



# PUBLIC SPACES SHOULD BELONG TO US

Voices of Young Mozambican Women on Peace and Security

Women, Peace and Security

Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity  
EARTH INSTITUTE | COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mozambique has been characterized as a peaceful country since the end of a protracted fifteen-year-long civil war in 1992. Within this post-war context, public and private discourses in the country continue to imagine peace as the absence of war and military conflict. Yet, several regions within Mozambique are burdened by systemic injustices, a lack of public wellbeing and various kinds of insecurity. Women and girls in particular continue to experience a disproportionate amount of social, political and economic insecurity, despite recent efforts to promote gender equality and the inclusion of a women, peace and security agenda through a National Action Plan in 2018.

Through the voices, images and stories of eight young women from the neighborhoods of Maxaquene A, Maxaquene B, Polana Caniço A, Magoanine and Aeroporto in Maputo, Mozambique, this report offers a re-conceptualization of *peace and security* that extends far beyond the terrain of only armed conflict and war. The narratives and images shared in this report were collected through a participatory research partnership between Horizonte Azul, a Mozambican feminist civil society organization, and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) program at Columbia University between 2017 and 2019.

For the particular purposes of this study, the Women, Peace and Security team established a working partnership with Horizonte Azul, and collaborated with eight women from the organization who actively co-produced a participatory visual research project. Participants were chosen by Horizonte Azul staff based on a set of internal criteria and interest in the proposed project. This proposed collaboration took the form of a photovoice research project that explored themes related to peace and security in their daily lives. All of the participants are active members of the community association Horizonte Azul located in the Maxaquene A neighborhood of Maputo city. The organization creates and provides key spaces for community engagement about gender and social issues, particularly focused on the empowerment of vulnerable groups such as children, girls and young women.

By chronicling the lived experiences and grounded knowledges of the participants, this report showcases a reimagined view of peace and security that links everyday safety, structural inequality and well-being through a gendered lens. The testimonies explored in this report bring to light nuanced insights about the daily lives of women and girls in Maputo, Mozambique and their experiences of peace and security in everyday life and presents an understanding of peace and resilience within and beyond the Mozambican context.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### A Brief Overview of the Status of Women, Peace and Security in Mozambique

In August 2018, the Mozambican government, in partnership with U.N. Women, launched a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>1</sup> The Plan recognizes the human rights of women and girls and emphasizes the importance of their participation in formal peacekeeping and peacemaking processes:

**The National Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (PNAMPS) - 2018-2022, recognizes the rights of women and girls and their vulnerability in the context of armed conflict, and emphasizes the importance of their role as agents of prevention and resolution of conflict and peacekeeping.<sup>2</sup>**

This National Plan comes decades after the fifteen-year civil war in Mozambique. It also comes at a moment when, around the world, there has been an increased global recognition of the need for women and girls (and their interests) to be involved in peacebuilding and peacemaking processes.<sup>3</sup>

The presence of formal peace in Mozambique is significant because of its particular history of “three distinct chronological eras of war” including its colonization by Portugal in the 16th century and the recent civil war between the government and the National Mozambican Resistance (RENAMO), an armed rebel group (and now, a political party in Mozambique), from 1977 to 1992.<sup>4</sup> The Mozambican Civil War resulted in the death of more than one million people (making up 7 per cent of the population) and the creation of more than four million internally displaced persons and migrant refugees. With more than \$20,000 million in damages, Mozambican civil society faced massive destruction of bridges, railways, health posts, and schools with lasting impacts that continue to affect the country today.<sup>5</sup>

The Rome Accord Peace Accord, which was signed in 1992 without the inclusion of women, officially ended the civil war and has been heralded by international development organizations such as the World Bank,<sup>6</sup> United Nations, and other international donors<sup>7</sup> as a successful act of peacebuilding. Following the signing of the 1992 peace agreement, Mozambique held democratic presidential and legislative elections in 1994, with the dual hope of shifting to a democratic system of governance and ending the ongoing violence. However, despite its successes, the exclusion of women’s voices in the creation of the Accord has produced enduring impacts, such that, since 1994, ‘the ongoing economic insecurity in the country remains distinctly gendered, while the legacy of the wars remain unmistakable in the everyday lives of a vast majority of women, including their experiences of everyday violence.’<sup>8</sup>

The continuous structural and everyday violence, informed by high levels of economic insecurity and growing inequality, has been worsened by the armed conflict between RENAMO, and the government of Mozambique that resurfaced in 2013. This renewed conflict has generated a new wave of instability and violence that, in addition to causing significant material damage, has produced a notable increase in violence by government soldiers and also boosted the migration of Mozambicans to nearby Malawi. Although military attacks affecting the provinces of Sofala, Manica and Tete have ceased with the approval of the new electoral package in 2018, Mozambique continues to be in a very sensitive and tense political and economic situation.<sup>9</sup>

While social conditions in Mozambique have been subject to increased volatility in recent years owing to the incidence of armed conflicts in particular, recent shifts in economic conditions have further increased the country’s growing instability. For one, several hidden government debts<sup>10</sup> were made public in 2015, showing evidence of the government’s corruption and mismanagement of funds. As a result, international organizations, such as the International Monetary

Fund - IMF, that contributed to these funds through aid packages have been terminating their agreements and leaving the country, accompanied by a flight of foreign investments. As the Mozambican Tax Authority (2018) notes, more than two thousand companies closed and many others reduced their personnel by half, as a direct result of the economic crisis. Subsequently, the decline in public investment, foreign direct investment and foreign aid had detrimental social effects through rising rates of unemployment, famine, and family instability, alongside significant increases in cases of gender-based violence, early and child marriages, and sex for pay.<sup>11</sup> Indices of violence within communities have also risen, creating a worsening environment of insecurity and fear, especially for women.

In addition to the economic crisis, a new military conflict has erupted. Since 2017, there have been armed attacks in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula, areas where there are conflicts of interest related to extractive mega-projects of the mining and oil industries between those connected to the illegal trade in ivory, gold and stones, and local farmers.<sup>12</sup> There is no consensus as to the real causes of the conflict; the government, for instance, claims that these are acts of vandalism, derived from Islamic fundamentalist attacks.

