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# **The intricacies and pitfalls of the politics of coalition in Mozambique**

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## **Abstract**

Ever since the advent of multiparty democracy in the early 1990s, coalitions have been formed to contest in all the general elections that have taken place up to today in Mozambique. In fact, dozens of party coalitions emerged during the period from the first elections in 1994 to the last elections of 2014. Yet, nearly all of them collapsed before getting seats in Parliament, with only two managing to survive to serve between one or two terms before eventually collapsing.

The highly bipolarized environment of Mozambican politics influences the dynamics and nature of coalition. Almost all coalitions on their functioning are perceived as either pro-the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) or pro-the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), although between the two only the latter has engaged in various attempts to forge coalitions.

From the emergence, collapse and longevity of some coalitions there are three key elements highlighted in this article as determinants: the power dynamics inside the coalition; the party funding mechanisms; and internal democracy.

## 1. Introduction

Party coalitions are a seemingly common feature within Mozambique's landscape of multiparty democracy. However, there have been very few attempts to understand this phenomenon, as well as the dynamics surrounding it.

This article sets out to describe the complexities around forging coalitions in Mozambique. It is informed by information gathered largely through literature review as well as key informant interviews (KIIs) with individuals, some of whom are associated with the different political parties.

However, it is not the intention of this article to cover all aspects of knowledge relating to this topic, but it will endeavor to broaden the understanding on and contribute to further debate on the consolidation of multiparty democracy.

## 2. Multiparty Landscape

After a protracted and intensely violent civil war between RENAMO and FRELIMO government, a new Constitution was drafted in 1990 which introduced multiparty democracy in Mozambique. In the same context, a Peace Agreement was signed in 1992, bringing an end to the civil war, and allowing for the realization of regular multi-party elections in the country.

Guided by the need to ensure citizens' rights to political participation in matters of governance, the Constitution defines political pluralism as the guiding principle of Mozambican democracy. The Constitution's commands are concretized by the Political Party Act 7/91 of 23 January 1991, which establishes the legal framework for the formation of political parties. According to Act 2 (1) of the same law, citizens enjoy the right of freedom of association and to voluntarily join any political party.

Operating within the parameters of the above-mentioned provisions, the multiparty landscape today includes about 100 registered political

parties, with around 74 of them considered to be active.<sup>1</sup> According to one leader of a political party, “many of the parties are actually splits from RENAMO and FRELIMO, led by individuals who have become frustrated with these two dominant parties”.<sup>2</sup>

However, regardless of the number of parties that have contested elections or are currently registered, only FRELIMO and RENAMO have dominated the political arena in Mozambique, with the former consistently holding a majority of seats in Parliament. The first real change to the dominant position of these two parties was in 2009, when the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) entered the political scene and presented itself as a new political force.

As demonstrated in table 1 below, while some party coalitions such as the Democratic Union (UD) and RENAMO-Election Union (RENAMO-UE) succeeded in getting into Parliament in the first elections (1994), no party coalition has succeeded in gaining parliamentary representation in the last two elections. This failure was mainly due to RENAMO’s decision to discontinue its participation in RENAMO-UE after the 2004 elections.

In general, “the type of democracy being implemented in Mozambique looks quite adversarial and close to a model of ‘competitive elitism’<sup>3</sup> whereby only a few dominant political parties, in this case FRELIMO and RENAMO, can afford to participate effectively in any electoral process. Therefore, it is correct to observe that: “the political landscape in Mozambique is undoubtedly dominated by FRELIMO and RENAMO, both of which have military backgrounds. They are the only parties in Mozambique with clear organizational structures and a broad presence in all districts of the country”.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Instituto Para a Democracia Multipartidária (AIMD), 2017. ‘Base de dados dos Partidos Politicos Moçambicanos’, Maputo.

2 Interview with Massango, J. PEC Representative, 19 June 2018, Maputo, Mozambique.

3 Siteo, E.J., Matsimbe, Z. & Pereira, A.F. 2005. ‘Parties and Political Development in Mozambique’, Issue 22 of EISA research report. Electoral Institute of Southern Africa.

4 Ibid.

## 3. The Mozambican Electoral System

### 3.1. Electoral system

Since the introduction of multiparty democracy in the early 1990s, Mozambique has adopted a proportional representation system with closed party lists for the election of Members of Parliament (MPs). The parliamentary representation of each party is calculated using the d'Hondts method for the vote's conversion.<sup>5</sup> The country's president is elected by a simple majority, with a possibility for a second round of elections if no candidate achieves more than 50% of the votes.

For the first three general elections (1994, 1999 and 2004) the law had established a threshold of 5% as a precondition for the parties to create a caucus in parliament. Subsequently, during the 2006 electoral reform this threshold was abolished as a result of pressures from smaller parties, thus resulting in a decision that allowed parties with less than 5% of seats to form a caucus in Parliament. This amendment to the electoral threshold for representation is what assisted the MDM to have a caucus in the 2009 national elections.

