded based on their party affiliation. The associations ally themselves with local governments to

facilitate the implementation of their projects, and these end up being undermined by partisanship". *Costa António, participant in the Focus Group of Students of the Applied Geography and Territorial Management Course at Rovuma University, on 21.11.2024, Lichinga*

"Looking at the number of women out of work, vulnerabilities are not being addressed. It is necessary to give young women employment and create associations supporting them. There is partisanship and nepotism that limits access to employment for all" – *Graça Caetano Luís, Focal Point of the Women's Network of the District of Lago, interviewed on 22.11.2024, Metangula, District of Lago.*

5.3. Gender-Based Violence and Women Victimization in Conflict Context in the Niassa Border Region

1) Although it is recognised that extremist groups use violence against women as a tactic of war, using women in their strategic actions but also for abusive behaviour, the government entities have no specific activities aiming to address matters of GBV in conflict contexts. The women's CSO dealing with GBV in the districts studied, in their turn, have not yet seen violent extremism as a significant threat that can subject women to different forms of violence that they seek to combat. Paradoxically, they recognise that in violent extremism, women are victims of physical, especially sexual, violence. The focus of those CSOs is on domestic violence perpetrated against women by their intimate partners.

2) In the communities, women are sensitised as mothers and wives; in turn, they sensitise their children, young men, and husbands, considered to be at-risk groups and vulnerable to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism. Therefore, women are not assumed to be either risk groups or victims, much less is their agency recognised to participate actively in terrorist groups. They are seen as supporting men and may carry out marginal activities in support of extremist groups, particularly as wives.

"There have been meetings where only women participate, and we give information on different subjects, including terrorism. We develop approaches to terrorism with women. We say that terrorists have used women to survey some areas to gather information. We say that women are lured because of low economic conditions. We followed this when it started in Cabo Delgado. This is a great challenge for women: to enter deep vigilance." – *Augusto Luave, Director of the District Service for Health, Women and Social Action), interviewed on 25.11.2024, in Metangula, Lago District.*

"Women are seen as shields, facilitators of carrying weapons and informants. Women are the guardians of communities. Terrorists bet on them because they are hardly suspicious. In areas where there is conservatism, women who wear the burqa are not groped. There is another aspect in which they are used as cooks and satisfy the sexual desires of terrorists. Historically, women have been oppressed and used as bargaining chips; they can be exchanged for the promise of goods and a better life for their families – *Clara Armando, Program Officer at FOFeN, interviewed on 20.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

The Women and Peace Movement, of which the Muslim Women's Organization is part, deals with social issues and aims to promote women's participation in conflict resolution and combating domestic violence; it does not deal with issues of violent extremism. The Movement also promotes women's economic empowerment initiatives such as the Rotating Credit. – *Judite Uairesse Chitanda, Muslim Women's Organization, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement, Niassa, interviewed on 19.11.2024, in Lichinga*

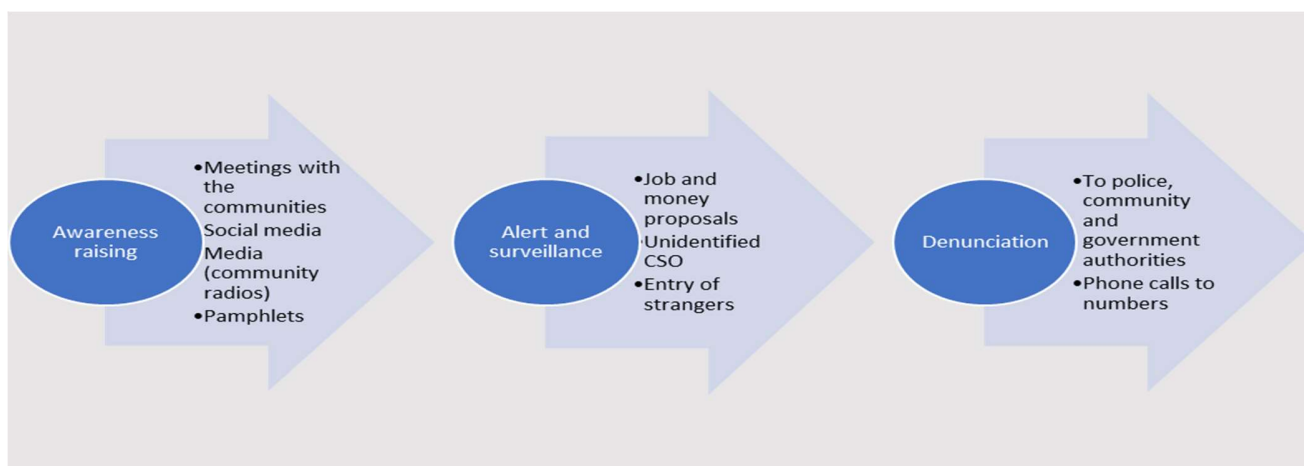
“They [women] suffer from all these problems [terrorism]; they lose their murdered sons and husbands. They are left without any support.” – *Judite Uairesse Chitanda, Muslim Women's Organization, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement, Niassa, interviewed on 19.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