Likewise, the exploitation of rubies in Montepuez leads to daily violent clashes between the military and illegal miners coming from Tanzania and elsewhere. In Manica, there are similar conflicts in the gold mines between the military and migrant miners from Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Importantly, such mining areas also show increased rates of sexual violence, premature marriages and child prostitution. In Tete, Vale and Rio Tinto run open-pit coalmines and their related infrastructure have displaced thousands of local inhabitants, a majority of whom are subsistence farmers, causing significant rises in food insecurity.<sup>13</sup> Between 2009 and 2010, Vale resettled 1,365 households, while Rio Tinto and Riversdale resettled 84 households in 2011.<sup>14</sup>

The cumulative effect of these armed attacks, the ongoing economic crisis and the resettlement of people for the development of mining and other mega projects is particularly evident in the significant increase in forced in-country migration within Mozambique, producing large swathes of internally displaced persons. These migrants leave behind their material and cultural assets, exposing women and children in particular to increased economic vulnerability, sexual violence and food insecurity. Migrants are not recognized as rightful state-subjects in their new, temporary spaces, because of which they also suffer the loss of rights available to other citizens.

International organizations have worked closely with both the Mozambican government and civil society since the end of the civil war to implement post-conflict processes aimed at reconstruction and rebuilding, including gender equality and social justice programming.<sup>15</sup> Since 1994, when Mozambique held its first-ever multiparty elections, politicians have made major strides at the policy level in the area of gender equality. Mozambican parliament now consists of approximately 40 percent women, and the goal of gender equality and universality is written into the constitution.<sup>16</sup> The Government of Mozambique is also a signatory on all major human rights conventions and numerous regional commitments to gender inclusion and equality, including the Southern African Development Community's Declaration on Gender and Development (1997),<sup>17</sup> The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004),<sup>18</sup> and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003).<sup>19</sup>

Mozambican elected officials have also historically expressed willingness to partake in the international agenda of women, peace and security, ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (The Maputo Protocol) in 2005,<sup>20</sup> the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1997,<sup>21</sup> and the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005).<sup>22</sup> In 2000, the Mozambique government adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which centers and highlights the role of gender equality.

Despite the absence of war, the changing national rhetoric regarding gender equality, and the publication of the National Action Plan, Mozambican women and girls face insecurity as a result of the lasting legacy of war and subsequent socio-economic conflicts.<sup>23</sup> On October 6, 2018, the President of Mozambique officially launched the Decentralization, Demilitarization and Reintegration (DDR) package for ex-RENAMO forces, following agreements between the government and RENAMO to maintain an effective and lasting peace in the country.<sup>24</sup> There has since been a concerted government effort to integrate women into the decision-making process, but the participation of women remains minimal to date. This is due in part to the fact that a majority of negotiations and their resulting decisions continue to be based on the dictates of armed groups, while only giving a marginal role to other actors, especially women. In such a militarized, ‘post-conflict’ scenario, women and girls continue to be seen as ‘weapons of war’ and their ongoing systemic marginalization gravely impacts the amount of credible information available about the everyday lives of women and the degree of access to humanitarian assistance while encountering sexual and gender-based violence.

While there has been significant policy commitment and documentation about the importance of centering women, armed conflict, and gender equality in the region since the 1992 peace agreement, there remains a need for qualitative data that better explains the progress that has been made on the ground toward gender inclusion since the 1992 peace treaty, exploring the current terrain of peace and security through a gendered lens. This report attempts to contribute to this data gap by offering a gendered view of peace and security in Mozambique as chronicled by members of Horizonte Azul, a community organization in Maputo working towards social justice.

## Viewing Peace and Security through a Gender Lens

Dominant policy perspectives about security center the knowledge of, and relationship between, military and state actors.<sup>25</sup> This report builds on a more holistic approach that pushes for a perspective of ‘human security’, which instead “redirects attention in discussions of security: from the national-/state-level to human beings as the potential victims; beyond physical violence as the only relevant threat/vector; and beyond physical harm as the only relevant damage.”<sup>26</sup> This broad human security approach has also been mobilized within academic and policy circles in various ways. In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR) introduced two components of human security that move the scope of security analysis from a territorial/military focus to one that centers the security and experiences of individuals, rather than states. Here, human security is only achieved in the presence of both ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want.’<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the HDR also presented a series of dimensions that should be considered when addressing human security, namely: economic, food, health, environmental, political, personal, and community dimensions. Subsequently, in 2003, the Commission on Human Security launched its Final Report also highlighting the urgent need for a new security paradigm “centered on people—not states.”<sup>28</sup>

In this broad human security approach, peace is shaped not only by the absence of war but also by individuals’ expectations and desire of prosperity for themselves and those in their community. Further, this understanding affirms that threats to security emerge not only from armed insurgencies but also from relationships among a wide range of actors based on unequal power relations.<sup>29</sup> This includes unequal power relations between men and women, in particular, as highlighted by various gendered approaches to security studies. As feminist scholars have pointed out, taking a gendered approach to security by “including women as a category of identity within security discourse”, and by “integrating gender as unit of analysis”, safeguards against creating “silences, which in fact reinforce the dominance of masculinist universalisms and, at the same time, impede theoretical progress within security studies.”<sup>30</sup>

In the case of Mozambique, studies on peace and security have thus far taken a traditional approach, focusing on wars or armed and politico-military conflicts. However, recent efforts by feminist scholars in particular have advocated

for the use of a gendered approach to security that demonstrates critical linkages between gender relations, violence, peace and security. For instance, these scholars find that “although the violence of armed conflict has ended, the levels of violence against women in all spheres of ‘post-conflict’ life has not only continued but has acquired certain other dimensions.”<sup>31</sup> The activism of some women’s groups has made the violence more visible but “violence continues independently of the end of armed conflict because at its root are gendered relationships of unequal power, combined with unprecedented levels of poverty and unemployment; these root causes are in turn associated with the armed conflicts that have raged since 1964, with the colonial inheritance and with a model of ‘development’ based on a fundamental inequality which affects women much more than men.”<sup>32</sup>

This report builds an alternative, gendered view of peace and security by drawing from the grassroots experiences, knowledges and situational analyses carried out by a Maputo-based NGO, Horizonte Azul over the past fifteen years, and through the broad approach taken by the WPS program at Columbia University to understanding issues of women, peace and security. Following from this, this report also speaks to some of the same themes raised in the Mozambique National Action Plan in terms of peace and security, and grounds these themes in examples from Mozambican women’s everyday experiences and perspectives.

