

Mozambique

Estimated population 19.5 million

A Portuguese colony for almost 500 years Mozambique became independent in 1975. Its membership of the Commonwealth, although never a British colony, is due mainly to the influence of former South African President Nelson Mandela. After independence from Portugal Mozambique offered sanctuary to anti-apartheid activists from South Africa and independence fighters from Rhodesia. As a result the Apartheid Regime and Rhodesian elements sponsored rebellion by an organisation called RENAMO and a civil war fomented by extreme right-wing elements from outside caused havoc in the country from which it is still in the process of recovery. Economic growth in the 1990s especially following the end of apartheid in South Africa was extremely impressive at over 10 per cent but catastrophic flooding in 2000 was a major setback. Nevertheless the economy rebounded quickly with growth of nearly 15 per cent in 2001 and a levelling out to 7 per cent thereafter. Mozambique's Human Development level in 162nd place still leaves a great deal to be desired as does its GDP per capita at \$339. Females can expect to live to 49 and males to 45.

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