

# GUNS, POWER AND POLITICS



Community activist  
resource

Extractivism,  
Militarisation and  
Violence against  
Women in  
Mozambique

# Background to Guns, Power and Politics

WoMin and its partners – Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG) in Zimbabwe, Justiça Ambiental (JA) in Mozambique, and Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) in Sierra Leone – jointly undertook this feminist political economy research in 2018. The aim of the research is to inform national network formation, support women's organising, trauma intervention and justice efforts by addressing the intersection of extractivism, militarisation, securitisation and violence against women.

When the research was commissioned, WoMin and its partners were clear that it would draw on formal academic analysis, research reports and reports written by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Interviews with key personnel working in NGOs or leading community organisations would be conducted, but there would be no primary fieldwork involving affected or potentially affected women. We adopted this position for a number of reasons:

(a) Women who have endured violence perpetrated by private security and the military have rarely spoken about this experience and so there is deep unaddressed trauma; and

(b) The terrain of work is extremely risky and there is need for careful process to enable women to think through risks and consequences to speaking out about the violence.

An extractive research process would likely cause further trauma and harm to the women we have elected to serve as an alliance. The researchers, bar one, respected this boundary.

The research was undertaken in Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Mozambique, and informs a conceptual synthesis paper which draws key conclusions from the research and builds critical concepts and ideas about the relationship between extractivism, securitisation, militarisation and violence against women. The research has been translated into a community activist resource tool for information and consciousness-raising in each of the three countries.



**Activist guide written by Shamim Meer drawing on a research paper authored by Áurea Mouzinho. The research and the activist guide were both commissioned by Justiça Ambiental and the WoMin African Alliance.**

# 1.

## INTRODUCTION

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Mining companies have created many problems across Africa. They take over the land communities have lived on and farmed for generations, where livestock grazed, and where family graves still stand. Governments give permission to the mining companies to take the land. They seldom ask the people who live on this land what they want or need. The companies and governments are not interested in the people. They are only interested in the profits: the money that mining will bring to the companies.

People lose their land to mining companies, and because land is their main means of surviving, they are left with nothing. When they live close to the mine, they face ill health from breathing mine dust and the rivers they rely on are polluted by waste from the mine. In most mining-affected areas there are tensions between companies and communities. When communities question or resist, they are faced with private security sent by the companies, and the police and military sent by government.

It is not easy to find information on how the police, army and mining security are affecting communities in mining areas. During visits to two mining areas for this study, community members told us that the mining companies try to prevent communities from speaking to 'outsiders' about the problems they face. It is even more difficult to find information on women's experiences of violence in mining areas.

From the little information we have, we know women experience sexualised violence and rape. These forms of violence are difficult to talk about because they are not only physically, but also psychologically traumatic. Women are often wrongly made to believe that they might in some way be to blame for sexualised violence – people may ask what was she doing out so late? Was she asking for it? Did she enjoy it? It is well known that with sexualised violence the victim is often blamed and has to defend herself. This is wrong and needs to be challenged so that more women can speak out about these experiences.

This booklet hopes to increase awareness about the violence women experience in mining-affected areas, and to inspire ways to uncover and challenge this violence. We hope to encourage women to find ways to open up discussion on the violence they face, so that this can be addressed through support, as well as through finding ways to stop such violence. If people do not speak about and do not expose the violence women face in mining areas, the problem will remain unchallenged.

In the following section we start with a note on power. We then look at how mining started at the time of Portuguese colonial rule in a system that oppressed and exploited Mozambican people. Next we look at how the Frelimo government made the shift in the late 1980s from socialist policies, which focused on the wellbeing of the people of Mozambique, to an economic system which focuses on company profits instead, while not protecting or addressing the needs and interests of the majority of Mozambicans. We note that this economic system is kept in place through violence – with private security, the police and army controlling and disciplining anyone who stands in the way of mining companies. We try to uncover as much as we can about the ways in which women are affected by such violence, and we point to the need for more information and discussion on the violence women face at the hands of private security, police and the military in mining areas.

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## 2. POWER

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The story we want to tell is a story of power. Of power over people, and of the power communities and women have and can build to overcome the power over them.

In Mozambique's history, the Portuguese colonisers used their power to oppress and exploit Mozambican people. Frelimo built its power as a liberation movement to end colonial rule and to bring in a system of socialism focused on ensuring the needs of all Mozambicans were met. Women were active in the liberation movement and were part of building people's power against the colonisers.