This report begins with a description of the methodology of a participatory visual collaboration and then explores two emergent themes: 1) security and insecurity beyond only war and armed conflict and, 2) peace and freedom beyond only war and armed conflict. All participant voices featured in this report are members of Horizonte Azul. By viewing the landscape of peace and security through local women’s eyes, this report attempts to paint a fuller picture of peace and security in Maputo, Mozambique, while also offering important lessons to understand the women, peace and security status in the country more broadly. The women’s voices chronicled in this report therefore echo the recent push around the globe, by academics and policymakers alike, who have demonstrated key structural links between the gendered problems of everyday safety, structural inequality and sustainability and durable peace and security for all.<sup>33</sup>

# 3. CO-PRODUCING PEACE AND SECURITY THEORY THROUGH PARTICIPATORY VISUAL ENGAGEMENTS

## Introduction

The broad goal of this report is to illuminate women's micro-level experiences of peace and security that contribute to broader, macro-level understandings of the women, peace and security terrain in Mozambique, with lessons for places and spaces beyond. This report therefore chronicles women's particular experiences of peace and security in their everyday lives and spaces, as representations of the broad terrain of women, peace and security, through data collected via focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews with eight participants in 2017.

This report is the product of a research collaboration between Columbia University's Women, Peace and Security program, and Horizonte Azul, ASCHA, a Mozambican organization that strives to promote and protect human rights, especially of young women and girls. ASCHA promotes initiatives that advance gender equality, empowerment, political participation and civic engagement of young women and girls, especially those in at-risk environments in peri-urban and rural communities.

Founded in 2005, Horizonte Azul started by providing basic services and advocating at the community level for the rights of orphaned and vulnerable children and youth. Since joining the Fórum Mulher Network in 2011, the organization has used institutional training and capacity building workshops in schools and communities to support young women and girls; mainstreamed gender in their programming; and also began working with boys and men to instill new understandings of masculinity. Horizonte Azul especially works to highlight the importance of including perspectives of women from civil society, and to articulate to policymakers both the urgency, and also the wisdom that can come from doing so.

To advocate for the rights of women and to host community workshops and training, Horizonte Azul leverages its strength through a network of young local awareness-raising activists and mobilizers, such as those that co-produced this report. They also partner with large-scale international organizations such as the United Nations, World Vision and Rozaria Memorial Trust in Zimbabwe.

## Methods and Design

Participatory visual research is a method consisting of the representation, dissemination and interpretation of data in which the researcher centers participants' expertise. It is a collaborative methodology based on creating "possibilities of visualizing what is at stake (through the eyes of community photographers) and shifting the boundaries of knowledge (through the eyes of insiders)." Photovoice is a specific type of participatory visual research, described as "a type of grassroots policymaking where populations whose voices are often absent from policy are given simple cameras to express their points of view on a particular issue."<sup>34</sup> Visual and participatory tools have the ability to make research more democratic and more holistic by featuring voices of subjects not just as objects of study, but rather as participants and interpreters of research.

The WPS research team collaborated with Daniel Lyons, a photographer and expert in participatory visual methods, and research assistant Julia Cardoni, both of whom had already worked within the Mozambican context for many years. The project began with an orientation to introduce the Photovoice method to the participants, including addressing ethical considerations in taking public photographs, as well as to provide an overview of the project timeline and commitments. This was followed by an in-depth group discussion generated by Horizonte Azul's members on reflections of their

experiences of peace and security in their neighborhoods and broader community. The discussion engaged themes related to gender violence, insecurity in public spaces, domestic violence, physical and psychological violence and the naturalization of male behavior influenced and reinforced by local social norms.

This broad discussion led to three framing questions that guided the subsequent photographic exercise:

- 1) How do social norms influence the practices of violence?
- 2) What types and in what types of locations do violence occur?
- 3) What is expected of the behavior of men and women in situations of violence?

Based on these framing questions, the eight participants, Arcelia, Berta, Jessica, Dulce, Filomena, Silvia, Diolene and Rita,<sup>35</sup> began the participatory process: taking photographs, curating the images, and then discussing the meaning and implications behind each image as a group. More specifically, they took pictures of sites, events, symbols or scenes in their community that held specific meaning related to the ways in which they think about and understand everyday experiences of peace and security in their own individual and communal lives. These images served as discussion prompts to collectively explore those peace and security themes that were significant to the group.

Following these group discussions about the chosen images, each participant was also interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview questionnaire generated by the women themselves and the types of themes and questions they were most interested in. During these interviews, the participating women shared rich and thoughtful reflections on the meaning of security and the sense of being “secure” in public spaces. The majority of the photographs represented contexts of violence, such as abandoned areas and ruins, while others documented symbolic spaces of exclusion, or “spaces where women cannot be”, both physically and metaphorically based on conventional social norms and understandings of common sense within the community.

These individual interviews were supplemented with focus group discussions that generated multilevel connections between the participants’ experiences of daily violence and broader global, social phenomena. Participants moved from just talking about physical sites of insecurity and exclusion to also reflecting with each other on broader themes such as corruption, national security, social inequality and peace.

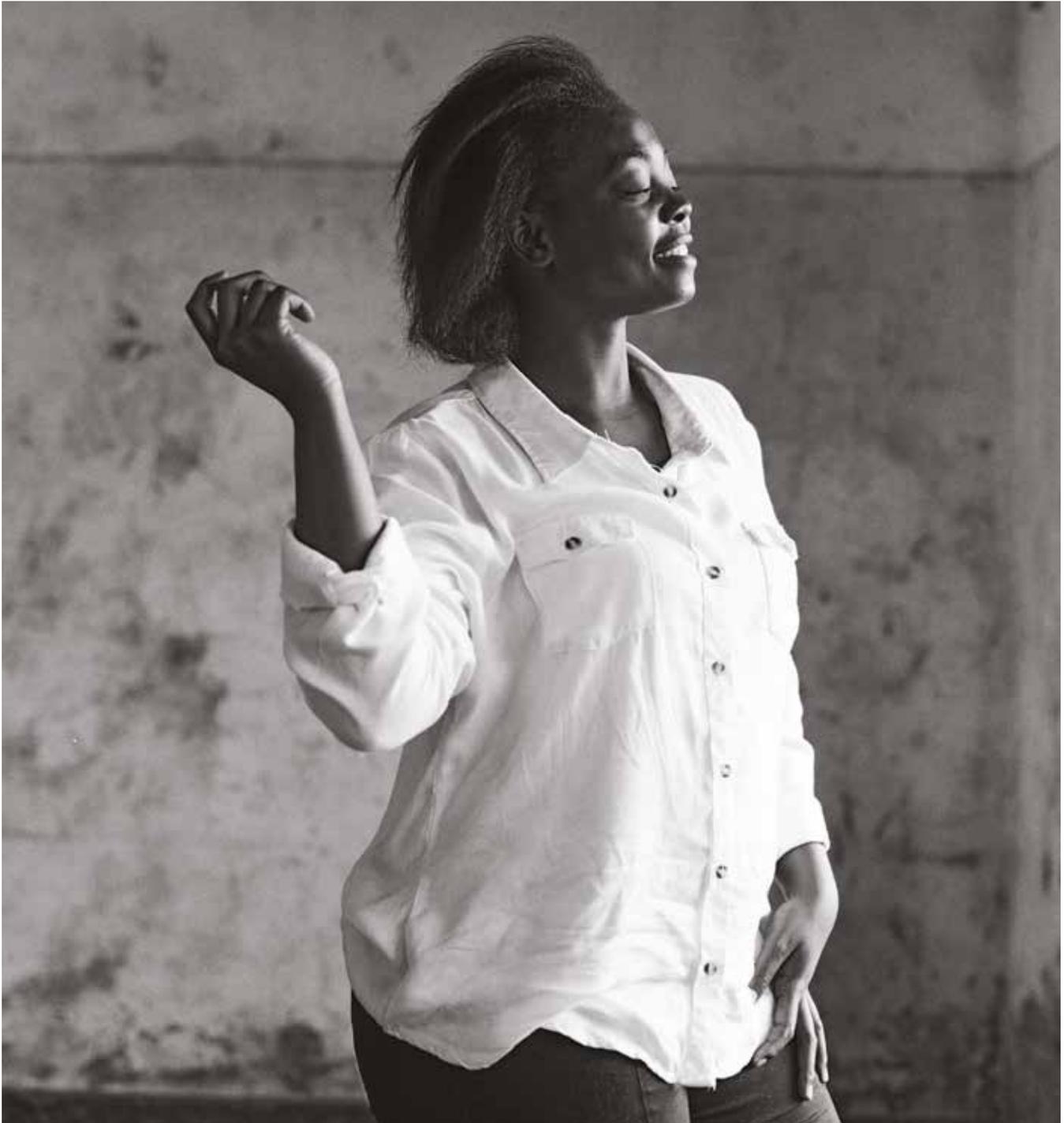
These discussions culminated in the creation of a second set of framing questions such as:

- 1) What is the reality of Mozambique regarding corruption?
- 2) How does social inequality interfere with the peace process?
- 3) How is security related to the peacebuilding process?

After reflecting on this latter set of questions, and engaging in another round of photography, the participants further shared their complex understanding of the peace and security terrain through a second round of interviews. The images co-produced during the second round of discussion served primarily as metaphors to discuss peace, corruption and social inequality, and was the basis of a second focus group discussion where participants further engaged in a shared deliberation over the nuances of peace and security in their everyday lives and its ties to broader social problems within Mozambique and beyond.

A final wrap-up meeting saw the culmination of the photography portion of the project, during which participants reviewed all of their photos and discussed their collective meaning and implications as a group. Participants were invited to work together to create a narrative to describe the collective body of work, while answering questions such as: who should see these photos? And, how do they need to be seen? These questions not only informed the terms of this report, but also led to the development of a strategy for a grassroots photo exhibit organized by Horizonte Azul.

## PAINTING A PICTURE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### **BERTA DE NAZARETH**

Berta is a 24-year-old young woman with a degree in Sociology. She is a social activist for women's human rights. She became an activist in 2005 after joining Horizonte Azul with a focus on advocating for the rights of children. Since this time, Berta has expanded her activism to include defending the rights of young women and girls at all costs through her work leading advocacy groups.



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### **DIOLENE GIMO**

Diolene is Horizonte Azul's Communications Officer and a human rights activist for girls and young women. A 23-year-old woman, she graduated in International Relations and Diplomacy, and dreams of a world where gender equality and respect for women is a reality.

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### **FILOMENA FERNANDO CHAVANGUANE**

Filomena is a 22-year-old mentor and social activist. She first got involved in Horizonte Azul's activities in 2009 as a participant of the organization's theater and poetry youth group. Starting as an advocate on children's rights causes, she expanded her passion to defend social causes in women and girls' rights.

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**JÉSSICA HELENA  
IGREJA**

Jéssica is 25 years old and currently studying Marketing Management. She is an activist in women and girls' human rights and is a mentor in the MUVA Assistente program.

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**DULCE FERNANDO  
HOUANE**

Dulce Fernando Houane is a 25-year-old student and activist. She dreams of becoming a Military Defense Police Officer, to change the landscape in which she lives, and to ensure security, order and public tranquility.

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### **RITA JACINTO HUO**

Rita is a 21-year-old student, feminist, and social activist in the field of women's human rights. She is involved in a women's economic empowerment project where she trains women in the manufacturing and selling of notebooks using *capulana* fabric. Rita is also interested in photography.

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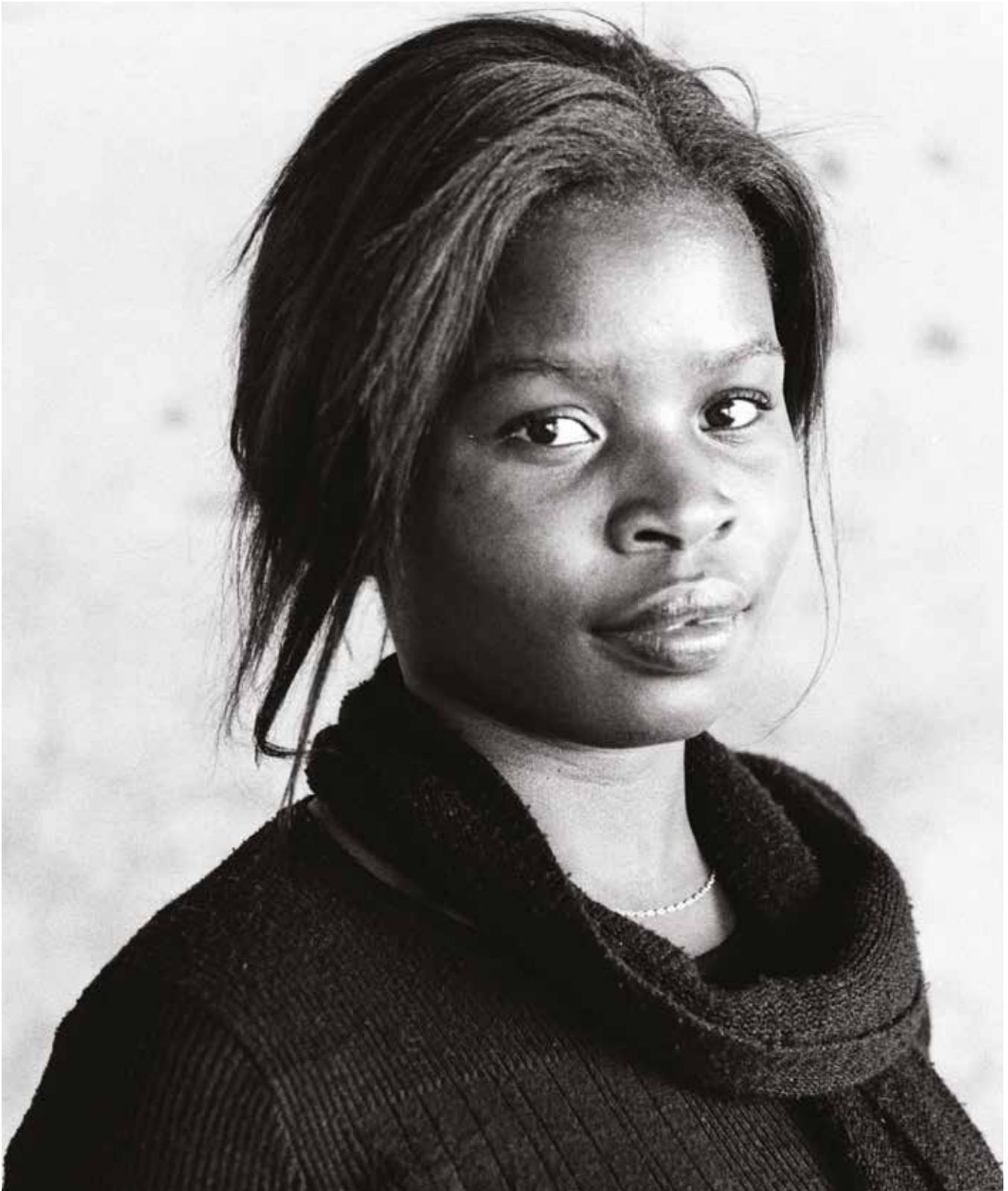