To this day, the d'Hondt method prevails, creating obstacles for most parties to reach the required proportion to gain parliamentary representation. According to some authors,<sup>6</sup> if the d'Hondt system had been abolished, the proportion of votes achieved by small parties such as Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance (PDD-AD), National Reconciliation Party (PARENA), Independent Party of Mozambique (PIMO), Social Broadening Party of Mozambique (PASOMO), Broad Opposition Front (FAO), Labour Party (PT), Party of Freedom and Solidarity (PAZS) and Liberal and Democratic Party of Mozambique (PALMO) would have enabled them entry into the Parliament.

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5 De Brito, L. 2005. 'Sobre a barreira dos 5% e do método de conversão dos votos em Mandatos', EISA Electoral Institute of Southern África, Maputo.

6 Ibid. and Nuvunga, A., 2007. 'Experiências com Partidos Políticos em Novas Democracias, O 'Deixa Andar' no quadro Institucional em Moçambique'; In: Fundação Konrad Adeneur, Cadernos Adenauer VIII, n 3; Partidos Políticos, Quatro Continentes: Rio de Janeiro, pp 53-73.

### 3.2. Parliamentary Elections Results background

**Table 1: Electoral Results**

Political Party	Election Year				
	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)	129	133	160	191	144
Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO)	112	-	-	51	89
Mozambican National Resistance-Electoral Union (RENAMO-UE)	-	117	90	-	-
Democratic Union (UD)	9	-	-	-	-
Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM)	-	-	-	8	17
Total	250	250	250	250	250

Two years after the signing of the General Peace Agreement, in 1994, the country held the first multiparty general elections, which were won by FRELIMO. The Presidential election was won by the FRELIMO candidate Alberto Joaquim Chissano. RENAMO became the main opposition after garnering the second highest number of votes, followed by the UD coalition.

The next elections, in 1999, were conducted in a very competitive yet balanced environment. While RENAMO, which had entered under a coalition named RENAMO-UE, significantly increased its number of seats in parliament, it was unable to secure victory for its presidential candidate Afonso Dhakama. Instead, FRELIMO and its candidate (Chissano) secured both the majority in the parliament and the presidency. These victories were repeated in the subsequent elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014, with the party remaining dominant in Parliament and securing the presidencies of Armando Guebuza, in 2004 and 2009 and Filipe Nyusi, in 2014.

RENAMO lost support over the past three electoral cycles, achieving its worst results in the 2009 elections. It recovered significantly in 2014, but these results were still below those of the first three elections. The great innovation in the political scenario was undoubtedly the emergence of the MDM party, formed by former members expelled from RENAMO, and led by Davis Simango, mayor of Beira. The MDM won seats in parliament in the very first elections it contested in 2009 and has increased its number of seats in parliament in the 2014 elections.

## 4. The Emergence of Coalitions in Mozambique

Although the Constitution itself does not clearly stipulate the rules for alliances between parties, it sets the parameters for ordinary laws to regulate the coalition of parties. Article 75 of the Mozambican Constitution makes legal provisions for the Political Party Law in 7/91 of 23 January on the formation of coalitions. The Political Party Law in its article 26(1) defines the basis for the creation of a coalition for electoral proposes. Similarly, article 26(2) determines that these coalitions will be regulated according to specific terms in the electoral law 4/93. This law was later replaced by Electoral Law 7/2004 of 17 June which establishes the legal basis for the creation of coalitions. Article 26(3) of the same law defines coalitions as entities, which are independent from political parties.

In line with these legal provisions, Mozambique has seen the registration of more than fifteen (15) party coalitions, especially during pre-election times (see Table 2), with parties attempting to use these coalitions to overcome the d'Hondt method and the 5% threshold.

From these 15 coalitions, only 10 have managed to contest in the general elections.<sup>7</sup> While the law allows all political parties to form coalitions, it has mainly been opposition parties that have made use of this opportunity.

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7 Comissão Nacional de Eleições. 2014. Deliberação. 82/CNE/2014. Centralização Nacional e Apuramento Geral dos resultados eleitorais presidenciais, legislativas, e das Assembleia as provinciais de 15 de Outubro de 2014. Available from: [http://macua.blogs.com/files/cne\\_deliberacao-en.pdf](http://macua.blogs.com/files/cne_deliberacao-en.pdf) [2014, 30 de Outubro].

**Table 2: Mozambican Coalitions and the Election Contested**

<b>Elections year</b>	<b>Coalitions</b>	<b>Coalitions' member parties</b>
1994	Democratic Union (UD)  Patriotic Alliance (AP)	Liberal and Democratic Party of Mozambique (PALMO), National Democratic Party (PANADE), and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO).  Patriotic Action Front (FAP) and Mozambican National Movement-Social Democratic Party (MONAMO-PMSD).
1999	Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD)  Mozambique National Resistance-Electoral Union (RENAMO-UE)  Mozambican Opposition Union (UMO)	National Democratic Party (PANADE) and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO).  The Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO), The Independent Alliance Party of Mozambique (ALIMO), Patriotic Action Front (FAP), Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party (FUMO-PCD), Mozambican National Democratic Movement-Social Democratic Party (MONAMO-PMSD), National Convention Party (PCN), Mozambique People's Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), National Unity Party (PUN), United Democratic Front (UDF), and Mozambique National Union (UNAMO);  The Mozambique Democratic Party (PADEMO) and Democratic Reconciliation Party of Mozambique (PRDM).

