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THE RELEVANCE OF MOZAMBIQUE'S PEACE AGREEMENT

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On 4 October 1992, the feast of St. Francis, in Rome, the Mozambican president and secretary of FreLiMo Joaquim Chissano and Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the ReNaMo, the guerrilla warfare from independence against the government of Maputo, signed a General Peace Agreement which ended 17 years of civil war (hundreds of thousands of deaths; 3-4 million internally displaced persons and refugees in neighboring countries).

The signing concluded a long negotiation process, which lasted a year and a few months, carried out at the headquarters of the Community of Sant'Egidio, in rooms that were not large, but welcoming, in a garden where banana trees stand out that remind one of Africa and a large olive tree which reminds us that we can begin to collaborate again after the fiery deluge of the armed opposition. There, in Trastevere, some members of the Community

(the [cookie policy](#), Andrea Riccardi, and a priest, Matteo Zuppi, today archbishop of Bologna), a Mozambican bishop (Jaime Gonçalves, ordinary of Beira, recently deceased) and a "facilitator" expression of Italian Government (Mar

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dialogue between those who fought in the name of Marketing and power. They had set up a negotiating framework based on the unity of the Mozambican people, in search of what unites and not what divides. Do not show anymore

With the General Peace Agreement, the delivery of guerrilla weapons to UN forces was established, the integration of ex-combatants into the regular army, procedures for demining and pacification of rural areas, a series of steps destined to transform armed confrontation between the parties in a competition based on constitutional and democratic rules. The 1994 elections, the first truly free in the former Portuguese colony, would have sanctioned the success of the entire negotiation process and given to Mozambique in a new season, primarily made of peace.

Peace has set in motion a process of normalization of the situation and of economic and social growth. A path that is not simple and non-linear, but also a great success story, an example of how a state can leave behind the gigantic difficulties and sufferings of a civil war, to face the ever more complex but smaller and more manageable challenges, those economy, international relations in the globalized world, social diversification, strengthening of a civil conscience.

The history of these post-war decades has been characterized, yes, by a harsh political dialectic, and with peaks of open conflict - between 2013 and 2014 Dhlakama, not feeling secure, had rediscovered the path of the forest and forced the international community to a new mediation effort - as well as fear, alive in the ruling party, of democratic alternation, even at the local level, almost as if it could undermine the unity of the country. But also these years have been characterized by the acceptance of by two presidents of the succession constitutional rules: after winning the 1999 elections, Chissano gave up applying for a third term; his successor, Armando Guebuza, winner in the 2004 and 2009 rounds, also retired at the end of the second term, leaving the position to the current president, Felipe Nyuzi.

Meanwhile, the young country has gradually healed its wounds, reconstituting the network of infrastructures and communications, strengthening, with all the limits of the sub-Saharan context, the education and health systems. In some fields, continental excellence has even been achieved. For example, when, in February 2002, the first DREAM center for antiretroviral therapy in Africa was opened, it was in Machava, a suburb of Maputo. A health center managed by Sant'Egidio, but not private, connected to public health, and therefore able to guarantee free of charge the medicines that saved the lives of many HIV-positive people in the West. The right to therapy, a right that is often violated and rejected, was recognized in Mozambique earlier than in many other countries on the continent. The DREAM program has spread throughout the country since then: mothers and children free of AIDS are today a sign of hope and resurrection.

Sant'Egidio has remained close to Mozambique for all these years, to win peace after the war. A generation that has not known war has grown in the Peace Schools that Sant'Egidio has opened in dozens of cities. A vast Youth for Peace movement has spread to schools and universities, spreading a culture of solidarity and gratuitousness, prerequisites for a pluralist and peaceful society. Furthermore, through the BRAVO Sant'Egidio program, it has allowed tens of thousands of Mozambican children to be registered at the registry office, snatching them from invisibility and protecting their rights.

From an economic-social point of view, everything has changed in 25 years. The FreLiMo abandoned the early Marxist ideology and became a firm believer in the free market. Perhaps too much, so much so as to be referred to as a model student of the International Monetary Fund. The party that led the country to join the Comecon, the economic organization of the communist countries that looked to Moscow, ended up launching a plan of privatization among the largest and most radical, and managed to achieve important macroeconomic results.

Yesterday's nomenclature quickly turned into an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. A phenomenon that has strengthened in the 2000s, those of the growth of GDP at "Chinese" rates, so as to allow the emergence in several large cities, Maputo obviously, but also Nampula, the economic capital of the North, of a new and not insignificant middle urban class, with the advantages and disadvantages of this process. The cities have become the places of a thousand opportunities, the traffic - that winds at all hours through the streets of Maputo - is made of large and expensive cars. Inequalities, as well as corruption, have grown, while the communitarism of "independence days" has left room for a competition with sometimes ferocious traits.

At the signing of the peace in Rome the Mozambican leaders inherited a country exhausted by thirty years of war, first anti-colonial and then civil. Mozambique was among the poorest countries on the planet, although the vast territory was potentially very rich in resources and economic opportunities: huge reserves of coal, but above all, natural gas and probably oil, as well as gold and diamonds. With the liberalization of the economy investors have competed to acquire privatized activities, to operate precisely in the energy and mining sector, to launch tourism projects on the Mozambican coasts. Thanks to them, the country has become one of the so-called "African lions", one of the sub-Saharan countries with the strongest and fastest growth.

Such a rapid process has also shown its limits, as has the "raw material curse". The development model has not proved sufficiently inclusive, has increased the number of the wealthy, but also that of the marginalized. And the large investment projects linked in particular to the exploitation of the subsoil and the offshore have not had employment repercussions that are up to expectations, especially after the fall in the prices of raw materials. Thus, today Mozambique faces the reduction of international currency reserves,

the collapse of the Metical, the national currency, the raising of public debt.

But, precisely, these are the problems of peace. Which country doesn't have them? With all its difficulties, in a world that is experiencing a third world war in pieces, that stretched country on the Indian Ocean is not part of the patchwork. And so good silver weddings with peace, dear Mozambique, and a thousand of these days!

Update to 4 October 2017

THE PAINTING ON THE PEACE IN MOZAMBIQUE



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