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### **ARCELIA PAULA FERNANDO HOUANE**

Arcelia Paula Fernando Houane is a social activist and medical student. She has the dream of being a doctor to help people, particularly women.

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**SÍLVIA GERVÁSIO NHASSENCO**

Sílvia is a 27-year-old mentor and facilitator in gender matters in the MUVA Assistente program. With a degree in Accounting and Public Relations, Sílvia dreams of becoming a lawyer to continue to fight against violence against women and to advocate for women's rights.

## 4. KEY THEMES FROM PARTICIPANTS

### 1. Security and Insecurity Beyond War and Armed Conflict

#### A) Infrastructure and Everyday Security



(Diolene, Photo 1)

***This little very dark hallway leads to a house. Every once in a while, men smoke, they drink, and they stay there. I was so scared to be there, any girl who passed by to access their own house, they were catcalled and harassed – Diolene***

A major theme to emerge from the group discussions about peace and security was the relationship between infrastructure and everyday safety. The group decided to take pictures of places where they felt safe and unsafe, and also of places where they felt insecure and/or symbolized insecurity. Many women took photos of alleyways and public streets, identifying these as areas where they felt unsafe. For example, women cited abandoned construction sites and the lack of streetlights as creating precarious conditions where sexual assault is likely to occur. Being unable to avoid these areas in order to go about their lives and complete tasks (i.e., daily chores, work, school, etc.), they spoke of how women and girls must navigate dangerous environments in order to fulfill familial obligations as well as pursue opportunities for income generation and social mobility. Participants, Diolene, Berta, Silvia, and Dulce shared their perspectives on the relationship between infrastructure and security (see Photo 1 above).



(Berta, Photo 2)

*In this picture, I was thinking about the locations and types of violence that occur in my neighborhood. This is a ditch, next to a school with intense daily movement of children and adolescents. Here many girls have been raped. This photo illustrates the space. But it is at night that violence happens here. It is a space where people can do whatever they want, regardless of the law. It is a space of abandonment. This street by chance is one of the ways that gives access to many other places in the neighborhood. It could be a place of tranquility but it does not bring that feeling – Berta*



(Silvia, Photo 3)

***This house [is] under construction and it has not been worked on since last year. Here, places like this are usually spaces where violence occurs, mainly sexual. So to me this type of unfinished structures provides a space for rape – Silvia***

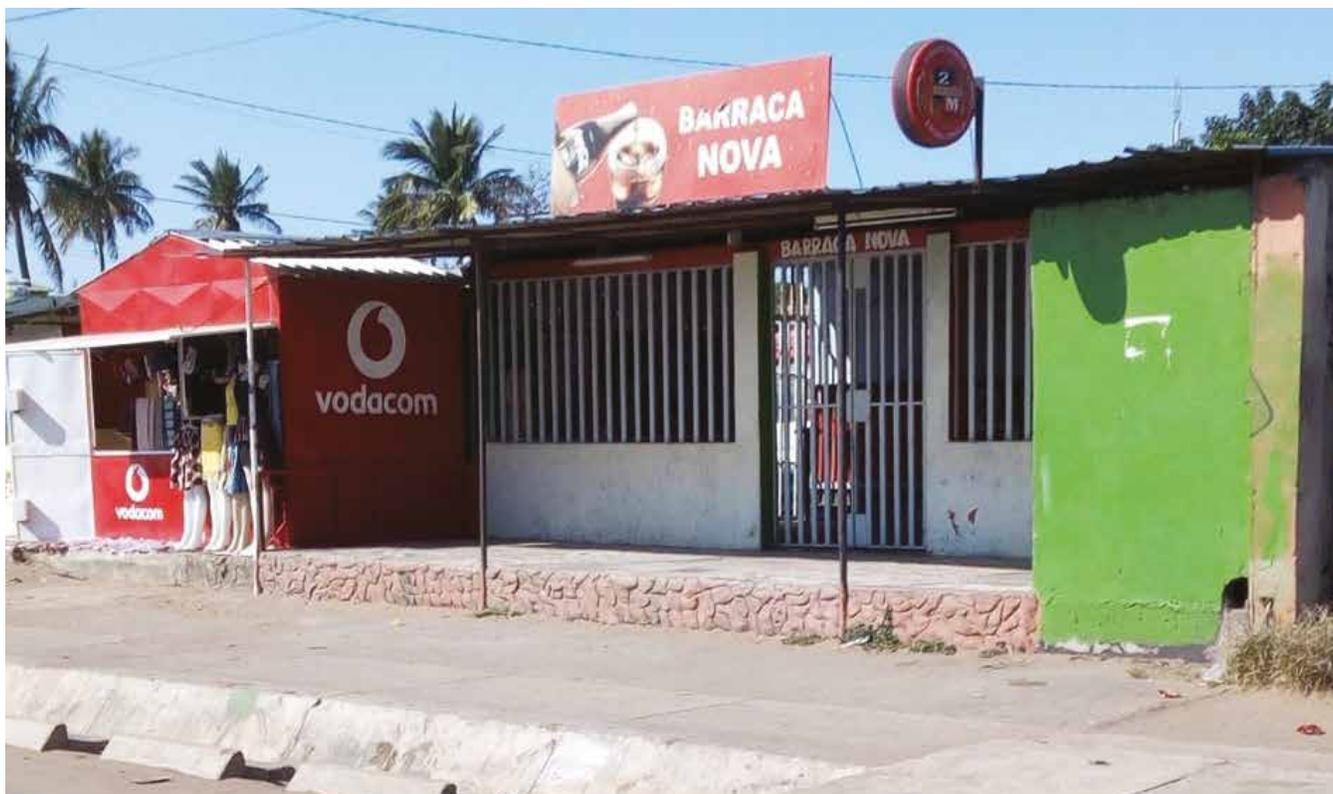
In each of these images and descriptions, security was talked about in terms of pathways women take every day on their way to work, school, and home. The participants' viewpoints, both visually and conceptually, illustrate the particularly intricate ways in which spaces are gendered, and engender security and insecurity. In doing so, the discussions among the participants pointed to the close structural ties between urban infrastructure, economic security, and social and personal security for women and girls in particular. Especially by highlighting the high incidence of rape in particular spaces and pathways, the participants discussed the systemic experience of gendered insecurity among Mozambican women of their class and social background.