“Those who join terrorism are men. The widow suffers, and they suffer with children. The man can enter when he has no money, but the woman cannot; she thinks about the children. Man only thinks about acquiring money. She only enters if the way to mobilise is strong and comes from her husband. We watch the videos showing us the evils, which discourages entry” – *Adelina Luis Emedi Amelane, Coordinator of the Imani CSO, member of FOFeN, interviewed on 20.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

5.4. Women's Agency and Scope for Action for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in the Niassa Border Region

Regarding women's agency and their ability to transform gender relations, guarantee their rights, and participate in peace and security processes, the study reached the following findings:

1) In the Niassa Border Region, the widely known and implemented strategies for P/CVE are awareness, alert/surveillance, and denunciation. There is almost a belief in social cohesion, and the effectiveness of these measures to prevent violent extremism is measured by the non-occurrence of terrorist attacks in the districts studied.



5.4.1. How do Women Participate in this Process of Violent Extremism Prevention?

a) Sensitisation

Women are sensitised to:

- Talk to their children, partners, and other male family members so that they avoid accepting promises of money and employment from foreigners. Through such promises, they can join subversive groups.
- Do not host unknown men or foreigners in their homes without prior information from the local authorities.

- Do not accept marriage proposals from unknown or foreign men.
- Women, especially those who do cross-border business, are sensitised not to engage in business unknown and unauthorised by the authorities with foreigners.
- Avoid going to the farms in small numbers and long distances away.
- Engage in savings groups, small businesses, and other lucrative activities.

2) Awareness, however, does not focus much on women as a risk group but as a mobilising agent capable of influencing men, whether they are children or partners as risk groups. Government entities understand that awareness-raising through various means is the only possible action in the context of scarce resources, limiting the implementation of other activities for P/CVE.

b) Alert/Surveillance

- Women are called to be more vigilant about who enters and leaves the community, whether natives or foreigners.
- Women must watch what their family members and natives bring from outside.
- Women should be vigilant against unidentified associations without the endorsement of local authorities that offer donations and projects.

c) Denunciation

- Women should report to local authorities (community, police and government) strange movements of natives and foreigners in the community.
- Women must report the presence of foreign guests, including those who have not presented themselves to the authorities.
- Women must denounce the sudden enrichment of their family members and natives coming from outside.

“Women have great potential in preventing and combating violent extremism because regardless of their level of education, they are a school. She has much knowledge that she passes on to her son. Noticing some deviant behaviour, she calls her son and advises.” – *António Omar (Sheik Abdala), Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa, interviewed on 21.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

“Women are economically deprived. Due to a lack of funds, the government only holds meetings to sensitise women that this [violent extremism] does not happen. The government has nothing. We are in a crisis; if there are investors, it can ensure other activities”. – *Samuel Benjamim, Secondary School Director and Representative of the Head of the Administrative Post of Còbuè interviewed on November 23, 2024, at the Administrative Post of Còbuè, Lake District.*

“The Municipality has addressed the issue of violent extremism in public events, asking for everyone's vigilance and the denunciation of any strange act. Surveillance and denunciation are the strongest aspects of the neighbourhood. Our daily bread is vigilance (knowing who we live with). The information we have given is that they should not accept promises of jobs, money and business.” – *Beatriz Cristina Butile, Councilor for the Social Area at the Municipal Council of the Village of Metangula, interviewed on 25.11.2024 in Metangula, Lago District.*