<p>2004</p>	<p>Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD)</p> <p>Mozambique National Resistance-Electoral Union (RENAMO-UE)</p> <p>United Front for Change and Good Governance (MBG)</p> <p>Broad Opposition Front (FAO)</p> <p>Union for the Salvation of Mozambique (USAMO)</p>	<p>National Democratic Party (PANADE) and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO).</p> <p>The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), the Independent Alliance Party of Mozambique (ALIMO), Patriotic Action Front (FAP), Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party (FUMO-PCD), Mozambican National Democratic Movement-Social Democratic Party (MONAMO-PMSD), National Convention Party (PCN), Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO), Mozambique People’s Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), National Unity Party (PUN), and the United Democratic Front (UDF)</p> <p>The Mozambique National Union (UNAMO) and the Party of All Mozambican Nationalists (PARTONAMO).</p> <p>The Liberal Front (FL) and African Conservative Party (PAC).</p> <p>The Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration (PAREDE), and Union for Change (UM).</p>
<p>2009</p>	<p>Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD)</p> <p>Electoral Union Coalition (UE)</p>	<p>The Mozambique People’s Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Congress Party (PACODE), Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), and the Union for Reconciliation Party (PUR).</p> <p>The Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO) and the National Unity Party (PUN).</p>



2014	<p>Electoral Union Coalition (UE)</p> <p>Party for Peace, democracy and development/democratic alliance (PDD-AD)</p>	<p>The Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO) and the National Unity Party (PUN).</p> <p>Democratic Party of Mozambique (PDNM), Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), Democratic Congress Party (PACODE), Democratic Congress Party (CDU), Partido Liberal e Democrático de Moçambique (PLDM), Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO), National Convention Party (PCN), Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration (PAREDE), Mozambique National Union (UNAMO), Party of all Mozambican Nationalists (PATRONAMO) and Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance (PDD-AD).</p>
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The 1994 election registered the first two coalitions formed to contest for legislative elections. The UD coalition won 9 seats, the AP was the other coalition to contest in the 1994 elections, but failed to gain any seats.

During the 1999 national elections, three new coalitions emerged, namely RENAMO-UE, ADACD and UMO; whereas the two coalitions formed during the 1994 elections failed to compete in the 1999 elections. However, some of the parties which were part of the FAP migrated to the new and strongest coalition, in terms of the number of seats it obtained in parliament, RENAMO-UE. RENAMO-UE was formed to contest the 1999 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, and absorbed eleven political alliances<sup>8</sup>. Whereas the ADACD Coalition composed of PANADE and PANAMO; the UMO coalition composed of the lesser known PADEMO and the PRDM were formed to only contest in the legislative elections.

<sup>8</sup> The parties that constituted this alliance were: ALIMO, FAP, FUMO-PCD, MONAMO-PMSD, PCN, PPPM, PRD, PUN, UDF and UNAMO.

Furthermore, it was the 2004 elections that registered the highest number of coalitions ever seen in Mozambique<sup>9</sup>. Five coalition parties were registered by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) to contest the elections. Besides RENAMO-UE, four new coalitions emerged – mainly to contest for the legislative elections (and one presidential election) namely: ADACD, MBG, FAO and USAMO.

For the 2009 elections, the number of coalitions registered to contest the Legislative election was reduced to two, that is, ADACD and UE. The other coalitions that had emerged in the previous 2004 elections had collapsed just after the elections, and therefore could not contest in the 2009 elections. The elections of 2014 maintained the same number of coalitions that contested the 2009 elections, namely: the UE and the Development, Peace and Democratic Party-Democratic Alliance (PDD-AD) composed of PDNM, PRD, PACOD, CDU, PLDM, PSM, PEMU, PCM, PAREDE, UNAMO, PATRONAMO and PDD.

## 5. Coalitions and challenges

Coalitions in Mozambique can be divided into two categories, namely: those with representation in parliament and extra-parliamentarian coalitions.

### ***5.1. Coalitions that had representation in Mozambican Parliament***

In the history of coalitions in Mozambique only two have managed to gain representation in the Mozambican parliament. The UD Coalition<sup>10</sup> had nine (9) seats in Parliament during the period of 1994–1999; and RENAMO-UE had 117 seats in 1999–2004 and 90 seats in 2004–2009.

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9 African election Database. 2012. Elections in Mozambique. Available from: <http://african-elections.tripod.com/mz.html> & European Union, 2014. *Mozambique Final Report General Elections*. Available from: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eueom\\_mozambique\\_2014\\_final\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eueom_mozambique_2014_final_report_en.pdf).

10 The UD Coalition, was one of the first coalitions created since the establishment of multiparty democracy in the country.

### 5.1.1 Democratic Union (UD) Coalition

The UD Coalition was one of the first coalitions created since the dawn of multiparty democracy in the country. According to Kadima,<sup>11</sup> quoting Brito, there are two hypotheses to explain the UD's surprisingly good performance in the 1994 general elections. The first is that of the "symbol effect", as the UD chose as its symbol the cashew nuts which are well known in the rural areas. The second relates to the party's position on the ballot paper suggesting that because of FRELIMO's presidential candidate, many of its voters had marked and chosen the bottom square on the parliamentary ballot paper, thus voting accidentally for the UD.