(Dulce, Photo 4)

*I understand that the buyer demolished the house and needed to rebuild, but this kind of situation creates a lot of insecurity especially among women in the community. I feel safe at home. In the area where I'm at, crime is not too bad there. The unsafe areas are where you can only go through alleys. Some people have to go through there every day just to get into their homes – Dulce*

## B) Daily Violence and Public Spaces



(Berta, Photo 5)

*This photograph is a night space, a bar that young people use as a place of leisure. These kinds of bars can also be thought of as spaces that naturalize violence. This particular bar is frequented by young people, and young women and girls are understood as easy targets. If you are raped at this bar, it will be seen as justified violence by asking what you were doing there, what did you want there? In this space physical violence occurs, if the woman refuses, she is booed, because it presupposes that we should accept such attacks – Berta*

Another related theme to emerge from these discussions was the ways in which abandoned areas and lack of infrastructure contribute to insecurity and the violence women experience in public places. Participants took photographs of public areas like bars and schools. For many, these spaces were riddled with the potential for violence and inextricably linked to their definitions and experiences of security and insecurity. In Photo 5 above, Berta reflects on the gendered implications of occupying public spaces.

Participants also described what a safe space would entail in contrast to the areas where they live today. Silvia shared, “What would a safe space be? A finished house with people living in it. No space for evil-doers. No space for rape.”

In the group discussions, reflecting on their pictures, members of Horizonte Azul explained that a majority of women and girls in Mozambique regard schools as unsafe.<sup>36</sup> This was not described exclusively in terms of physical safety but also related to psychological stressors in and outside of the classroom. Jessica describes her experience listening to a teacher chastising her peer who, as a pregnant youth, was constantly rebuked in class. She explained:



*Whenever in biology class we talked about reproduction, the teacher always gave the example of my friend who got pregnant at age 13. This is a kind of psychological violence. Thus, psychological violence is not only inflicted between students, but teachers can [also] be inflicting it on the student – Jessica*

(Jessica, Photo 6)

When reflecting on the theme of security, and how young women and girls experience security in schools, participants shared that schools are not often “looked after”, leaving young people to feel unprotected and uneasy. For example, Jessica captured her view in Photo 7 as follows:



(Jessica, Photo 7)

*This image speaks about security and peace. It was taken in front of a school where there is no guard, and therefore no security. Schools must have guards to protect the students who are studying. Without the guard, people who are not studying are able to enter the school, and steal, or provoke a fight. It is important to have security everywhere. I purposely took the photo with those children because they are the ones in need of care and protection – Jessica*

Through their photographs, the group noted that the insecurity women and girls experience is often related to feeling unable to navigate public spaces independently. Berta described this as follows:

*These spaces don't belong to women, don't belong to girls. By being in any street, doesn't matter if it's an alley, if it's day, if it's in the afternoon, it's already assumed that this isn't a space for women, because since we were little we were taught that we should stay at home, do the dishes. When we go out, we become easy targets to evil-doers, and because it creates a high level of insecurity, because we need to transit on the streets to do our daily chores, and it becomes a daily struggle to walk on those streets. So, when looking at the streets, at the public spaces, at the abandoned schools, and the abandoned spaces, to me it brings this matter of insecurity, the matter of public spaces not belonging to us, it's that denial of not belonging to these public spaces.*

The exclusionary gendering of public spaces characterized by Berta and Silvia is another significant theme within the women, peace and security terrain that is often overlooked while taking a normative 'traditional' approach to the field, particularly the emphasis on primarily linking security with war and armed conflict.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, the ties between education as a tool of socio-political development and gendered access, especially girls' limited access to educational spaces such as schools, is of particular significance in this context. While gender-focused development and post-conflict programming may focus on the role of education in promoting and sustaining women's empowerment—such programming also has to contend with the lived realities described by Jessica and Silvia when considering the significance of gender parity in educational access to creating and sustaining peaceful societies at large. In many ways, seeing schools as potential spaces of psychological violence and conflict for girls in particular is a key contribution to understanding the peace and security terrain of Mozambique.

### C) Social Inequality



(Jessica, Photo 8)

***This photo reflects social inequality. The photo shows the economic inequality in the everyday life of the neighborhoods. Specifically the peripheral neighborhoods in the city of Maputo. There are houses that do not have as much as a fence, and they sit next to houses that have everything. One family sits on a low level and the other is high above them. This does not create an environment of peace, but rather there is envy and potential for conflict – Jessica***

Reflecting on the broad theme of peace and security, participants took pictures that they felt captured the dynamics of social inequality. Through discussions of these images, they framed inequality as a dynamic that shapes their everyday lives, relating to the theme of security. Specifically, they cited socio-economic divides and gender norms as driving forces influencing social stratification and insecurity. Jessica visually captures how this reality of social inequality affects her sense of peace in Photo 8, above.

