



CABO LIGADO

24 January 2024

Cabo Ligado Update: 8-21 January 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-January 2024

- Total number of political violence events: 1,740
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence: 4,842
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence targeting civilians: 2,073

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

SITUATION SUMMARY

Islamic State Mozambique’s (ISM) “[kill them where you find them](#)” campaign, launched on 4 January, petered out over the last two weeks. However, insurgents managed to score a major victory in occupying Mucojo, Macomia district, after forcing Defense Forces of Mozambique (FADM) to abandon their strategic positions on the coast. The occupation of Mucojo marks the first time that the insurgency has held a significant settlement since it was expelled from Mocímboa da Praia and Mbau in [August 2021](#).

The village was occupied by insurgents on 21 January, according to [Voice of America](#), who then seized food and goods left behind at the barracks. It came after insurgents threatened to avenge a series of killings carried out by the FADM and on 18 January, they warned the FADM they would imminently launch an attack, prompting security forces to withdraw without a fight. Carta de Moçambique [reported](#) that the FADM summarily executed three young men in the villages of Rueia, Nambija 2, and Nacutoco surrounding Mucojo between 16-18 January. A local source told Cabo Ligado that up to seven civilians may have been killed. This followed an attack on Mucojo on 26 December in which nine Mozambican soldiers were killed. A large group of up to 40 insurgents were also observed buying goods in nearby Pangane village and were allegedly assisted by local sympathizers, local sources claimed.

The week before their occupation of Mucojo, the ISM campaign was still underway but was losing momentum. On the evening of 9 January, insurgents invaded Litamanda village on the N380 in Macomia, looted goods and fired at civilians, killing one and injuring another. Islamic State (IS) also claimed to have burned 10 houses in a statement that said the attack was part of the “kill them where you find them” campaign.

Also on 9 January, insurgents entered the village of Nachiji near Nanquidunga on the R762 south of Mocímboa da Praia town. They burned a house, stole goods, and killed a man who tried to confront them, local sources reported. The next day, insurgents attacked the villages of Chinda and Antadora on the N380.

IS claimed to have burned 11 houses at Chinda and 36 at Antadora as part of its campaign, but there were no reported fatalities. This was the last attack on the N380 for the rest of this period.

Between 26 December and 17 January, over 5,300 people were displaced by the insurgent campaign in Macomia and Muidumbe, according to the International Organization for Migration's [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#).

Meanwhile, conspiracy-fueled violence against healthcare workers continued as the Naparama militia allegedly beat and stripped a nurse at a clinic in Papai, Namuno district, around 17 January, accusing her of spreading cholera, [Notícias](#) reported. The Naparama denied they were responsible in a meeting with a local government official. A video circulated online also suggests that the Naparama burned down buildings in protest. Another [video](#) shows a large crowd of Naparama appearing to surround and intimidate police.

FOCUS: ISM EMBED IN MUCOJO IN WAKE OF FADM KILLING CIVILIANS

Events in Mucojo Administrative Post since the 26 December attack by ISM on an FADM outpost have left ISM with a tactical advantage in Macomia district. ISM being able to take control of the village raises questions about FADM's appreciation of strategy, discipline, and their relationship with communities. With the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique's (SAMIM) withdrawal imminent, they also raise questions about that force's role in Macomia district now, and the impact of its scheduled withdrawal later in the year.

FADM troops first [fled Mucojo](#) on 26 December in the face of an ISM assault. Since the seemingly retaliatory killings of civilians by FADM around 17 January, Mucojo has again been abandoned, and according to one source, FADM had completely withdrawn from the Macomia coast. This hands a significant tactical advantage to ISM. Mucojo gives them access to the sea, and control of the Estrada Velha, the road that runs north along the coast, to Mocímboa da Praia. Control of the road also gives them some control over access from the east to Catupa forest, long an ISM stronghold.

The killings in Mucojo are not unprecedented and play into the hands of ISM, which has been cultivating relations with coastal communities for almost a year. Of political violence events involving FADM over the course of the conflict to the end of 2023, over 13% have been of FADM targeting civilians. These have resulted in at least 115 fatalities in the conflict. The distribution of such events is stark, with nearly 30% occurring in Macomia district. Communities in the villages of Mucojo, and elsewhere on the coast, will be alienated from state forces, and unwilling at best to share intelligence. Strategically, this leaves FADM, and its partners in SAMIM, at a significant disadvantage. It is not known at what level the decision to target civilians, and then withdraw was taken. If taken at a senior level, it raises questions about FADM military doctrine and practice. If taken locally, it demonstrates a significant breakdown in discipline.

Despite being based less than 45 kilometers inland from Mucojo, the South African contingent of SAMIM seems to have provided no backup to FADM in Mucojo during these events. ISM's history of deploying improvised explosive devices on the coast has likely been a deterrent, while rain-damaged roads put mounted patrols at a disadvantage. With withdrawal scheduled for July, SAMIM may also be reluctant to work side by side with FADM when it is shooting civilians.

For now, Mucojo is in ISM's control, while FADM's recent behavior and SAMIM reluctance to intervene suggest that it will be some time before the Macomia coastal strip is under state control. The future SAMIM withdrawal could put Macomia district headquarters itself at risk.

ROUND-UP

President Samia and General Mkunda on the complications of military intervention

Both President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania and the country's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) General Jacob Mkunda addressed Tanzania's military intervention in Mozambique on 22 January during the annual meeting of commanders and the CDF. Speaking on Tanzania's deployment of a bilateral force to Cabo Delgado, President Samia brought to the surface the tensions that regional intervention has brought. She stated that the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF) bilateral force in Nangade district was deployed not just to tackle the insurgency, but also because "[the army of a foreign country is there, and is along our border.](#)" This was a clear reference to the Rwandan Security Forces deployed in Palma district. TPDF's bilateral force has been deployed in Nangade district since October 2022, alongside its SAMIM contingent.