The Frelimo leader, Samora Machel, said that women's liberation to end their oppression was an important part of the liberation struggle, but to be free, women also had to challenge the power men have over women in Mozambican society. Women should be seen as full human beings and not as inferior to men.

After independence, Frelimo was able for a short time to put in place policies in line with socialist ideas, which focused on the people. But these policies were overturned in the late 1980s when government shifted to a system of development that focused on companies and profits and created increased hardship for the majority of Mozambicans. This shift enabled mining companies and corrupt top officials to use their power to amass riches, while the majority of the people lived in increasing poverty.

For women, despite Frelimo leaders stating that women's oppression must end, very little was done to ensure changes in women's lives. And so, women in communities affected by mining often have to face the power of the mines, the power of the government and the power of men over women.

Communities affected by mining and women in these communities can challenge the powers over them. People have power within themselves and they can build power with each other to challenge the harmful model of development, the harm created by mining in people's lives, and the harm created by a system which sees women as inferior to men.

Women can build their power to challenge the many ways in which they are harmed by mining, including the violence that mining brings into their lives.



It was as if government was saying to these companies, 'come take our resources and do what you will with our people to make as much money as you want'.

# 3. MINING IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Portuguese ruled Mozambique from the 1500s until independence in 1975. The people of Mozambique faced much hardship under the Portuguese colonisers. They took over the land and forced Mozambican men to work almost like slaves, on the mines and plantations in Mozambique and in neighbouring British colonies such as South Africa.

The Portuguese made large amounts of money from mining. They increased their wealth from coal mining in the 1940s and aluminium mining in the 1950s and 1960s. Mozambicans saw none of this wealth. Instead they faced increased hardship.

The people of Mozambique fought against colonial rule, with Frelimo leading the struggle for freedom from the Portuguese. In 1975, Mozambique became independent, and the new government, led by Samora Machel, followed a socialist path. This meant that government focused on making sure that all Mozambicans had land, and that government put money into things such as education and health care to make sure that people's needs were met.

But soon after coming into power Frelimo was weakened in a war with Renamo, and through interference from the governments of apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia who were opposed to socialism. In addition, Frelimo was pressured by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and capitalist companies interested in making money.

A weakened Frelimo began to shift away from socialism in the mid-1980s. In place of socialist development, the Frelimo government now took a capitalist path. This meant government spent less on people's needs, such as education and health care. Government opened up the country's people and resources to companies wanting to make profits. Laws and policies were passed to attract foreign companies. It was as if government was saying to these companies, 'come take our resources and do what you will with our people to make as much money as you want'. At the same time, some corrupt government officials began to make sure that some of this money would come into their hands. The needs of the majority of the people of the country were forgotten.

Since Mozambique had one of the largest coal supplies in the world, many mining companies took up this offer. They came from all over the world by the year 2000, as the box below shows.

**By the year 2000, the Mozambican government had granted South Africa's Sasol oil and gas company rights to extract natural gas in Inhambane Province.**

**Soon after, the government also gave permission to other international companies to extract coal, mineral sands, gold, rubies and other minerals.**

**In 2007, Vale the Brazilian-owned mining company started the first privately-owned coal mine in Moatize in the Tete Province, and very soon other coal mining companies started to mine in different areas of the same Province. These included: Riversdale (Australia), Rio Tinto (Britain-Australia), the International Coal Ventures Private Limited (ICVL) (India) and Jindal Africa (India).**

**In 2007, government gave Irish-owned Kenmare permission to extract mineral sands in Moma, Nampula Province.**

**In 2011, government gave British-owned Montepuez Ruby Mining permission to mine rubies in Nyamanhunbir, Cabo Delgado Province.**

According to Mozambique's National Mining Registry, about half of Mozambique's land area is set aside for mining, mostly in the northern and central parts of the country.

The government's National Development Strategy (NDS) for 2015-2030, sees the mining of coal, natural gas, mineral sands and gemstones as important for the country's development.


The mining companies told the people whose land they wanted that mining would reduce poverty and develop the community. But this was not true. While companies made big profits, communities affected by mining lost their land, homes and livelihoods. For them there was no wealth and no development.

In many cases, government officials enriched themselves through the corrupt granting of licenses to companies. At times government officials were involved in these mining companies. The Centre for Public Integrity (Centro de Integridade Pública) notes that weak laws in Mozambique makes this corruption possible.