Although the UD had successfully won some seats in parliament, parliamentary debates were largely dominated by FRELIMO and RENAMO. The low number of seats and lack of decision-making authority in the parliamentary plenary debates, combined with internal disputes are regarded as the major reasons for the failure of the UD. The coalition disintegrated after the first parliamentary term and did not contest in the elections of 2009. As one informant noted, the UD coalition began to disintegrate after the departure of PANAMO, which was the strongest party, due to intra-coalition conflicts".<sup>12</sup>

### 5.1.2 RENAMO-UE Coalition

RENAMO-UE was the strongest coalition and garnered the largest number of parliamentary seats that any coalition has over the past 28 years. The coalition was formed on the eve of the second elections in 1999 and managed to stay in parliament for two consecutive terms. Considering the results of the first elections of 1994, the rationale for the coalition was that RENAMO would have a better chance of winning a majority in parliament if it worked together with other political parties. On the other hand, the extra-parliamentary parties perceived that a coalition

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11 Kadima, D. & Matsimbe, Z. 2006. RENAMO União Eleitoral: Understanding the Longevity and Challenges of an Opposition Party Coalition in Mozambique, in Kadima, D. (ed). *The Politics of Party Coalitions in Africa*. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. pp 111-146.

12 Interview with Nicopola, Paulino, PALMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

would be a good strategy to overcome the obstacle of the 5% threshold and the d'Hondt model for seat allocation in parliament.<sup>13</sup>

In light of this, the coalition was formed with the understanding that RENAMO would lead and also obtain a majority of the seats in parliament; whereas the other 11 political parties representing UE would have two seats each for the President and General Secretary positions. In the 1999 elections, RENAMO increased its seats from 112 in the 1994 elections to 117. These numbers created expectations that the coalition would do better in the next elections of 2004. In fact, the President of RENAMO complained that he won the 1999 elections and FRELIMO rigged the results, implying that the coalition would have worked if the elections were free and fair.

However, against all expectations, the 2004 election results were worse than the previous results, with the coalition winning only 29.7% of the votes which translated into 90 seats. The 2004 electoral outcome marked the beginning of a political crisis inside the coalition where RENAMO blamed the other parties and argued that even before the coalition they had never performed so poorly in an election. With reduced seats which still had to be shared with the other partners, the concept of the coalition became an unacceptable constraint for the party. As a consequence, the parliamentary mandate of 2004 was marked by internal crises within the coalition. For example, the UE side were accused of taking "a free ride" with RENAMO, and they were not given time during the plenary sessions to participate and debate their views. Conversely, RENAMO was accused by the other members of the coalition of not managing the financial resources received from parliament properly and without an equitable share amongst the members of the UE, thus raising further discontent inside the coalition.

The discontent among the members of the coalition were further exacerbated when the parties composing the UE disagreed with the RENAMO leader for boycotting the parliamentary sessions when he claimed that the electoral results of 2009 were rigged. The UE, against Dhlakama's advice, took their seats in the parliament – which was

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13 Ibid.

equivalent to betrayal according to RENAMO. The consequence of these divisions was that RENAMO declared that it would contest the upcoming local elections without the coalition. Conversely, from the UE side, the loss of interest in remaining within the coalition after the 2004 elections was also due to the excessively centralized leadership style within the leadership of RENAMO. According to a former member of the coalition, *'it was unacceptable that RENAMO wanted to rule the coalition in a very dominant way. Taking all decisions about the coalition's life and destiny.'*<sup>14</sup>

### 5.1.2.1. Impacts of Coalitions on the Broader Peace Process: the case of RENAMO-UE

The coalition provided RENAMO with a peaceful strategy for overcoming post-election tensions in the 1990s, and to improve its performance in the elections. Just after the 1994 elections, RENAMO engaged in alliances with other opposition parties and used them to strengthen its campaign for electoral reforms. This campaign by RENAMO was a result of discontentment over the performance of the electoral management body which had been accused of rigging the 1994 elections in favour of FRELIMO. The campaign sought to force the government to engage in a dialogue for reforms on such issues as the structure and composition of the electoral management body.

Therefore, RENAMO created an alliance with 18 parties and boycotted the local elections of 1998. This position was articulated in Dhlakama's interview conducted just before the 1998 local elections, when he stated that: *'Ah Yes, RENAMO will not participate in the next elections on 30 June, and RENAMO is not isolated in this position, because there are 18 opposition parties that won't go to the elections. And this position will remain, in the absence of a real change of attitude of the Mozambican government.'*<sup>15</sup>

The loyalty shown by the extra-parliamentary parties towards RENAMO on the boycott of the elections created a conducive environment for the

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14 Interview with Couto, Hipólito, PUN Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

15 Valot, H. 1998. A Renamo nao vai participar...: Entrevista de Afonso M. Dhlakama, 15 de Maio de 1998. *Lusotopie*, pp. 39–43.

foundation of the coalition RENAMO-UE later in 1999. When the coalition was formed, RENAMO benefited from the new leaders emerging from civil society such as academia, church and professionals. The addition of new members to the coalition, who were not linked to the civil war, boosted the image of RENAMO as a party that was open, democratic and committed to peacebuilding.