Participants also explained that gendered expectations, familial obligations and caretaking roles prevented them from achieving upward social mobility vis-à-vis schooling and employment. Women also described being married at a young age and being responsible for the majority of the household chores, even as children relative to their male siblings.<sup>38</sup>



(Berta, Photo 9)

Berta captured this in Photo 9, adding that:

*We talk a lot about premature marriage, girls who live a life that has been premeditated for them by other people, while men enjoy the freedom to do as they like. The professions of women and their roles are also premeditated, always having some dimension of caretaking, or some kind of service provision.*

Berta also explains that while there are many programs to decrease child marriage, societal expectations often make this impossible. She described:

*If I tell a 17-year-old that [she] shouldn't be a homestay woman, it's contradictory with what she has learned since she's little during her socialization. I remember that we discussed this a lot, the naturalization of things [...] and for men, the expected behavior is to be free, to do whatever they'd like to do [...]. In this photo we can even see the expected professions for women. A saleswoman, a nanny, a nurse, a teacher, because there is this dimension of caretaking and service provision.*

While the theme of social inequality came through in the multiple group discussions about peace and security, the photographs served as prompts for such discussions and ranged from the literal to the symbolic. Some women took photographs of nature to represent social inequality and stratification. For example, Filomena photographed poorly cared for grass (Photo 10) to represent the inequality she feels in her life. She explained:



(Filomena, Photo 10)

*There's grass which is growing, while other portions are fading. This is what happens. Social inequality. Some people develop, grow up, but others remain in the same condition, and don't have an opportunity, or capacity, to develop, because there are others that step on them, without thinking of the consequence of what is happening – Filomena*

## 2. Peace and Freedom Beyond War and Armed Conflict

### A) Activism and Social Engagement as Peace

In addition to discussing the topics of everyday violence and insecurity, participants also shared their imaginings of what peace and justice look like, and could look like, for their communities. They participated in animated discussions about what peace means to them in everyday life. For the majority of them, peace was highlighted and depicted in images about everyday relationships—places where they can speak, communicate, and share knowledges with each other. Further, peace was centrally tied to descriptions of activism and action.

Rita, for example, noted that:

***Activism is, first, to love what you do. Then, to have the ability to share information that you learn during workshops [...], know how to listen, know how to act, so that people see you as someone different.***

Silvia reflected:

***At this moment, in our communities, we need more communication, more lectures, more activists, that would gather in groups, to rigorously walk across communities, visit markets [...] and, with people's consent, try to explain what violence is, what are the aftermaths of violence, why it shouldn't be perpetuated.***

Berta added:

***[Peace] is a matter of discussing ideas, not of using force.***

Arcelia agreed:

***If a group of men and women gather to talk, we can generate better ideas on how to live together peacefully, to have sustainable relationships, so there is no violence within the relationship. It is through conversations that we will understand each other and try to achieve peace. Because effective peace, as we know it, the big ones (government) are trying to solve. But peace in homes, peace in our relationships, everything happens through conversation.***

The conversations and reflections from the group underscored the importance of community gatherings for discussing local problems and finding strategic solutions. Participants noted that, in order to build a just society where all members feel at peace and secure, there must be input from a wide range of actors in civil society, not only elected officials and authority figures. They identified the need for more opportunities to work cooperatively to find solutions as a major theme in their shared discussions, and in their photographs. Additionally, participants also articulated a relational view of peace as critical for community wellbeing and cohesiveness that is achieved via activism. In their view, activist exchanges served to create peace by fostering knowledge sharing through informed dialogue.

B) Misallocation of Resource as Structural Violence



(Arcelia, Photo 11)

***People use this ditch to throw dirty water, waste, they pee, defecate, do many things. Thus, this [polluted ditch] is a kind of violence. If our community receives a visitor, a Minister for instance [...], and then they come to our neighborhood and see our ditches, very polluted and dirty, it becomes a source of low self-esteem for our community – Arcelia***

While speaking about the links between peace, security and economic resources, the group stressed the significance of investment in social and public services to creating and maintaining peaceful communities. They articulated that spending large amounts of money on weapons or military undermines the importance of funding social programs. For example, Silvia argued that the “state should take care of us, provide us [with] health services. Security is way beyond buying weapons.” Arcelia concurred, and described the government’s neglect of the sanitation system in the district of Maxaquene (Photo 11, and the quote above).

Berta also remarked on the importance of public services and spaces as related to peace:

*The biggest criticism I place on the relationship with peace is that our government is preoccupied with buying weapons and is not concerned with educating people as political and critical subjects.*

Berta articulated her perspective of peace in this way:

*If the country could work on security issues, not only from the military point of view. Each day, more policemen, more army officers are trained, but it is important to look at the security of the society, security in terms of ideology, [...] of freedom. If I'm free, I'll feel safe to opionate and make constructive critics, or not, but voice my thoughts. This is a kind of peace I could have.*

Dulce shared a photo of a police station at night to express her thoughts:



*In this photo I wanted to reflect on security and peace. It's a police station. I took it at night because they do not allow you to take photos. When the state cannot guarantee security, justice is taken into one's own hands. This happens frequently, but when people take justice into their own hands, they disturb peace, they fight between themselves.*

*I wanted to take this photo because when police don't do their job, when they abuse their power, violence only gets worse. Community members then feel it is their job to do the police's work – Dulce*

(Dulce, Photo 12)

Through their collective reflections, the participants demonstrated the pitfalls of a security perspective that prioritizes political security over all other forms by allocating a majority of state resources to the military and police forces. Instead, they argued for an expanded meaning of insecurity that includes structural inequalities created as a result of preferential allocation of resources (which in turn is informed by a limited understanding of 'peace' and 'security'). In their critical dialogues and theorizing, they identified underlying structural links between patterns of government spending and their experiences of social and economic insecurity in particular, illuminating the need for rethinking 'peace' and 'security' from within a broader context of human security that includes multiple domains such as physical, social, political, economic and ecological security.

C) “Come and Go”: Freedom of Movement



(Berta, Photo 13)

*The plant is kept safe by stones, like the government that promotes security by weapons and not by freedom, as free citizens. On one hand the plant is zealous and on the other hand she is a stifled plant. Taking only into account the exterior and not the welfare of the nation – Berta*

A common phrase relating to the theme of feeling “peaceful”, “safe”, and “free” amongst the women was of being able to “come and go.” As previously mentioned in this report, participants described feeling insecure as they move throughout Maputo. Freedom of movement was a central theme amongst the group when envisioning what feeling “peaceful”, “safe”, and “free” would entail. Through Photo 12 (above) Berta describes that female citizens do not just wish to be “protected” from physical threats but that they also desire to move freely without restriction.

