

4.11.2019 Katete

On October 15th presidential elections took place in Mozambique and since then the situation is a little unstable. The current president Filipe Nyusi with his governing party ,Frelimo‘ won the elections again. However, the only existing opposition party ,Renamo‘ does not accept the electoral results. A radical wing of the Renamo party is expressing its dissatisfaction about the disputed electoral results by creating unrest. A few trucks have been shot at and a police station attacked.

We are debating and planning how to best get the fastest to the southern coast. The southern coast is tourist area and in the hands of Frelimo whereas Renamo is more active in the northern part of the country. But today we only have to drive 90 km to Katete, the last campsite before the border.



The Tiko Lodge in Katete is not only a campsite, but also a community center, which runs several projects, a vegetable garden as well as a restaurant. The mango trees there are too low and we cannot drive into the campsite. Means we have to stay at the car park where we get attention from all different kind of people who watch all our moves until it gets too dark. Our last homework for today is to drink all the beer we still have on stock, as officially it is not allowed to bring beer into Mozambique.



5.11.2019 Chimefusa (Zambia) – Cassacatiza, Tete (Mozambique)

Today is our border crossing from Zambia to Mozambique. We assumed the remaining 60 km until the border post are a quick drive, but the road is getting narrower and the potholes wider, so we need much longer than anticipated. The border crossing from Zambia to Mozambique is not much frequented, most tourists enter the country from the north via Malawi or from Zimbabwe and South Africa.



At the Zambian border our passports are quickly stamped with the exit chop, but the stamp for our Carnet takes time. The head of customs is even called and three customs officers want to inspect our truck – however more out of personal interest than for customs reasons. They want to look into every hatch outside, and inside they open all the drawers and ask a lot of questions. But while checking we have a lot of fun with them; they want to park such a car in their village, mainly because they are most of the time without power.

At the Mozambican border we have to park at the border fence and walk to the border control building. The building is run down and sparsely furnished. However, in a dusty back room, they have a very modern machine from Germany. This computer takes our finger prints, our photos and all is printed out onto an immigration visa sticker which is put in our passport. All run by solar power. In addition to the visa fee, we also have to pay road tax and insurance fee and last not least get the Carnet de Passage stamped. Finally, the immigration officer greets us “Welcome to Mozambique”.

As we are a bit concerned about the road condition as well as worried about the safety situation, we want to drive the 270km to Tete, the next bigger city, in one go. The road turns out to be much better than anticipated, there is almost no traffic, only the heat is our biggest enemy. The landscape looks similar to Zambia, charcoal is produced everywhere and sold at the road side. We notice the power lines and that in Mozambique also males do transport things on their heads. In Zambia we saw only women carrying things on their heads.

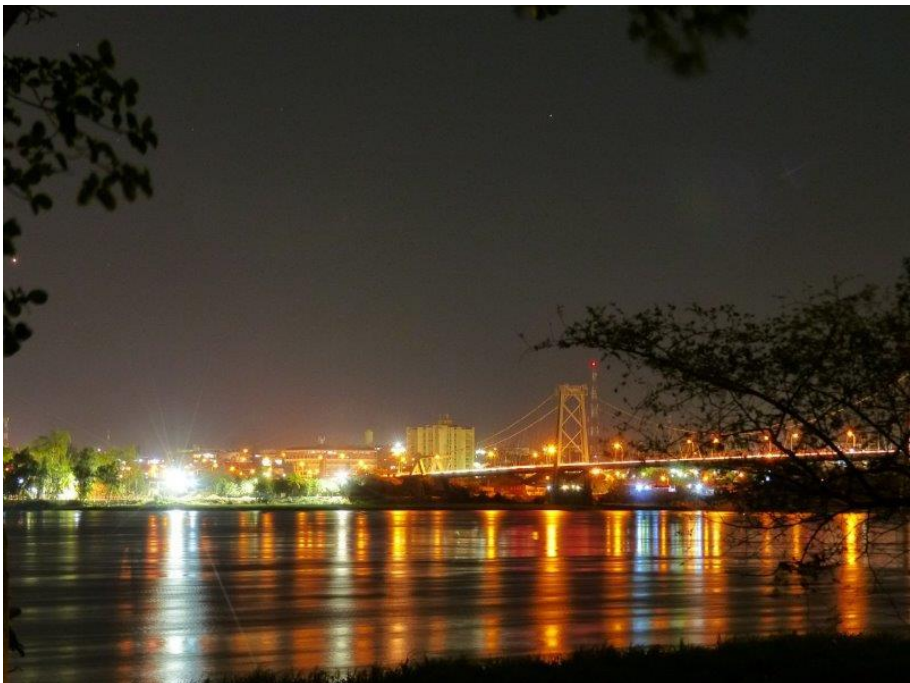
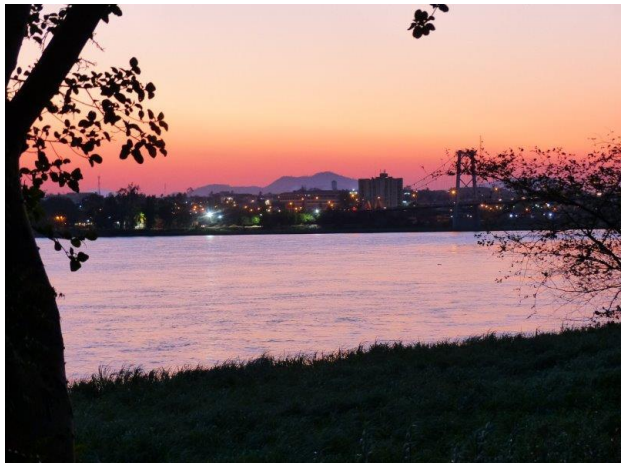


Since the road is in a much better condition, we arrive already in the early afternoon in Tete and are quite surprised. Tete is not the dusty little place we expected, but a bigger town and the first thing we encounter is a traffic jam.