“When there was an attack [in Mecula], we set up a surveillance system. For women, we warned that all dreams would be at risk. We warned that it was easy for terrorism to penetrate through marriage. We approached them to control their movement. Anyone new should introduce themselves to the local authorities. We mobilise those who are traditional doctors to present any strange patient they will receive. This is a way to close off possibilities for terrorists to penetrate” – *Daimone Assane Diamone, Head of the Matchedje Administrative Post, interviewed on 27.11.2023 in Matchedje, Sanga District.*

“The woman must know how to identify the person. Because the people who recruit are acquaintances who know what the woman wants, she must be attentive, know how to identify who she is talking to and why that person needs her”. – *Helena Paulo, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement for the districts of Lichinga and Lago, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

“She [the woman] can help in the surveillance of the community. She can confirm the strange man's behaviour in the community. Women are a fundamental warning system. They can inform local leaders about the bad faith of men who get involved or who intend to get involved with them.” – *António Omar (Sheik Abdala), Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa, interviewed on 21.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

“In the context of violent extremism, at some events, we invite partners to present the theme of extremism. Government agencies also talk about the subject. Of the dangers that arise. We have been raising awareness so that young people do not get involved in violent extremism.” – *João Magalhães, Provincial Director of Youth, Employment and Sports, interviewed on 26.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

“Women must talk to their children, and these children must have an occupation so as not to enter these movements. Children without a job can easily fall into these threats.” – *Helena Paulo, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement for the districts of Lichinga and Lago, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

- 3) Some women participants in the FGD demonstrate that surveillance strategies are effective for resistance to recruitment. However, given unmet socio-economic needs, they may not be sustainable in the long term. This thought is shared by some community authorities who understand that over time, awareness speeches can fall into disrepute, and communities may think that they are being distracted so as not to benefit from the job opportunities that may arise.

“Awareness and vigilance may not be sustainable for long because people need opportunities. There will come a time when people will say that we are lying, there is no war, we are just talking so they do not have money” – *João Aly Azizi, Community leader (Regulus) at the Administrative Post of Macaloge, interviewed in 28.11.2024.*

“Family and community surveillance work was important in preventing youth recruitment and the spread of extremism in the province. For example, in Mecula, the local population even denounced nephews. Families have been sensitised enough, but they need to see evidence (jobs for the largest number of people).” – *João Magalhães, Provincial Director of Youth, Employment and Sports, interviewed on 26.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

- 4) Generally, there is an understanding that women and men can perform the same activities in the family, the community and society. However, there is still a masculinised perspective

on their involvement in an armed conflict. Women are seen only as those who can perform reproductive functions, even in the context of armed conflict.

- 5) Women's agency to contribute to P/CVE is not recognised individually. A woman, individually, is not recognised as an agent for change; only women collectively are seen as potential agents; however, this depends on their empowerment by CSOs. The contribution initiatives proposed by the study participants place women as passive and need external stimuli from women's CSOs for their empowerment.

"Let us not discard the importance of women in this matter (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism). Unfortunately, we have not yet begun to use women's potential. Underestimate. We have not discovered that it can contribute to prevention and combat. The day we find out, women will contribute. However, we can do this through empowerment and education". – *António Omar (Sheik Abdala), Deputy Delegate of the Islamic Council of Mozambique in Niassa, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

"Women have space to help resolve the conflict through association for dialogue. In associations, we appealed to the government; individually, women think that it is not possible. Women still think they cannot; women do not complain about anything. I do not know if they are like this because of the religion that says that women should be submissive. When we enter the associations, we can speak" – *Adelina Luís Emedi Amelane, Coordinator of the Imani CSO, member of FOFeN, interviewed on 20.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

"Individually, it is difficult; the woman always needs a push to be able to decide. For example, in domestic violence, the woman thinks that life is like that. Alone, she has no way out of this life. She needs support from other women. Therefore, it is necessary to help women and give them a path. The woman can enter into association because here she has another vision of life, of being able to grow. " – *Judite Uairresse Chitanda, Muslim Women's Organization, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement, Niassa, interviewed on 19.11.2024, in Lichinga.*

- 6) Women's CSOs do not have specific activities adjusted to the context of the threat of violent extremism and, therefore, are oriented towards P/CVE in the districts studied in Niassa. FOFeN is the only CSO that demonstrates some work to support displaced women, aiming at their integration into host communities and their economic empowerment through the Rotating Credit Savings program.
- 7) In Niassa, there is a widely recognised lack of multisectoral and *multistakeholder* dialogue on violent extremism, which limits the knowledge and engagement of women's CSOs on the role they can play in P/CVE.

