

# Mozambique History

## Pre-Colonial Period

The primitive population of Mozambique were gatherer-hunter Bushmen.

The great migrations between 200/300 AD of the Bantu people, warriors from the great lakes, forced these primitive popu



Before the VII century, coastal commercial trading posts were established by the Swahili Arabs to exchange products from the interior, mainly gold and ivory, for a variety of goods

## Colonial Inroads

The end of the XV century sees the establishment of Portuguese commercial settlements aiming at the acquisition of gold destined to be traded for Asian spices.

Initially the Portuguese established themselves in the coastal areas where they built the fortress of Sofala (1505) and occupied the Island of Mozambique (1507). Only later on by means of military conquests, with the support of the missionaries and traders, they began a process of expansion into the interior where they founded several trading posts such as the ones in Sena (1530) and Quelimane (1544). The objective was no longer the pure and simple control of the gold trade, but on the contrary to control the access to the gold production areas. This phase of commercial expansion into the interior is known as the gold phase. The following two, the ivory and slave trade phases, were known as such because of the high demand of these commodities by the mercantile world. The flow of these commodities was lastly done through the system of the "Prazos" in the Zambezi Valley which constituted the first Portuguese attempt at colonization. The "Prazos" were a kind of feudal system where the Portuguese traders occupied land that had been donated, conquered or otherwise acquired. The abolishment of the "Prazos" by royal decree of 1832 and 1854 created the conditions for the emergence of the "Estados Militares" in the Zambezi valley which dedicated themselves specifically to the slave trade, even after its official abolition in 1836 and later on in 1842.

In the Mozambican context the Macua-Lómué populations were the most affected victims of the slave trade.

Many of the victims where exported to the Mascarenhas Islands, Madagascar, Zanzibar, Persian

Gulf, Brazil and Cuba until circa 1850. Cuba was the main market of slaves of Zambebian origin.

With the advent of the Berlin Conference (1884/1885) Portugal was forced to effectively occupy the Mozambican territory. Given the military and financial incapacity to do so, the found alternative was the renting out of sovereignty and authority of vast territories to royal and leasing companies. Companhia de Moçambique and Companhia do Niassa are typical examples of royal enterprises. Companhia da Zambézia, Boror, Luabo, Sociedade do Madal, Empresa Agrícola do Lugela and Sena Sugar Estates are examples of leasing companies. This system of companies was used to the north of the Save River.

They were geared mainly to the plantation economy coupled with some labour traffic with neighbouring countries. The provinces south of the Save River (provinces of Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo) remained under the direct administration of the colonial power in this region of the country. The rendering of services based on the recruitment of labour force for the South African mines and the railways and harbours were the mainstream of economic development.

This regional economic division explains the reasons for the actual economic asymmetry between the North and the South.

The colonial occupation was not a pacific one. Mozambicans always imposed armed resistance to this occupation, the main ones being those led by Mawewe, Musila, Ngungunhane, Komala, Kaphula, Marave, Molid-Volay and Mataka. For all purposes the so called pacification of Mozambique by the Portuguese was a failure.



## The Struggle for Independence

The secular oppression and the Portuguese fascist colonial regime would force the people of Mozambique to take up arms and fight for independence. The struggle for national liberation, was taken up by Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique). This organisation was founded in 1962 as a result of the fusion of three movements in exile, namely UDENAMO (União Nacional Democrática de Moçambique), MANU (Mozambique African National Union) and UNAMI (União Nacional de Moçambique Independente). Guided by Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane, FRELIMO initiated the struggle for national liberation on 25 September 1964 at the administrative post of Chai in the province of Cabo Delgado.

Frelimo's first president, Eduardo Mondlane, would eventually be assassinated on the 3rd of February 1969. Samora Moisés Machel was his successor who proclaimed the country's independence on 25th June 1975. Machel was the victim of an air crash, incident which is still unexplained, at M'busini in neighbouring South Africa and was succeeded by the former President of the Republic Joaquim Alberto Chissano. At the beginning of the eighties, the country was confronted with an armed conflict instigated by RENAMO (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique) with the support of the South African apartheid regime. This conflict that caused many casualties and the destruction of many economic infrastructures would only come to an end in 1992 with the signing of the Acordos Gerais de Paz between Frelimo and Renamo. In 1994, the first national democratic elections were held and were won by Frelimo. Frelimo won the 2000

elections as well. In October 2004 the third democratic elections were held.

- Religion**
- Cristianism: Catholicism e protestantism (30%)
  - Islamism: Norte do País (20%)
  - Traditionals Cults: (50%)