Over the last twenty years, mining companies have made huge profits from Mozambique's natural resources. They have become powerful players in the country's economy and politics. Because of their power, mining companies have been able to avoid and evade paying tax. This means that the country loses out while the mining companies get richer and richer. In 2014, for example, the CIP Bulletin, Edição No 42017, published by the Centre for Public Integrity (Centro de Integridade Pública) shows that the Mozambican government received only 50% of the expected USD 7.8 million in royalties from the Montepuez Rubi Mining Company. The Panama Papers which uncovered corruption by large companies in many countries across the world, highlighted that a large share of royalty payments from ruby mining does not reach government, nor does it get to the communities. The royalties go instead into secret bank accounts in other parts of the world.

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An illustration of four women with dark skin and light-colored hair, rendered in a stylized, flat-shaded manner. They are arranged in a circle, each with a speech bubble pointing towards them. The background is solid black. The speech bubbles contain text in white and yellow. The woman at the top right has a yellow speech bubble. The woman at the top left has a white speech bubble. The woman at the bottom left has a white speech bubble. The woman at the bottom right has a white speech bubble.

“Why do they say I asked for it?”

“Why do they ask if I tempted him?”

“Why do they ask what I was wearing?”

“Why do they ask what I was doing there?”

# 4. EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY MINING

The communities who have been living on land rich in coal, rubies and other minerals are the ones who suffer the most once mining starts.

Mining takes place in rural provinces in the northern and central parts of the country. The communities here depend on the land, water and forests to provide and care for their families. When mining companies come into their villages, people lose access to the fields, water and forests and are forced to find other means of survival.

Communities whose land is taken for commercial farming and fishing, and wood extraction also face problems similar to those of communities affected by mining.

Communities affected by mining try to build their power to negotiate with the mines and government around compensation and relocation, but often the law and policies are not in their favour and instead advance the interests of the powerful companies.

When a company wants to start a mine, the law provides for the community living on the land to be involved in negotiations for the use of the land and negotiations for compensation. However, this seldom happens.

In many cases, government grants companies the right to mine, without consulting the communities living on the land. The rights these communities have in law, to be part of decisions about their resettlement and compensation, or to say no to the mining project are ignored.

In some cases, there are "pretend" discussions, as in the case of the Montepuez Ruby Mining Company. This company pretended to enter into talks with the community of Nyamanhubir, in the Cabo Delgado Province. It seemed that the company was following the rules of discussions in order to give the community a say, but meanwhile the company already had permission from government to go ahead with mining.

When companies start discussions with communities, the power dynamics between the company and the community are unequal and the discussions seldom lead to favourable results for the community. Because most communities affected by mining live in poverty, they see hope in the promises of jobs, services, and better living conditions promised by the companies. Added to this, government tells communities that mining is the only possibility for the communities' development. At times community representatives, and sometimes chiefs, are bought off or pressured to

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accept mining and the low levels of compensation offered by mining companies and government.

Many communities lose their land, their access to natural resources such as water and forests and they face delays in being relocated to new homes, and in receiving the promised compensation.

