

Topic Page: [Mozambique](#)

Definition: **Mozambique** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 a republic in SE Africa: colonized by the Portuguese from 1505 onwards and a slave-trade centre until 1878; made an overseas province of Portugal in 1951; became an independent republic in 1975; became a member of the Commonwealth in 1995. Official language: Portuguese. Religion: animist majority. Currency: metical. Capital: Maputo. Pop: 24 096 669 (2013 est). Area: 812 379 sq km (313 661 sq miles) Portuguese name: **Moçambique** Also called (until 1975): **Portuguese East Africa**



Image from:

[Mozambique's flag was adopted when the country... in](#)

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Summary Article: **Mozambique**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Country in southeast Africa, bounded north by Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania; east and south by the Indian Ocean; southwest by South Africa and Swaziland; and west by Zimbabwe.

Government Mozambique is a multiparty democracy. The 1990 constitution provides for a president, elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term, renewable only twice, and a 250-member Assembly of the Republic, similarly elected for a five-year term by proportional representation. The president, who is also commander-in-chief of the armed forces, appoints a prime minister but is the dominant figure in the executive.

History Mozambique's indigenous peoples are of Bantu origin. By the 10th century the Arabs had established themselves on the coast. The first European to reach Mozambique was Vasco da Gama in 1498, and the country became a Portuguese colony in 1505. Portugal exploited Mozambique's resources of gold and ivory and used it as a source of slave labour, both locally and overseas. By 1820 the slave trade accounted for 85% of all exports. The trade continued as late as 1912, and 2 million people were shipped to the sugar plantations of Brazil and Cuba; others to neighbouring colonies. In 1891 Portugal leased half the country to two British companies who seized African lands, built railway lines to neighbouring countries and supplied forced labour to mines and plantations in British colonies and South Africa. In 1895 the last indigenous resistance leader was crushed. From 1926 to 1968 the Portuguese were encouraged to emigrate to Mozambique, where they were given land and use of forced labour. Mozambicans were forbidden by law to trade or run their own businesses.

Frelimo movement for independence While other European countries began to grant independence to their colonies after World War II, Portugal maintained its overseas possessions and emigration to them increased. This provoked growing calls within Mozambique for independence and in 1962 left-wing political groups opposing Portuguese rule combined to form the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo). In 1964, it began an armed guerrilla campaign, receiving arms from China and the Soviet Union. Frelimo's leader, Samora Machel, demanded complete independence, but despite ten years of sporadic guerrilla warfare, Frelimo had failed to capture significant population centres. In 1974, however, a socialist-inspired military coup in Portugal overthrew the right-wing dictatorship of Antonio Salazar and Portugal's new government agreed to grant independence to its colonies, including

Mozambique, in 1975.

Challenges following independence Machel became president on independence in June 1975 and Joaquim Chissano, a member of Frelimo's central committee, became prime minister. Frelimo established a one-party state allied to the Soviet Union, outlawed opposition political activity, and nationalized privately-owned industries. The new government faced a number of problems. The emigration of hundreds of thousands of Portuguese settlers left no trained replacements in key economic positions. Mozambique's economy was heavily dependent on exporting labour to South Africa's mines, and transit traffic from South Africa and Rhodesia. While Machel supported the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa and the Patriotic Front in Rhodesia, providing shelter and support to their guerrillas, he recognized that Mozambique needed to coexist and trade with his two white-governed neighbours. He put heavy pressure on the Patriotic Front for a settlement of the guerrilla war, and this eventually bore fruit in the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement and the election victory of Robert Mugabe, a reliable friend of Mozambique, as leader of the newly independent Zimbabwe.

From 1980 Mozambique was faced with widespread drought, which affected most of southern Africa, and in 1983–84 famine claimed 100,000 lives. It also faced attacks by mercenaries under the banner of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) – also known as Renamo – who were covertly but strongly financed and armed by South Africa. The attacks concentrated on Mozambique's transport system. MNR forces killed an estimated 100,000 Mozambicans 1982–87; 25% of the population were forced to become refugees.