"[To strengthen the resilience of women in the border region, in families and communities] There must be dialogue. Dialogue at home and in the community. The woman must make the man understand that what she is looking for is misfortune. There must be information" – *Helena Paulo, Focal Point of the Women and Peace Movement for the districts of Lichinga and Lago, interviewed on 21.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

"In families, it is necessary to strengthen dialogue. There is a lack of cohesion and unity in families. Dialogue in families and communities is poor and deficient. There should be frank conversations,

especially in families with young people and adolescents. Government and civil society can also promote ongoing dialogue with women, youth, and the community. The government must know the needs and desires of women and young people. The perception of women and young people that they are not being heard can generate a feeling of exclusion" – *Clara Armando, Program Officer at FOFeN, interviewed on 20.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

- 8) The authorities praise the existence of women at the highest level of provincial leadership (governor and secretary of state) as a significant step towards women's participation in decision-making processes on peace and conflict issues. However, for the women participating in the study, this has not been reflected in an advantage, neither in responding to their needs and socioeconomic empowerment nor in raising opportunities for their participation in decision-making processes.

"As long as they do not start by listening to women here locally, we cannot talk about difficult cases like war. Listening to us does not only mean talking but also responding to our requests. We still need water and an ambulance". – *Fátima Assumane, a participant of the FGD of the Macaloge Women's Savings Group, Administrative Post of Macaloge, Sanga District on 28.11.2024*

"We have women in power, but that does not change anything in women's lives here. The problems remain the same." *Fátima João Simão, a participant of the Focus Group of the Macaloge Women's Savings Group, Administrative Post of Macaloge, Sanga District on 28.11.2024*

"At FOFeN, we had a program for women in politics. Even the women in the party did not want to speak. We started to ask why women cannot be secretaries; they can only be secretaries of the bosses" – *Adelina Luís Emedi Amelane, Coordinator of the Imani CSO, member of FOFeN, interviewed on 20.11.2024 in Lichinga.*

"At the district level [Lago], meetings are held with the government and politicians, but women still do not have freedom and voice. They are not heard. They are only invited to demonstrate that there is gender equality." – *Graça Caetano Luís, Focal Point of the Women's Network of the District of Lago, interviewed on 22.11.2024, Metangula, District of Lago.*

"I was chosen in these 4 years to mediate these issues, such as disagreements and thefts in the community, but people prefer to resort to the regulus. I have already questioned why this is, but the regulus is greedy to solve matters. I think people reject me for being a woman." – *Amina Omar, President of the Community Court in Matchedje Administrative Post, interviewed on 27.11.2024, in Matchedje, Sanga District.*

"The leaders appear at campaign time; there is no room for women to complain." *Ella Zerizeni, a participant in the Focus Group of Women's Rotating Savings Groups of the Administrative Post of Cóbue, Lake District, on 23.11.2024.*

- 9) In all the districts the study focused on, there are rotating savings groups, primarily informal and without support from CSOs. In these groups, for 12 months, women deposit any amount from 10 meticals weekly, and at the end of this period, each woman receives what she has contributed. The amount deposited by the women can also be given as a loan, returned with interest, and later distributed among all group members.

- 10) Savings groups that operate in the form of cooperatives, such as in the production of vegetables in the Administrative Post of Matchedje, Sanga district, have boosted the diversification of production (the production of agricultural products different from those traditionally produced), their rapid commercialisation and promoted the economic empowerment of women.