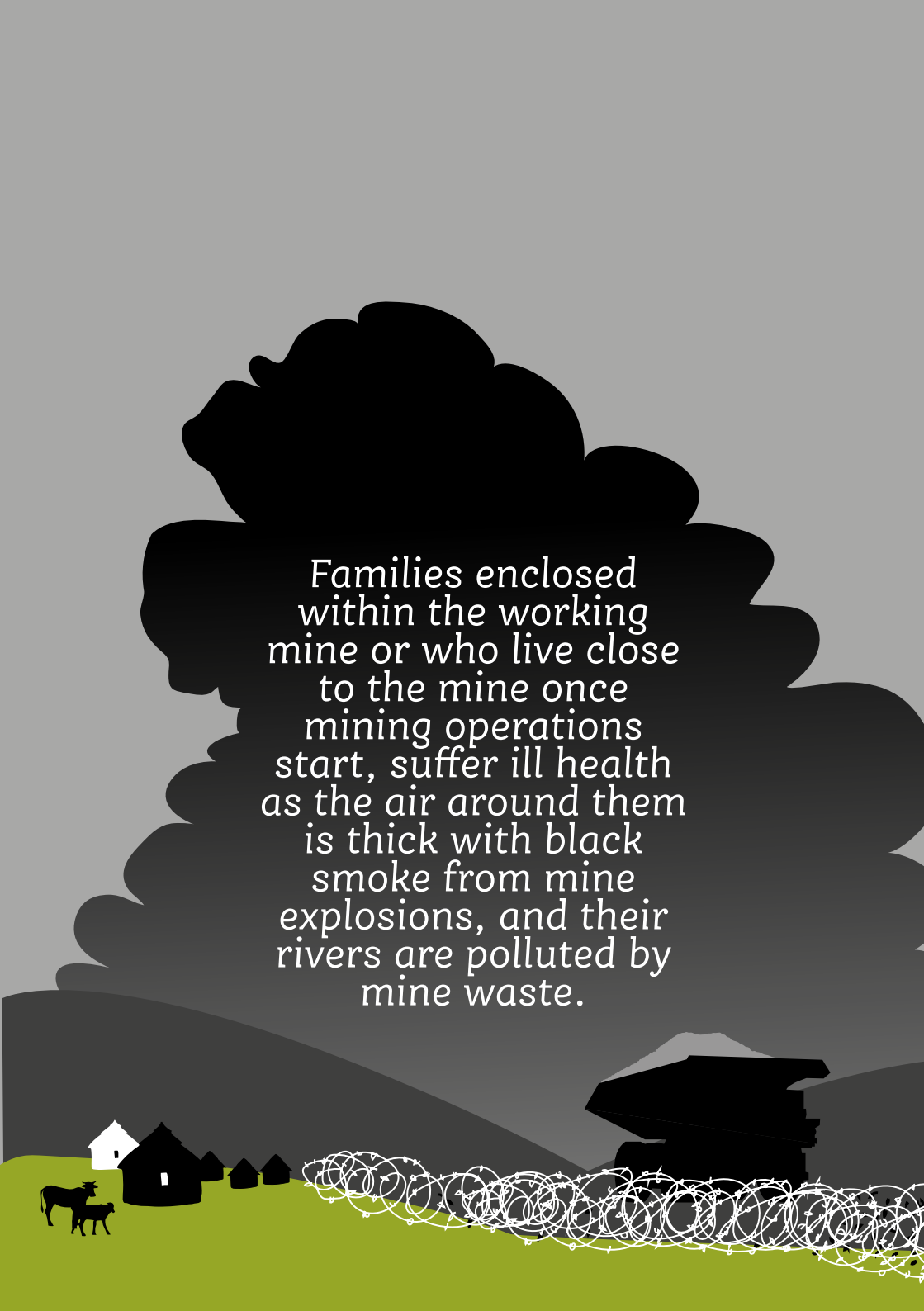
Community members often face additional hardship when mining companies move them to new settlements. The Mining Law (2014) lays down that when they relocate people who are affected by a mine, companies must provide housing in the same or better condition as their previous housing. The law says that companies have a responsibility for the communities' food security as well. However, mining companies often do not act in keeping with the law. Companies move families to areas without basic services and where farming is difficult or impossible. Often these areas are far from the towns where there are jobs, and far from the places where the community members have lived for generations.

At times the mine may fence in a village, so that people's homes and fields are within the mine. Families enclosed within the working mine or who live close to the mine once mining operations start, suffer ill health as the air around them is thick with black smoke from mine explosions, and their rivers are polluted by mine waste. Their crops are badly affected, and their cattle die. Blasting from the mine shocks people's bodies and cracks the walls of their houses. Often these communities lack proper access to health care, education and jobs.

For families moved by Vale and Rio Tinto, conditions in the new areas are worse than before. The new houses do not have the same standards as the old ones, the ground is dry and rocky and inappropriate for farming and there are few services, like water, education and healthcare.

For some communities, the homes they were moved to by the mine are far from the main towns and cities where they may look for jobs. This is the case for the communities of Cateme and Malaudzi, each located 40 and 44 kilometres from the city of Tete.

Mining can have other bad effects. For example, an Amnesty International 2018 report shows that the operations of Chinese-owned Hainyu Mining Company led to flooding of the Nangonha village in Nampula province, completely destroying 48 houses,



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partially destroying 173 houses and leaving close to 300 people without housing.

When a community is reluctant to agree with the company's plans, or where community interests are divided, some community members, and often traditional leaders, side with government and corporations, and give permission for the mining project in the name of the community without consulting the rest of the community.

The mine companies promise jobs, but these promises are never met. Most jobs at the mining companies require specialised training that many community members do not have, and companies are reluctant to invest in training. This means that very few community members are employed by the mines and the jobs that these few get are usually low-skilled and physically demanding jobs.