The coalition added to the creation of a positive political environment that greatly contributed to the reduction of post-election tension and a re-launch of RENAMO's efforts to obtain political power through the ballot. RENAMO accepted the opportunity to run for the 1999 elections and managed to get its highest number of seats in the parliament to date. The result of the 1999 election meant that power was more evenly shared between the FRELIMO and RENAMO. In the plenary debates, the opposition's performance was characterized by more structured positions reflecting the influence of the new entrants from civil society inside the coalition.

In an interview conducted for this paper, the former vice-chair of RENAMO-UE, stated that 'the UE members would bring balanced and not militarized discourse inside the coalition; allowing for peaceful and moderate parliamentary debates.'<sup>16</sup> Although the coalition faced a lot of challenges and internal tensions, eventually leading to its collapse, it made important contributions to sustaining peace in key moments of democratic transition and reconciliation. The coalition was viewed by RENAMO as a viable and strategic means to mobilise around its struggle for democratic processes and peacebuilding. Today, 10 years after the collapse of the coalition RENAMO-UE, the party still sees the coalition as strategic means to obtain power through the ballot box. In fact, after the 2018 peace agreement with the government that mitigated the political crisis and which arguably gave space to RENAMO to relaunch itself for electoral contestation, there are indications that the party is considering alliances with other political formations for the next elections.

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16 Interview with Manecas, Daniel, PRD Representative. Interview, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

This possibility was reinforced by media which pointed out some interest and attempts by the MDM leadership to engage in a coalition with RENAMO for the 2018 local government elections.

#### **5.1.2.2. The Dynamics of Interaction Between RENAMO and Other Opposition Parties: The Tango Dancing?**

It would appear that “repulsion and attraction” shape the RENAMO politics towards other opposition parties, with the party balancing between viewing other opposition parties as either obstacles or vehicles to its own political interests to win elections.

Other opposition parties are indeed competitors within the opposition electorate. The more the opposition parties grow in number, the more competitors RENAMO has to beat in order to win the elections. RENAMO’s antagonistic attitude towards other opposition parties is revealed in its position on the electoral reform of 2006 where it defended the maintenance of the 5% threshold and the d’Hondt method for the allocation of seats, even in the face of pressure from other opposition parties for the elimination of the same.

Still, RENAMO needed the coalition with extra-parliamentary parties to secure all the opposition votes and to strengthen its pressure for electoral reform. In the first elections of 1994, there was a perception that the other opposition parties contributed to the defeat of RENAMO by splitting the opposition votes. Therefore, the coalition was only a useful tactic aimed at winning elections. This perception explains the paradox of RENAMO’s attitude vis-a-vis the opposition parties: defending measures that create obstacles to the multiplication of number of parties, while on the other hand engaging with them in coalitions.

The municipal by-elections in Nampula held in February 2018 for the replacement of the late Mayor Mahamude Amurane, who died in the middle of his term, created the basis for possible coalition between RENAMO and MDM. In the second round of the elections, MDM and other opposition parties, who lost in the first round, decided to support the RENAMO candidate who was the second most successful after

the FRELIMO candidate in the first round. The victory of the RENAMO candidate in the second round brought positive perspectives for the possibility of a future coalition. According to a SAPO 2018 interview; *'RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama does not rule out the possibility of his party joining with other opposition political formations to secure victories in the next (2018) elections'*.<sup>17</sup>

## 5.2. Extra-parliamentary Coalitions:

In Mozambique, the designation 'extra parliamentary parties' is used to refer to parties that are not represented in parliament. Accordingly, in reference to coalition politics in Mozambique, this section is divided into: i) coalitions formed by extra parliamentary parties that contested elections but failed to get seats; ii) and parties who collapsed without or before contesting any election.

### 5.2.1. Coalitions that Contested Elections and Failed to Get Seats in parliament

**Table 3: Coalition Parties that failed to get Seats in Parliament**

Coalitions	Coalitions' member parties
Patriotic Alliance (AP)	Leadership - MONAMO-PMSD).
Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD)	National Democratic Party (PANADE) and National Party of Mozambique (PANAMO).
Mozambican Opposition Union (UMO)	The Mozambique Democratic Party (PADEMO) and Democratic Reconciliation Party of Mozambique (PRDM).
United Front for Change and Good Governance (MBG)	The Mozambique National Union (UNAMO) and the Party of All Mozambican Nationalists (PATRONAMO).
Broad Opposition Front (FAO)	The Liberal Front (FL) and African Conservative Party (PAC).

17 SAPO. 2010. *Moçambique: Deputados da RENAMO criticam liderança, mais um quadro abandona partido*. Available from: <http://noticias.sapo.pt/lusa/artigo/10635779.html>.



