



4 April 2024

Cabo Ligado Update: 18-31 March 2024

[Cabo Ligado](#) — or ‘connected cape’ — is a Mozambique conflict observatory launched by ACLED, Zitamar News, and MediaFax.

BY THE NUMBERS

Cabo Delgado, October 2017-March 2024

- Total number of political violence events: 1,790
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence: 5,632
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence targeting civilians: 2,344

All ACLED data are available for download via the [data export tool](#) and [curated data files](#).

SITUATION SUMMARY

After three months of intense offensive activity by Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) in Cabo Delgado province, the last two weeks have seen a lull in violence, with no confirmed attacks. This may be due to Ramadan, during which insurgent attacks usually decline in Mozambique.

On 19 March, the governor of Cabo Delgado, Valige Tauabo, [announced](#) that after a 17-day occupation, the insurgents had withdrawn from Quissanga town, leaving it ransacked. The insurgents brought their looted supplies back to Mucojo in Macomia district, where they have been seen driving between coastal communities as far as Quiterajo village in an ambulance stolen from Quissanga. One source claimed that the insurgents have cleaned the Mucojo health center and are providing medical assistance to locals. Around 30 insurgents were seen passing through the village of Nambini, on the road between Macomia town and Mucojo, on 30 March, according to [Lusa](#).

Insurgent activity has also been reported in northwestern Macomia, near the villages of Chai and Litamanda. A source reported that insurgents have been moving from the north bank of the Messalo river to the south, and locals have found evidence of insurgent camps and farms in the area.

In Nangade district, residents of Ntamba reportedly reacted negatively to the announcement at a public meeting on 20 March that Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces will withdraw by 15 July. In May 2023, community leaders in Nangade [implored](#) SADC forces to stay.

Around 20 people kidnapped by insurgents were released on 23 March, apparently as an act of benevolence because it was Ramadan, according to one of the hostages, quoted by [Lusa](#). Three farmers captured in Metuge were taken to Quissanga, where they were forced to work for the insurgents. They told Lusa that they saw malnourished children and “only suffering” in the insurgent camp.

FOCUS: IS STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS ISM'S ACTIONS IN MACOMIA

Islamic State's (IS) spokesperson, Abu Hudhaifa al-Ansari, issued a statement on 28 March to mark ten years since the founding of IS. It was the seventh statement since March 2022. Issued irregularly, they usually mark significant events. Three of the seven statements in that time have marked the death of IS leaders. The most recent one was more upbeat but, like the other statements, stressed the importance of affiliates in Africa. Previously, affiliates in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo have been lavishly praised. This time, it was Mozambique's turn.

Given the push that ISM has been getting in IS media recently, it is not surprising that the spokesman highlighted the group. The language used to praise ISM was bombastic, but not entirely inaccurate. The "knights of Mozambique Wilayah [province]" are praised for displacing "Christians and their armies," as well as "upholding the rule of Shari'ah." ISM actions from 8 February to 3 March [displaced](#) over 99,000 people in Chiure, Macomia, and Mecufi districts, contributing to over 112,000 being displaced across the province in that period.

Recent issues of al-Naba have highlighted ISM's [preaching](#) in the parts of the coastal Macomia district that it controls. Their current emphasis on their interpretation of Islamic law has been clear in recent ISM behavior in coastal parts of Macomia district. Local sources have [given details](#) on how ISM is currently encouraging regular prayer, policing haircuts and trouser length, and banning alcohol and tobacco in Mucojo and neighboring villages.

ISM is able to exert such control through a combination of armed force, which allows it to control territory, and its familiarity with the community. Though the current rains have limited access to the coast, people still move between Mucojo and Macomia town to trade, despite security forces' efforts to stop such movements. ISM reportedly [controls access](#) to Mucojo from Macomia town currently. The group has likely been charging a toll, as it [was doing recently](#) in the west of the district on the N380 highway.

People in coastal Macomia are familiar with ISM's teachings and with the individual leaders with roots in the area. Muamudo Saha, [originally from Mucojo](#), is thought to have been active in the area last year. Other figures from the area, including Saide Bossa and Momade Nsuko, have long been active with the group, according to [Carta de Moçambique](#), and are still active in the area, according to local sources.

The bombastic language of IS statements may make the reader presume significant exaggeration. However, while one should not overstate the area and resources controlled by ISM, the group can fairly be described as pushing "the rule of Shari'ah" in at least one part of Macomia district.

ROUND UP

Nyusi confirms SAMIM withdrawal in July

President Filipe Nyusi [confirmed](#) that the SADC mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) will withdraw from Mozambique by 15 July this year, following a summit of SADC leaders on 23 March. Mozambique's foreign affairs minister, Veronica Macamo, claimed that SAMIM is suffering from funding shortages and that Mozambique cannot cover its costs. However, Filimão Suaze, the spokesman for the Mozambican Council of Ministers, said SAMIM is leaving because it has completed its mission to erode the capabilities of the insurgency. Suaze's claim comes despite the ISM offensive launched in January.