6. Strategies to Prevent and Counter the Recruitment and Radicalisation of Women and to Strengthen Women's Agency for Effective Action at the Border Region of Niassa – Recommendations

6.1. Recommendations for State and Government Entities

- Promote dialogue with different *stakeholders* on violent extremism, conflict resolution, and the role that each actor, especially women, can play in P/CVE.
- Enhance a multisectoral non-securitized component of P/CVE at all levels (provincial, district and local).
- Continue to promote programs that respond to women's specific needs to reduce their socioeconomic vulnerability through the Integrated Development of the North of Mozambique and other local government policies.
- Train and inform local authorities and community leaders on effective community outreach mechanisms adjusted to the local context (relative calm and absence of violent attacks) and socio-economic challenges, which do not fall into public disrepute over time.
- Inform CSOs about the message that these organisations should spread to communities about violent extremism to prevent and combat the phenomenon, considering the nature of their work, which seeks to influence attitude and behaviour change. This exercise would avoid CSOs' indifference to violent extremism matters driven by public entities' secrecy.
- Women in senior leadership positions (governor and secretary of state) should create more platforms for communication and interaction with women in districts to serve as role models and encourage women's agency and participation in decision-making processes regarding peace and conflict.
- Promote dialogue on the influence of borders in facilitating the entry and transit of subversive groups and in the recruitment and radicalisation of communities residing in border regions. This exercise would help raise awareness of the disadvantages unnoticed by communities in border regions, especially women who see only business opportunities.
- Expand spaces and platforms for listening to the specific needs of women and young people so that they know the existing opportunities to participate in decision-making processes and access resources. This can reduce vulnerability to recruitment, the feeling of relative exclusion, and the perception that foreigners or visitors enjoy jobs and resources.

- Ensure social inclusion in the implementation of social projects by adopting norms of good governance (transparency and accountability) and gender balance and raising awareness among communities about the importance of women's social empowerment in family, community, and social life.
- Create a public fund to support women's economic projects aimed at reducing their vulnerability in the context of violent extremism in the northern region.
- Ensure the empowerment of women, including IDP and women in IDP host communities, to be activists for religious tolerance in their communities and their participation in the implementation of measures to combat religious radicalisation.
- Improve the government's response to women's socio-economic needs that put them at risk of recruitment and radicalisation to extremism. This includes responding to the well-known needs of ensuring easy access to passports for the safe practice of business in neighbouring countries, improving access routes connecting administrative posts to the capital city and, consequently, access to accessible and secure transport.
- Ensure the dissemination of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAPWPS) and the implementation of its objectives and activities adjusted to the local context and priorities for women's participation in peace and security processes, prevention of all forms of GBV, protection of women and girls' rights, and promotion of peacebuilding.

6.2. Recommendations for Civil Society Organisations

- Bring concerted programmes and actions to transmit information about women's threats and vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism.
- Link economic empowerment with civic and social empowerment to ensure that women recognise and expand their space to participate in P/CVE and conflict resolution.
- Train and inform local CSOs on peace and conflict issues and ensure their integration into their agenda and activities.
- Promote lectures on violent extremism and its impacts on individual, family and social life to ensure greater resilience to recruitment, even in the face of the vulnerabilities that women experience.
- Advocate for women's rights whose enjoyment would prevent their vulnerability to recruitment, among others, the right to information, education, health and decent employment.
- Promote entrepreneurship training aimed at improving women's living conditions and consequently reducing their economic dependence on men and their vulnerability to recruitment and radicalisation to violent extremism.

- Disseminate mechanisms that promote changes in gender norms that modify men's negative behaviours or attitudes towards women, thereby reducing women's subjection to men's decisions to join extremist groups.
- Raise awareness among local communities about the social contribution of women's participation in decision-making structures to conflict resolution and peace promotion.
- Promote educational communication campaigns to remove cultural obstacles or barriers that prevent women's participation in public life and decision-making structures at family, community and social levels.
- Ensure the involvement of local CSO in implementing and monitoring the NAPWPS agenda and activities.

6.3. Recommendations for Cooperation Partners

- Continue to fund non-securitized state programs in high-risk communities to P/CVE, particularly activities aimed at minimising the identified and interrelated socio-economic causes of violent extremism, inter alia, socioeconomic exclusion, inequalities, and extreme poverty. Within the scope of this recommendation, funding for the employment kit programme carried out by the provincial directorate of youth, employment and sport can be increased, and the principles of inclusion and gender equity should be reinforced in the design and implementation of the programme.
- Ensure the finance and monitoring of the implementation of the NAPWPS at the local level and its impact on women's participation in peace and security processes, prevention of all forms of GBV, protection of women and girls' rights and promotion of peacebuilding.
- Study and identify CSOs' support mechanisms adjusted to the context and specific needs of the targeted communities, thus avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Continue to fund and monitor women's associations with social and economic empowerment programs.
- Finance initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

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