Berta also shared her feeling of insecurity as follows:

*Feeling safe I would say goes beyond the question of state security, [it] means to feel calm, to walk freely, to do what I want at night, in the church, in any space, to bring an inner tranquility. Security is still very much in question, for we are in constant distress. Security is an inner peace, walking and doing what I want without even thinking.*

*Every day police and military are trained but it is important to think about social security in freedom. If I’m free I need to feel safe to say so. This plant is held by stones. If I feel safe I can come and go whenever I want. I can put pressure on the state, and engage in social activism. The activist will only be able to go to the street if they have a sense of security.*

Filomena also offered critical insight on how the feeling of confinement and control prevents people from living freely and peacefully. She says:

***The Mozambican people are behind those bars (referring to the bars of a window). When you are behind those bars, [the feeling is that you are] in jail, you don't have the opportunity to go out, or to do whatever you want to do, you are kept in a solitary confinement (...) We are held without security, without peace, and mostly without voice, to say anything.***

Through their photos and conversations, each of the participants wove an intricate image of their complex experiences of insecurity, alongside their vision for a peaceful society. Not only did the participants produce a collective reading of their shared landscape, identifying specific places that created a feeling of insecurity, but they also mapped their ability to move through particular spaces onto markers of peace and security. Together, they shared how the ability to move freely through different spaces is a significant marker of a secure society, and hence identified key linkages between freedom of movement and the presence or absence of peace and security. In doing so, they articulated a complex rethinking of the women, peace and security terrain once again by making hidden connections between everyday experiences such as the 'freedom to come and go freely', with broader societal experiences of inequality, especially speaking as activist women for whom agency, security, and peace are both matters of deep communal and personal concern.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Within public and popular discourses in the Mozambican context, peace is still thought of and discussed as the absence of conflict. Such an approach often neglects to include the experiences of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, and more importantly, neglects the environment of insecurity, injustice, and lack of equitable rights that structure women's lives. The images and discussions chronicled in the previous section of this report highlight the complexity of this systemic exclusion, illustrating how women encounter and maneuver these situations in their daily lives.

While the national context in Mozambique is considered to be peaceful since the end of the civil war in 1992, several regions of the country continue to experience a total lack of justice, wellbeing and insecurity. In fact, the lived realities of Arcelia, Berta, Jessica, Dulce, Filomena, Silvia, Diolene and Rita documented in this report add a gendered dimension to this structural inequality between regions, showing how women and girls are disproportionately affected by insecurity and systemic injustice, while being exposed to all forms of violence in their own homes, neighborhoods and communities.

In 2018, members of Horizonte Azul participated in several workshops and meetings organized by UN Women, such as the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Leaders' Forum, and talked about peace and security from the expanded viewpoint shared in this report.<sup>39</sup> In the last forum, held on December 12 and 13, 2018,<sup>40</sup> the sociologist Maria José Arthur argued that Mozambique's major cities were not organized taking women and the poor into consideration. She offered a structural critique of urban design, showing how these cities were planned as a space for the elites, with the outskirts serving as areas only to house the working masses who sustain the economic activities in the city center.

In addition to a class-based hierarchy in city planning, there is also an implicit gender bias. The majority of city-dwelling women in Mozambique live in the outskirts, with little or no access to public health and education services, infrastructure or at a minimum, basic sanitation. As a result, as noted by several participating women, they also experience high rates of economic vulnerability and unemployment and also make easy targets for crime and violence. Part of the conversations in the district and municipal fora point to the kind of deficiencies in infrastructure and public services in peri-urban and rural areas and a lack of policing and access to justice in communities and districts that the participating women captured in their photos and discussions.

Relatedly, another theme that is vivid in the photovoice project as well as through different public fora hosted by Horizonte Azul is that of freedom of movement. In the photovoice project, this was framed amongst the participants as 'the right to come and go freely'. Through these discussions, the right to come and go freely is also seen as an essential part of a peaceful society, where women and girls are able to move through public spaces such as streets without fear of violation and harassment.

This linking of everyday movement without fear connects to the need for including women in discussions about peace and security more broadly in urban contexts; since infrastructure and public services in the outskirts of cities in Mozambique are not viewed from a gender perspective, women continue to experience social inequalities and violence in these areas.

Additionally, one of the biggest challenges to building and maintaining peace is the way the Mozambican justice system conducts cases of gender-based violence.

For Horizonte Azul, the theme of women, peace and security is an important part of the struggle to ensure the well-being of girls, and to build a freer and more just society. As reflected in the conversations among the photovoice

participants, it is of critical importance to continue to recognize the expansive nature of 'peace' and 'security' beyond war and armed conflict. It is only by affirming this broad understanding of peace and security that women's diverse experiences of insecurity become evident, and give meaning to the inequality and violence that continues to structure women's lives.

The instances of gender-based violence and experiences of structural violence characterized by the participants challenges the myth that Mozambicans 'live in peace'. In the current political context, moving forward with a more holistic women, peace and security agenda illuminated by Arcelia, Berta, Jessica, Dulce, Filomena, Silvia, Diolene and Rita would mean questioning and pressuring state authorities for a new security paradigm that centrally includes women's voices with the goal of creating better, more peaceful living conditions for all.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This report captures some less commonly discussed features of peace and security. The reflections included in this report affirm the need for a more holistic understanding of peace and security that expands beyond the context of war and armed conflict. The participants in this participatory project defined peace as fundamentally grounded in relationships and provided real world examples of the conditions and situations that threaten their livelihoods. The prevalence of 'everyday violence' that many of the women highlighted in their discussions are often not made central in policy, and yet influence women's mobility, sense of security in their surroundings and their public presence as equal actors in society.

Grassroots organizations led by women are essential in both identifying and responding to these nuanced experiences of peace and security. Horizonte Azul, the organization with whom the Women, Peace and Security program partnered with on this report, is an example of a grassroots women's organization that effectively works to create more secure and peaceful conditions for women and girls in Mozambique.

While the Mozambican national context is dominantly regarded as 'peaceful,' as this report shows, women and girls living in Mozambique continue to be exposed to several forms of violence in their own homes, neighborhoods and communities. In their discussions with each other in this participatory visual process, through reflecting on images of daily life in Maputo, the members of Horizonte Azul that participated in this photo project not only characterized their experiences of insecurity, but also named multiple ways that women and girls mobilize every day, decades after the end of the Mozambican Civil War, to improve conditions and livelihoods within and among their communities.

They spoke, for example, of peace activism as located through the dissemination of knowledge and ideas and of the freedom to move and be in public spaces as central to their security. Their discussions of the need for better public infrastructure as well as the dissolution of gender norms and expectations are not unique to Maputo, but shared by cities all over the world. It is a perspective of peace and security that is not always highlighted but is critical to people's lived experience.

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