ADIN president sacked

The Mozambican government has [fired](#) the president of the Northern Integrated Development Agency (ADIN), Armindo Ngunga, and replaced him with Jacinto Loureiro. ADIN was supposed to be responsible for stimulating development in Cabo Delgado but it never raised [sufficient funds](#) for any meaningful projects. Ngunga had headed ADIN since April 2021 and was widely considered to have accomplished little in the role. Loureiro was mayor of the town of Boane in Maputo province between 2014 and 2024.

US pledges \$22m to support fight against the insurgency

The United States has [committed](#) \$22m to support Mozambique's fight against ISM insurgents in Cabo Delgado, adding to a previous \$100 million donation. The package was announced by Anne Witkowsky, US Assistant Secretary of State, following a five-day visit to Maputo. Witkowsky emphasized support for stabilizing efforts, including training officials, fostering social cohesion, and boosting youth opportunities. The funding falls under the [Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability](#), which covers Mozambique, Haiti, Libya, Papua New Guinea, and four coastal states in West Africa. The specific [Mozambique strategy](#) was made public last month.

Cabo Ligado Update #166

16 - 29 March 2024

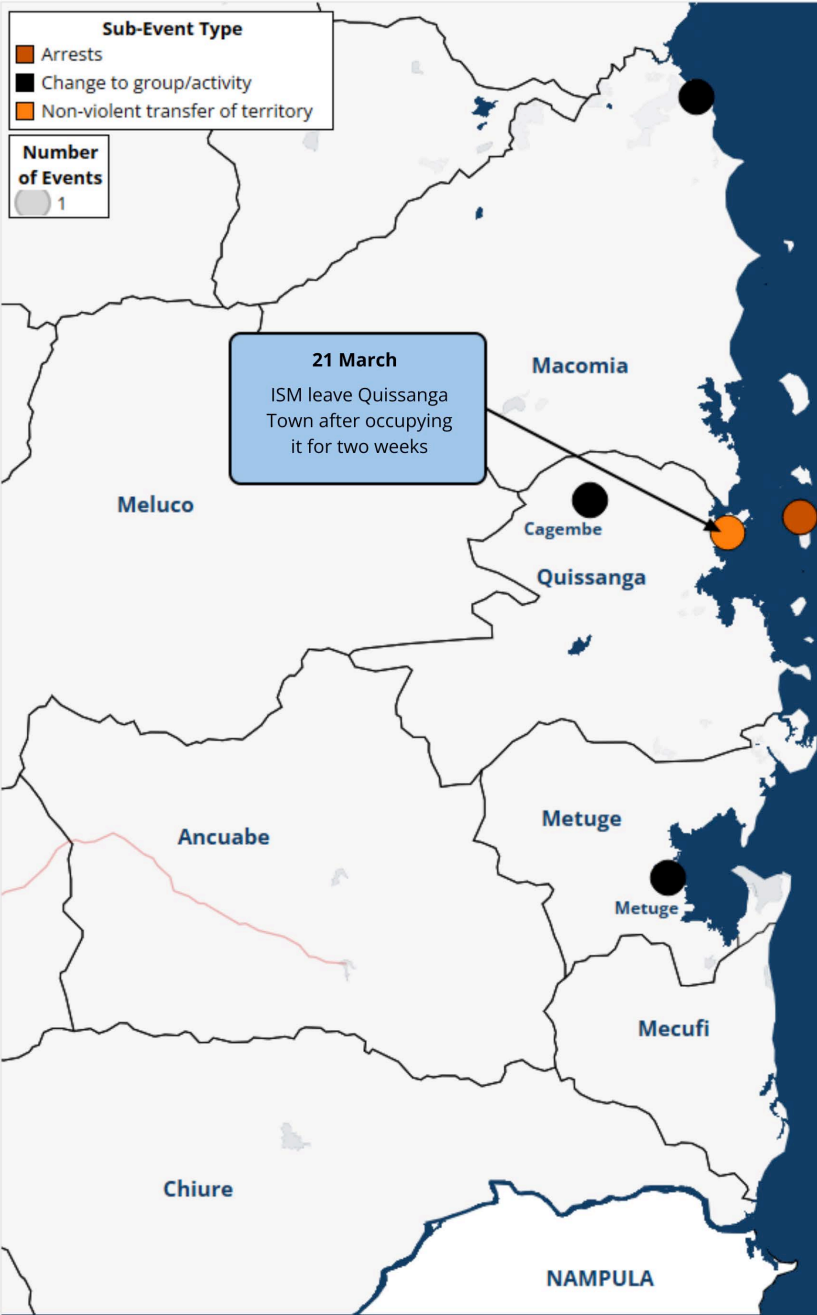
Key Data Points

Events in Cabo Delgado province from 1 October 2017 to 29 March 2024

At least 1,790 political violence events

At least 5,632 reported fatalities from political violence

At least 2,344 reported fatalities from political violence targeting civilians



NOTE: This map displays political violence events that have taken place in Cabo Delgado province from 16 - 29 March 2024. Some events from this coverage period may be included in the next infographic due to reporting delays. ACLED is a living dataset and figures are subject to change as new information becomes available.