In communities where artisanal mining contributed historically to the subsistence of many families, such as ruby mining in Nyamayumbir and gold mining in Namajuba (Nampula Province), the arrival of mining companies means that artisanal miners have to limit or stop mining.

One option for people in these communities is to leave their villages to find jobs in other parts of Mozambique or in neighbouring countries. But it is the men who can leave because they are often better educated than women, and they are free from household responsibilities. According to the Ministério de Género, Criança e Acção Social, 2016, *Perfil de Género de Moçambique*, 72% of women are not able to read or write compared to nearly 43% of men. Women cannot easily leave as they have to care for children, the sick and the elderly.

Men often start new families in the places they go to find work, and women in the communities affected by mining are left to provide for their families without the help of the men in their homes. To survive they do whatever is possible – some cook and clean, others run shebeens, and take up sex work – and in some situations the difficulties of surviving leads to the forced marriages of young girls.

In Cateme and Malaudzi, women struggle to set up smallholder farms, and this has led to food shortages and hunger. Girls are leaving school because these are far from the area the community was moved to and some girls were raped coming from school.

Often people whose villages are fenced within the mine are not allowed to move freely, and they are prevented from meeting together. At times, the police, army or private

security enter homes to search for “stolen minerals”. They search people as they enter the fenced area, and when this happens women’s bodies are searched by male police, soldiers, or company security.

Restrictions on free movement, fear, and spying seem to be the experience of communities who live within the mining company fence in Cassoca, and in Bagamoio where community members live next door to the Vale mine.

In Nyamanhumbir (Cabo Delgado), where the Montepuez Ruby Mining Company operates, private security agents, the police and the military play a key role in the protection of the company’s interests.

In 2017, a video leaked on the internet showed police torturing artisanal miners inside a ruby mine. Many people in mining impacted communities have said that police and private security agents destroyed their houses in the middle of the night, damaging and taking their possessions. The police and security say that they take these actions to maintain law and order around the mining areas. But they are really a means of protecting the companies and their interests.

When people in these communities confront the companies or the government, they are seldom heard, and their concerns are hardly ever addressed. Instead the police, army and private security companies employed by the mine threaten people. If people protest, they are arrested and face criminal charges. They may face beatings, and at times even bullets.

Government often allows private security companies to take action against community members affected by mining and at times send in the police and army to deal with community protests.

When their families are resettled, or when they lose their land to the mines, women and girls often have to walk longer distances to provide food, to collect water and wood. They are exposed to many risks, including rape.





# 5. EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE BY WOMEN IN COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY MINING

While doing this research we did not find a great deal of information about the violence experienced by communities affected by mining. We found that not many studies had focused on violence. And we found that community members in affected communities were not free to talk, because of tense relations with mining companies.

This does not mean that there are no problems, but rather that we have to find ways of breaking the silence.

What is very clear is that there are usually tense relations between the community and the mine, and that government is very often on the side of mining companies. Together government and mining companies make sure that community voices are silenced.

As noted earlier in this booklet, there is even more of a silence on the violence experienced by women in communities affected by mining. Violence against women, sexual abuse and rape are not topics that community members can easily talk about.

From the little we have learnt, we do know that women in communities affected by mining experience violence from the police, army and private security companies in different ways from men. Women are sexually harassed and at times raped by police, army and private security working for the mining companies.

When their families are resettled, or when they lose their land to the mines, women and girls often have to walk longer distances to provide food, and to collect water and wood. They are exposed to many risks, including that of rape.

In cases where the mining company has taken over forests, security officials demand sexual favours before allowing women to enter a forested area to collect wood. In some cases, women have been raped by security guards.

When the police, army or private security search women, this takes the form of sexual assault on women's bodies.

# 6. CONCLUSIONS

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We showed in this booklet how mining became more important to the government of Mozambique since the early 2000s and how laws and policies focused on encouraging mining companies to set up mines, while not considering the needs of the people of Mozambique.

We showed how communities affected by mining lost the land they need to live on and survive from, and how they face violence from private security, the police and army who search their homes, their bodies and prevent their free movement.

We highlighted from the little information we have been able to find, that women face additional hardships because they care for families and because of sexualised violence.

We hope that the information in this booklet will encourage further discussion among women in communities affected by mining, so that they tell their stories on how they have been affected by security companies, the police and army and think through actions they can take around these issues.