Union for the Salvation of Mozambique (USAMO)	The Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), Democratic Alliance for Social Restoration (PAREDE), and Union for Change (UM).
Democratic Alliance of Veterans for Development (ADACD)	The Mozambique People's Progress Party (PPPM), Democratic Congress Party (PACODE), Socialist Party of Mozambique (PSM), and the Union for Reconciliation Party (PUR).
Electoral Union Coalition (UE)	The Ecological Party of Mozambique (PEMO) and the National Unity Party (PUN).
Party for Peace, democracy and development/ democratic alliance	PDNM, PRD, PACOD, CDU, PLDM, PSM, PEMU, PCM, PAREDE, UNAMO, PATRONAMO and PDD-AD.

As already noted, since the dawn of multiparty democracy in Mozambique, there have been several parties which joined and formed coalitions to contest elections. The coalitions AP<sup>18</sup> and UD were among the first to contest the 1994 Mozambican elections, thus paving the way for other coalitions to be formed in subsequent elections.<sup>19</sup>

Other coalitions, as mentioned in Table three, managed to contest the elections but failed to remain in existence for the subsequent elections, due in part to the lack of resources to sustain the coalition as well as intra-coalition fights, according to a key informant from an extra parliamentary party<sup>20</sup>. Additionally, at times conflicts between the members emerge immediately after the elections, especially over issues of sustainability, as elaborated further below.

18 The AP was comprised of the *Movimento Nacionalista Moçambicano* (Monamo) and *Frente de Acção Patriótica* (FAP); and it was led by Monamo president Maximo Dias, a lawyer and veteran who was exiled in Portugal after independence in 1975.

19 This is the case for political parties such as the MBG, FAO, USAMO and UMO which have been formed and contested the next elections.

20 Interview with Massango, João, PEC Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

### **5.2.2. Coalition That Collapsed Before Contesting Any Election**

From the coalitions that were formed, there were some that collapsed even before being able to contest any elections. This list would include coalitions of extra-parliamentary parties such as FUSA, CMM, G16, FUSAD, CPDM, PIMO-Constructive Opposition, Opposition Hand in Hand and others. It is important to highlight that the G18 was a coalition formed under the leadership of PIMO to support the complaints of RENAMO relating to election irregularities, resulting in the latter boycotting the local government elections in 1998.

These attempted coalitions did not succeed in their goals for reasons already alluded to such as, internal leadership squabbles; lack of statutes; lack of registration; lack of resources; mutual accusations of betrayal of the coalition principles among the members; lack of clear ideology and commitments to internal agreements; low trust and an unclear support base etc.

Additionally, these coalition were vulnerable to the influence of the ruling party and other stronger opposition parties. For example, in the 2009 election, the chair of the Constructive Opposition declared support to the ruling party, thereby creating strained relations inside the coalition.<sup>21</sup> In the 2014 election the leader of Opposition Hand In Hand was included on the list of RENAMO's candidates and became an MP. These two cases resulted in the failure of the coalition and the reduction of trust amongst the parties that constituted it.

## **6. Coalitions Dynamics in a highly bipartisan political environment**

In its short but intense process of democratization, Mozambique's bipartisan political environment has been an important determinant for the politics of coalition in the country. Although many coalitions have

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21 Verdade. 2009. *PIMO declara apoio incondicional à Frelimo e Guebuza* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.verdade.co.mz/opiniao/94-eleicoes-2009/6056-pimo-declara-apoio-incondicional-a-FRELIMO-e-guebuza> [2018, September 18].

been formed independently from FRELIMO and RENAMO, the two parties have been very influential to the functioning and dynamics of these coalitions. Despite the fact that FRELIMO has never been engaged in coalitions, there have been strategic interactions between the party and some of the coalitions. In fact, after the results obtained by the RENAMO coalition in 1999, FRELIMO began to realize the threat that opposition coalitions could represent. The fear of RENAMO increasing their seats in parliament made FRELIMO invest in strong campaign strategies, which included interactions and cooperation with opposition parties to divide or split the potential vote for RENAMO.

For RENAMO, the lessons from the victory of the UD coalition, which won 9 seats in parliament during the first elections, might have led them to engage in a coalition for the first time in the 1999 elections – winning them an additional 5 seats in parliament. This experience made RENAMO believe that coalitions could be a solution for winning a majority of seats in parliament. However, as mentioned before, due to the internal conflicts and the poor performance in the third election of 2004, where the coalition lost 27 seats in parliament, RENAMO abandoned the coalition in the fourth elections of 2009, and contested alone. Staying in the coalition was no longer seen as strategic, and small parties were in their view taking a free ride. Part of RENAMO's members abandoned the party because of internal conflicts and formed a new party: the MDM.

