The Crime-Terror Nexus as a Vector in Counterterrorism: Making the Case of Cabo Delgado

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Introduction
The people of the northern province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, have been deeply affected by violence and displacement in the awakening of the terrorist insurgencies by the local terrorist group known as Al-Shabaab [3].

The province has long been facing hardships fruit of the governmental negligence, social tensions and organized crime that create opportunities for corruption and illegal trafficking, pillaging the province’s natural resources that entitled it the name of ‘Cabo Dourado’ (Golden Cape) [2]. Three areas are presented to fully contextualize the current and past history of Cabo Delgado:

- **Crime Terror Nexus:**
  - Elucidates a growing similarity between the phenomena of organized crime and terrorism, that trade methods or establish alliances [8]. The present work focuses on the criminal activities of terrorist organizations for financing purposes.
  - The long-established local routes of trafficking are considered – narcotics (heroin and cocaine) [6], timber, rhines [3] and ivory [4]. The breakdown of this traffic has been impeded by the corruption networks [5].

- **Crime Terror Networks:**
  - Lack of public investment, awarding the region the name of ‘Cabo Esquecido’ [2].
  - Social and political marginalization - the Kimanji constitutes the Muslim majority of the region, however, it is politically underrepresented and marginalized [2] [9].
  - High rates of unemployment (specially in youth), illiteracy and poverty [2] [9].
  - The region is rich in natural resources (gas and precious stones).

- **Aim and Methodology:**
  - The present study aims to better understand these ‘pre-existing conditions’, focusing on the role of terrorism financing. It uses the criminological perspective of the Crime-Terror nexus and tries to grasp to what point the existing trafficking and organized crime networks enabled current terrorist events.

  - Is this nexus present in Cabo Delgado? Are there alliances taking place?
  - Is terrorism financing based off criminal activities?
  - How can we characterize the Crime Terror nexus in Cabo Delgado and in other cases?
  - Did the preexisting traffic routes and organized crime create opportunities for terrorists?
  - What counterterrorism strategies should be implemented?

Qualitative semi-structured interviews having been conducted about an hour-long interviews on 2 Portuguese academics experts on security and conflict dynamics, with previous work in the African continent and on the Cabo Delgado conflict, and 1 Mozambican colonel knowledgeable about the area. Five dimensions were captured in the interviews with a categorical analysis – (1) Financing of Terrorism (Cabo Delgado); (2) Financing of Terrorism (Comparative Cases); (3) Contextual Opportunities; (4) Counterterrorism strategies; (5) Other recouping themes.

Conclusion
It seems that the likely sources of financing in Cabo Delgado are within the range of criminal activities that the terrorist group is profiting from. However, the study, in its capacity, cannot shed light on what this involvement entails, as information is still scarce. The results indicate 2 ways in which organized crime can be involved. Firstly, through the trafficking networks. Secondly, as an ‘external entity’ financing the group in order to destabilizing the region by exploring the energetic resources that would enrich the country and make Mozambique a stronger competitor in the global scene.

The social, economic and political history of the region is considered as important to the contextualization of the current insurgency, as it acts in a cyclical motion.

References