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Global North ‘climate reparations’ to prevent Southern fossil-fuel conflict. Mozambique’s gas curse, Islamic insurgency, imperial-subimperial capital accumulation and a climate-just alternative to international military intervention

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ABSTRACT

The climate crisis is amplified by socio-political and economic injustices everywhere but in 2021, perhaps nowhere as acutely as northern Mozambique. There, the Cabo Delgado province is a site for military intervention against Islamic insurgents, by local and regional armies (from the Southern African Development Community and Rwanda), backed by mainly South African mercenaries as well as European and U.S. armies. If successful, the main beneficiary will be Big Oil firms, which seek to extract 165 trillion cubic feet of offshore gas. But this too is a site where the region’s most extreme cyclone barreled down in 2019 (in the wake of severe droughts), as a result of higher temperatures in the Mozambique Channel. On the one hand, the overarching narrative promoted by media and intervention advocates, is that oil companies – Total (France), ExxonMobil (U.S.), ENI (Italy), Galp (Portugal), the China National Petroleum Corporation, Sasol (South Africa) and others – will provide Foreign Direct Investment, infrastructure, gas revenues, jobs and GDP growth to develop Mozambique’s impoverished northern-most province. On the other, a growing network of anti-intervention and climate activists suggest this is a recipe for disaster, and instead demand that reparations for the Global North’s “climate debt” must be invoked as an alternative source of income, that ordinary residents of Cabo Delgado should be the appropriate recipients through direct cash transfers to limit state corruption, and that the gas be left unexploited to avoid further climate chaos. The case is one of the most urgent to consider, en route to identifying a climate justice geopolitics that transcends scales and spaces.

ACESSO PÚBLICO



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