However, although convinced that they would do better without the opposition, RENAMO got its worst results ever, winning only 51 seats in parliament. The great irony being that part of the seats that they lost, went to the newly formed political party, the MDM, which had split from RENAMO. In the elections that followed neither FRELIMO nor RENAMO engaged in coalitions, but the two parties sought instead to influence the coalitions in their favour. Indeed, the coalitions that were formed by extra-parliamentary parties were seen as Pro-FRELIMO or Pro-RENAMO, publicly assuring their electoral support to the President of FRELIMO or RENAMO respectively. This was the case of the Coalition Constructive Opposition that was perceived as pro-FRELIMO, while the opposition

Hand in Hand was pro-RENAMO. In the opinion of the President of PIMO: *'the coalitions are important and necessary, but in my opinion, we have to have a representative of FRELIMO or RENAMO. If this does not happen the possibilities of success for the coalitions are small.'*<sup>22</sup>

## 7. Coalition and citizens representation

In the 28 years of multiparty democracy in Mozambique, there is no doubt that attempts at forming and sustaining coalitions have contributed to more parties being represented in parliament. For the first election, the coalition UD was a vehicle for four parties to be in parliament. In the second and third election, the coalition RENAMO-UE transported eleven political parties in to parliament.

Although some academics have been sceptical about the political base of the smaller parties, it can be argued that the votes won by those parties demonstrates that an additional group of citizens feel represented. RENAMO's best electoral results were achieved, with exception of the first election, during the Coalition RENAMO-UE. While according to Brito 2005, some parties such as PIMO and PDD would have won some seats in the parliament if the obstacles created by the d'Hondt method were not there, it is still a fact that the RENAMO-UE coalition provided an opportunity for many more small parties to get into Parliament. It can therefore be said that a group of parties in coalition are more likely to represent a diversity of groups, thereby creating an opportunity for (political) minorities to be represented. Therefore, the importance of the votes gathered by the opposition cannot be taken for granted when it comes to people's political representation.

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22 Interview with Sibindi, Yakub, PIMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

## 8. Coalition sustainability

The sustainability of coalitions in Mozambique is undermined by many challenges. The lessons from the emergence, collapse and longevity of some coalitions highlights three key elements as determinants: the power relations inside the coalition; the party funding mechanisms; and internal democracy.

### 8.1. *Intra-Coalition Power relations*

The intra-coalition power relations between parties took two different shapes. For the coalitions represented in the parliament, power was concentrated in one dominant party; while in extra-parliamentary coalitions the lack of a dominant party resulted in endless conflicts between the leaders of the party members.

#### 8.1.1 Coalitions with parliamentary representation

In the UD and RENAMO-UE coalitions the power relations among the members of the coalition were characterized by the existence of one strong party dominating and coordinating others. In the case of UD, it was led by PALMO, while in the case of RENAMO-UE, RENAMO was the leader. In those cases, the coalition is extremely dependent on the strength and interests of the leading member, which poses a huge risk of failure. According to one key informant interview, *'the UD coalition, began to disintegrate with the departure of PALMO from the coalition, which was the strongest party. This was due to internal conflicts within the coalition which led to its collapse.'*<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the coalition RENAMO-UE, which was held together by the main political party RENAMO, immediately collapsed when this party decided to abandon the coalition in 2009. There had been many attempts from the UE members to down-play their overall reliance on RENAMO for the existence of this coalition. For example, the President of Monamo was quoted as having said: *'There is no free ride here... we are connected, and we will work together... that is at least my purpose... I do not think*

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23 Interview with Nicopola, Paulino, PALMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

*about marginalizing myself, but if I am marginalized, I can also work alone, I can present bills, I have no problem, even if I cannot speak.'*<sup>24</sup> However, the later collapse of the coalition proved that it was just political rhetoric to deny the existence of a real problem: being overly dependent on RENAMO. Accordingly, the coalition disintegrated after RENAMO left, and each party contested the elections independently.

### 8.1.2 Extra-parliamentary Parties

The power relation within the coalitions formed by extra-parliamentary parties is characterized by lack of a consensual leadership. The fight between parties for the leadership has been the common malady of these types of coalitions.

There were several coalitions that emerged but collapsed immediately, such as the coalitions Opposition Hand in Hand and Constructive Opposition which did not even contest for the elections. According to a representative of one of the political parties 'coalitions of political parties that do not have political, financial and human resources have no power.'<sup>25</sup> Other representatives were of the view that 'the biggest problem of those coalitions is linked to the leadership. During the formation of coalitions, all representatives of political parties want to be leaders, which is not possible.'<sup>26</sup> These views clearly demonstrate that the coalitions formed by the extra-parliamentary parties that collapse even before running in the elections do so because of the power dynamics between the members. According to Programme Coordinator of IMD<sup>27</sup> 'There were many circumstances where parties came to IMD presenting themselves as coalitions and the next day they disintegrate because of the leadership problems.'

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24 Chitula, J. 2005. *Não há "crise" na coligação parlamentar da Oposição na AR* [Online]. Available from: [http://macua.blogs.com/moambique\\_para\\_todos/2005/01/no\\_h\\_crise\\_na\\_c.html](http://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/2005/01/no_h_crise_na_c.html) [2018, September 18].

25 Interview with Sibindi, Yakub, PIMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

26 Interview with Massango, João, PEC Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

27 Interview with Alfazema, Dercio, Program Coordinator of AIMD, Maputo, Mozambique, 14 June 2018.

## 8.2. Financial Sustainability

According to article 17 of the political party law, the source of funds for political parties can be membership fees; donations and legacy; state budget; and other sources of funds. In addition, article 20 establishes that the funding from the state budget is channelled proportionally to parties represented in parliament according to their number of seats. Although the Political Party Law does not refer directly to coalitions, the same stipulations apply for funding coalitions.