In Tete there is only one campsite, called „Jesu e bom“, located directly at the bank of the Zambezi river. We get the last place, which is in fact the owners parking spot. A

group of South Africans is on their way home from Ethiopia and with their five cars they occupy the entire camp.



Tete by night

6.11.2019 Tete

New country, same procedure, we have to buy a new SIM card, change money and go shopping. The supermarkets and banks in Tete look rather new and we assume that the mining industry has given the city a boost. We also see many men walking around in safety work pants and shirts with reflecting stripes, typical for the mining industry.

We treat ourselves to a meal at the ‚Cafe del Rio‘, a stylish decorated restaurant and bar with good food. Without our travel guide book from Ilona Hupe we would have never found this place. A good opportunity for a delayed birthday lunch.



In the evening around 8:00 p.m., we were almost ready to go to bed, a late arrival drives onto our campsite. We greet each other in the dark and Dewi thinks, somehow the man looks familiar, although we can barely see each other.



Indeed it is Carlo! Two years ago Angela and Carlo also shipped their Fuso expedition truck on the „Carmen” to Port Elizabeth, on the same ship like us. Africa is a village!

It is quite a coincidence, as they actually did not want to drive to Tete because of the heat, and we decided to extend our stay for one more day.

7.11.2019 Chimoio

We get up early, as today we have to drive to Chimoio, a reasonable long distance of 385 km. The road between Changara and Guro for about 50 km is supposed to be in a very bad condition. We are mentally prepared, as driving time needed for this stretch differ between six and eleven hours.

After bidding farewell to Angela and Carlo, we try to find our way out of the chaotic city of Tete. To cross the Zambezi cost bridge toll; soon we are out of the city and drive through typical landscape with charcoal and other goodies being sold on the road side. Even fresh chicken and live goats are on offer.





Just behind Changara the road condition deteriorates quickly, deep potholes and edges force drivers to drive criss-cross trying to avoid the deepest holes or one drives just beside the actual road. On the way we see many trucks loaded with precious logs, which are sold and shipped mainly to China.



With a short lunch break, we need 7.5 hours for this leg and arrive pretty exhausted at the “Lamimos” campsite located shortly before Chimoio. Down to the coast we still have another 450 km to go and we’ll have to break down this stretch somehow. We will never be able to make it in one day as the road behind Save is supposed to be extremely bad. Anyway, it’s enough driving for today.

8.11.2019 Ndzou Camp, Moribani Forest Reserve

Today we want to drive to the Ndzou Camp in the Moribani Forest Reserve, about 100 km away. To go there we can take a detour via the N260, which is supposedly leading through interesting landscape. But first we want to fuel up the truck, as in Chimoio the fuel is the cheapest due to its proximity to Beira.

From the owner of the filling station we hear that this morning at 7:00 a.m. near Inchope a truck with vegetable oil has been shot at with automatic weapons – that’s only 65 km away. This is not exactly the news we want to hear. Well, the rebels just want to create chaos. Our planned detour might not be such a bad idea after all, as this would mean



that we will bypass Inchope and hit the main road EN1 again only further south. The fuel station owner advises us to not drive early in the morning between 5:00 and 7:00 a.m. as there is too little traffic at this time. It seems that the official travel recommendation for tourists to not take this road makes sense, they even recommend to travel via Zimbabwe to get to the north of Mozambique.

The N260 is indeed a very scenic road, unfortunately the deforestation we witness is alarming! There are so many forest fires that the air is hazy.





The Ndzou Camp is located within one of the last areas of native forest, which survived the logging and the slash and burn lifestyle. There is not much left of the Moribani Forest Reserve surrounding the camp, but at least in the camp one still has the feeling to be in the middle of the jungle.

The drive way into the Ndzou Camp is very narrow and steep. While pushing through the trees and bushes we break off the cover of our outside horn. At least the manager reacts quickly and immediately tells his staff to cut free the overgrown entry track.



We find a relatively even spot which is juuust big enough for us, squeeze in and are happy to have some shade after all.



9.11.2019 Ndzou Camp

Since last Wednesday, three attacks in the region have been reported, on trucks and busses as well as a local police station. However, the village and district names where it happened don't mean anything to us, we try to get as much information as possible. We check our planned route and try to find out where the provincial and district boundaries are located, as the rebels are more active in the Renamo area where they find support within the local population who provide shelter and food for them.

We also ask the Camp Manager Nelson for his opinion. He thinks that the dispute is between black people only and tourists have never been a target. Also during the unrests 2014 to 2016 tourists have not been under threat.

Hopefully the rebels can recognize that we are not a military vehicle. Just to make sure we put a large sticker onto our truck which we still had with us. Now we can only hope that the rebels know he German flag ...