By 1983, Machel showed diplomatic skill in repairing relations with the USA and established himself as a respected African leader. In 1984 he signed the Nkomati Accord, under which South Africa agreed to deny facilities to the MNR, and Mozambique in return agreed not to provide bases for the banned ANC. Machel took steps to honour his side of the bargain but was doubtful about South Africa's good faith. In October 1986 he died in an air crash near the South African border. Despite the suspicious circumstances, two inquiries pronounced his death an accident.

Mozambique under Chissano In November 1986 Frelimo elected former prime minister Joaquim Chissano as Machel's successor as president. Chissano strengthened the ties forged by Machel with Zimbabwe and Britain, but drought and food shortages, and continuing MNR military attacks aggravated Mozambique's economic problems. In 1988, South Africa began to provide Mozambique's army with training and nonlethal material to enable them to defend the Cabora Bassa dam from MNR attack.

In 1989, Frelimo abandoned Marxism-Leninism to reduce a barrier to national consensus and in 1990 a new constitution brought an end to one-party rule.

End of civil war In December 1990, a partial ceasefire was agreed. Following peace talks during 1991 in Rome, a peace accord was agreed in August 1992 by President Chissano and the MNR leader, Afonso Dhlakama. The accord, which ended a civil war which had claimed 1 million lives and made 1.7 million refugees, provided for the two contending armies to be demobilized and replaced by a unified army, followed by multiparty elections. The process suffered serious delays and it was not until August 1994 that demobilization was completed and a new, unified army, the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (FADM), established. By mid 1995, most of Mozambique's refugees had returned home.

In the first multiparty parliamentary and presidential elections in November 1994, Chissano won 53% of

the vote and Frelimo 129 of the 250 assembly seats.

Following the end of the civil war in 1992 the economy grew rapidly, at around 8% a year, reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty. The country has received low-interest loans from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and the government's privatization programme, launched in 1989, led to more than 1,000 state enterprises becoming private.

Commonwealth membership and flood disasters In 1996, Mozambique became a member of the Commonwealth, having increased use of English and adapted its laws and institutions to fit Commonwealth practice; it was first country without historical links to the British Empire to be admitted.

Severe flooding in February 2000 and February–March 2001 affected a quarter of the population, killing over 10,000, leaving 1 million homeless, destroying infrastructure, and affecting 15% of the country's agriculture. President Chissano successfully appealed for international financial aid, receiving pledges of US\$13 million from Western governments and suspension of Mozambique's debt repayments.

Guebuza becomes president Chissano was re-elected president in 1999, but decided not to stand for a third term. The presidential election in November 2004 was won by Armando Emilio Guebuza of the ruling Frelimo party and he took over as president in February 2005. Guebuza was a millionaire businessman who had built his fortune in the energy, transport, and port industries. He built on Chissano's economic programme and encouraged greater inward foreign investment. This helped Mozambique to become one of the world's fastest growing economies, with GDP growing 7% a year from 2006–13 helped by foreign investment in its untapped oil and gas reserves and growing exports of coal and titanium. However, with 80% of the population still employed in agriculture, poverty remained widespread.

Guebuza was re-elected in October 2009, with 75% of the vote, although the opposition Renamo alleged widespread voting fraud. Tensions between Frelimo and Renamo heightened in 2012–13 following a police raid, in March 2012, on a camp of 300 Renamo supporters who were allegedly preparing to stage anti-government protests.

Renamo insurgency ahead of presidential elections Protests turned to insurgency from October 2013, with Renamo announcing its withdrawal from the 1992 peace deal. Fighting between Renamo rebels and government forces was particularly intense in the southern district of Homoine in January 2014 and there were a succession of kidnappings.

In September 2014 Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama signed a peace agreement with President Guebuza ahead of presidential elections. These were held in October 2014 and were contested by Dhlakama, who more than doubled his vote share (from 2009) to 37%. However, the Frelimo candidate, former defence minister Filipe Nyusi, won, with 57% of the vote, and became president in January 2015. Frelimo also won decisively in the parliamentary elections.

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traditional dance, Mozambique

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