Among the sources appointed by the law, the state funds are the most important. However, only coalitions with parliamentary representation are eligible for these funds. Thus far, only RENAMO-UE and UD have benefited from state funding, while other coalitions have never benefitted from state funding - which could have been used to build and strengthen their parties. It is this lack of funding that is identified to be one of the major reasons for the lack of longevity experienced by extra-parliamentary coalitions.

It was further observed by one party representative that “another challenge faced by coalitions is the lack of resources and strong disagreements within the coalition motivated by unfair division of the few existing resources.”<sup>28</sup> However, while lack of funds is a problem for the extra-parliamentary coalitions, the coalitions represented in parliament which enjoyed such financial support also experienced problems due to mismanagement, limited accountability and internal conflicts over the available resources.

Another representative stated that “Political parties go into coalitions to have financial benefits. And once in parliament the representatives of political parties do not maximize the benefit of the funds they receive. They mismanage all the funds.”<sup>29</sup> “The organizations that lead the coalitions have managed the funds without any transparency and this creates a situation of discontent among the members.”<sup>30</sup>

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28 Interview with Sibindi, Yakub, PIMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

29 Interview with Nicopola, Paulino, PALMO Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 18 June 2018.

30 Interview with Massango, João, PEC Representative, Maputo, Mozambique, 19 June 2018.

In summary, the availability of public funds is pointed out as a necessary, but not in itself a sufficient condition for institutional development of the parties. There are other necessities such as the need for transparency and competent management of resources.

### ***8.3. Intra-coalition Democracy (Internal Democracy)***

Although internal functioning of political parties is legally regulated by the Mozambican Law, Number 7/91, of 23 of January especially in articles 6 and 11, the culture of intra-party democracy is weak, which has negatively affected political coalitions.

The practices of internal democracy within the leading party is a chief determinant for the existence of democratic space within the coalitions. The centralized leadership by the president of RENAMO strongly influenced the internal democracy of the coalition RENAMO-UE. Key decisions were taken by the President of RENAMO without prior consultation with the rest of the members of the coalition. This occurred in 2004, when the leader of RENAMO decided not to take up his seat in parliament as a sign of protest against the alleged electoral irregularities.

However, this decision by the opposition leader was not supported and followed through by all members of the coalition, as some proceeded with attending parliamentary sessions. These differences in approach were considered to be signs of a lack of political cohesion inside these coalitions. Additionally, other members of the coalition argued that a lack of democratic culture and space to openly discuss issues contributed to a failure to build unity and cohesion. Complaints included the imposing of candidates, a lack of criteria for appointments to key organs, and constant in-fighting for leadership<sup>31</sup> In short, a lack of internal coalition democracy as well as inter-coalition engagements are considered to be factors that prevented the formation of effective coalitions, able to contest elections.

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31 In *Diario Independente*. 2008. A Longa Lista das Vítimas do Ditador Dlhakama. Available from: <https://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/pics/d100061.pdf>.



## 9. Conclusion

According to Jennifer Nicoll Victor 'Political parties play an important role in healthy democracies. Parties engage in a natural and constant competition that is meant to produce useful outcomes for voters and candidates. In order to achieve their goals, parties also form coalitions with interests, organizations, and segments of the population. The make-up of a party coalition can tell us a lot about the party's goals and priorities, but the process by which this occurs may seem mysterious or opaque.'<sup>32</sup>

This article has demonstrated that since the first democratic elections in 1994, Mozambique has seen both the emergence and collapse of many party coalitions. Amongst the dozens that emerged, only two succeeded to be in parliament and the government; others either contested the elections and didn't get sufficient votes or collapsed before elections were held. The 5% threshold (abolished in 2007) and the d'Hondt method for conversion of the votes into parliament seats have been some of the key legal reasons which promoted the formation of coalitions in Mozambique. Out of all the coalitions, only RENAMO-UE has managed some form of longevity, with two consecutive terms in parliament, while others collapsed after one term in parliament, e.g. UD. However, the majority of coalitions which actively contested elections ceased to exist after a poor showing at the polls.

The key reasons for failure of coalitions can be found in a lack of clear and shared visions among the coalition members; a lack of strong democratic leadership; poor internal democracy; bitter fights for leadership positions; a lack of transparency in the management of resources; negative results at election time; and poor levels of trust amongst members. Despite these failures, there are important lessons for multiparty democracy in Mozambique as coalitions have been important vehicles, especially for opposition parties, to overcome the constraints of the electoral law and system in order to obtain seats in parliament. The practice of coalitions has actively stimulated and supported inclusivity and diversification in the parliament and government of Mozambique.

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32 Victor, J. N. 2017. *Parties are more likely to form coalitions with groups that are like them and show loyalty, but not those that are rich*. Available from: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2017/03/13/parties-are-more-likely-to-form-coalitions-with-groups-that-are-like-them-and-show-loyalty-but-not-those-that-are-rich/>