

**Testimony of Ambassador Peter Vrooman**  
**Ambassador-Nominee to the Republic of Mozambique**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Wednesday, October 20, 2021**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

It is a great privilege and honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique. I thank the President and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. I am also grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration. I want to recognize my wife, Johnette Iris, for her partnership and passion, and for the resilience and curiosity of my children, Zarah and Hendrick, who are at school in Rwanda this week. And my mother, Sally, for coming to visit, teaching English, and mentoring students wherever the Foreign Service leads me. Finally, I would like to thank my extended family and friends who always lay out their welcome mats when we are in the United States.

Thirty years ago, I began my Foreign Service career on the Indian Ocean side of Africa in Djibouti, and I am now the Chief of Mission in Rwanda. I have served in Somalia and Ethiopia as well and believe that my experience on the continent has provided me with a unique understanding of some of the challenges facing Mozambique, including those related to the pandemic, climate change, terrorism, and post-conflict stabilization. If confirmed, I will further strengthen ties between the United States and Mozambique - by seizing opportunities to combat infectious diseases and promote global health security, sustain wildlife and maritime conservation efforts, and deepen bilateral business ties that foster job creation in both countries. I also remain committed to promoting respect for human rights and advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities throughout our policies and programs.

Mozambique remains a strategic and important partner on the African continent. The Government of Mozambique together with regional forces and allies are fighting ISIS-Mozambique, which has caused violence that has claimed thousands of casualties and internally displaced more than 700,000 people in the north since 2017. This region is home to massive natural gas reserves that could lead to a once-in-a-generation economic transformation for the country, provided there is responsible public financial management, community involvement in local decision-making, and transparency in the development of a sovereign wealth fund that allows revenue from natural resources to benefit all Mozambicans.

If confirmed, I will continue our holistic approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. The United States has committed to support the Mozambican government in four ways: 1) security assistance, 2) strategic communications, 3) socio-economic and humanitarian assistance, and 4) diplomatic engagement. Together, we are rebuilding vocational schools,

promoting dialogue and exchanges with emerging leaders and marginalized communities, and providing specialized counterterrorism training. If confirmed, I will partner diligently with the Mozambican government and its people to address the underlying drivers of extremism and terrorism by protecting the civilian population, addressing their development requirements, and upholding the core values of human rights, good governance, and democratic participation.

Mozambique also confronts the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has strained its health care system and disrupted economic growth. Significantly, the U.S. health partnership combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria helped Mozambique to respond quickly and effectively to COVID-19. We join international partners not only to end the pandemic, but to build back better for global health security through the more than \$55 million in COVID-19 assistance to Mozambique, including almost 640,000 U.S.-provided vaccines.

Finally, if confirmed, I will dedicate myself to building on the extraordinary progress that Ambassador Hearne and the U.S. Embassy have made in deepening our bilateral relations and supporting Mozambique's efforts to provide for the welfare of its citizens. It would be a tremendous honor to serve as Chief of Mission in Maputo, working at the new chancery that overlooks the same Indian Ocean where I began my Foreign Service career three decades ago. Our embassy will be a forum for clear-eyed discussions that contribute to concrete actions that advance our shared interests in democracy, security, prosperity, and friendship.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be honored to respond to any questions.