Speaking before her, General Mkunda addressed the issue of [SAMIM withdrawal](#). He noted that SAMIM will have officially withdrawn by 15 July, and noted that withdrawal "may have effects on Tanzania's internal security as the group [ISM] is still active."

Food shortages still afflict FDS

Several videos have circulated online showing pitiful food rations being dispensed to troops of the Mozambican army and police in Cabo Delgado. [Integrity magazine](#) quoted an anonymous military source saying that food shortages are affecting several detachments and barracks in the province but efforts are underway to improve the situation. Some troops have also not received their salary for the past three months, according to Integrity.

Cabo Delgado peace commission plans mission in February (VOA)

Sheikh Aminudin Muhamad, president of the Islamic Council of Mozambique, is planning an exploratory mission in February to identify potential negotiators for talks with insurgent groups, [Voice of America](#) reported. This mission is understood to be through the [Peacemaking Advisory Group](#), in which he is also involved. Sheikh Muhamad emphasized the need for dialogue to bring peace to the region but acknowledged challenges in contacting new insurgent leaders. João Feijó, a sociologist at the Rural Environment Observatory, [said](#) last week that negotiating with the insurgents may be possible, citing examples of peace settlements in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country.

Global IS attacks surge during "kill them where you find them" campaign

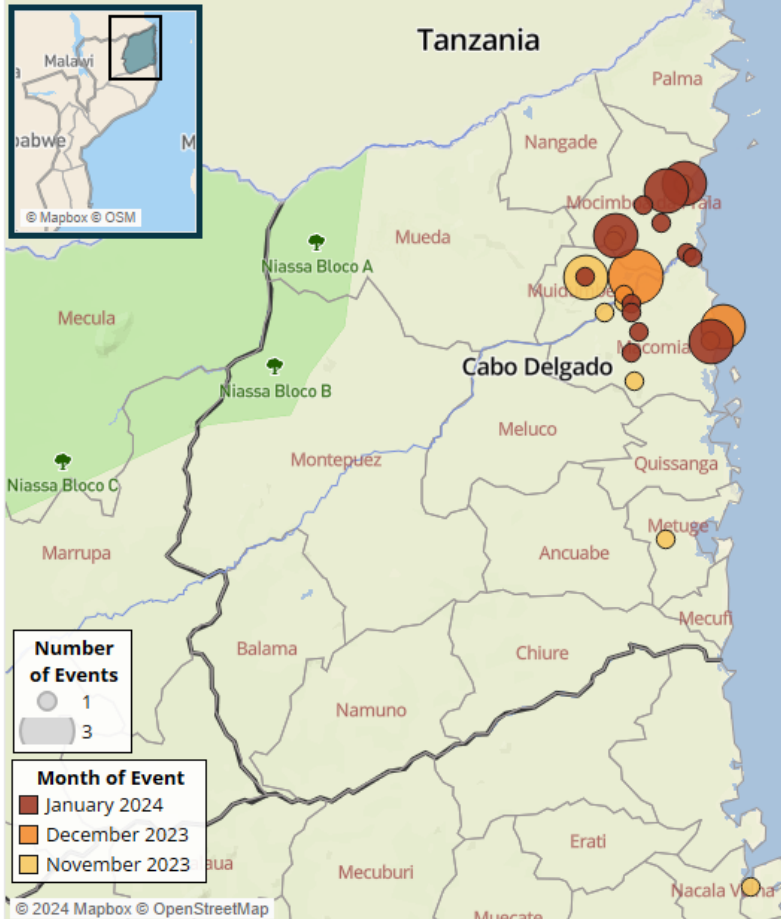
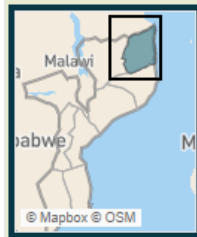
Islamic State claimed 100 attacks in its global "kill them where you find them" campaign declared on Jan 4, exceeding its average monthly totals for 2023, according to analysis by [BBC Monitoring](#). While daily claims declined after 6 January, they still surpassed 2023 levels. Syria's IS branch led with the most claims, followed by IS West Africa Province in Nigeria.

Global IS attacks surge during "kill them where you find them" campaign

The [Institutional Diagnosis Project](#) (IDP) released the book '[Mozambique at a Fork in the Road](#)' late last year. IDP was a research project managed by the University of Copenhagen that focused on the role of institutions in economic development in Bangladesh, Benin, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The book contains eight thematic papers on topics ranging from education to the justice system. The "fork in the road" is the expected revenues from natural gas. The work is useful for taking a long view of the challenges facing the country, highlighting the impact of Frelimo dominance, and the contribution of donor-driven policy choices in the 1980s to that.

Cabo Ligado Update #161

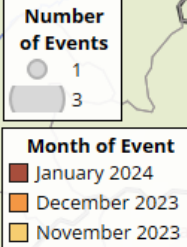
1 November 2023 - 19 January 2024



FADM Kill at Least Three Civilians in Mucojo

FADM troops killed at least three civilians in villages in the Mucojo area around 17 January. This was seemingly in retaliation for an ISM attack on a FADM outpost in Mucojo village on 26 December. In the days following the killings, FADM abandoned Mucojo to ISM.

NOTE: This map displays political violence events for the most recent three months. 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.



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100 km

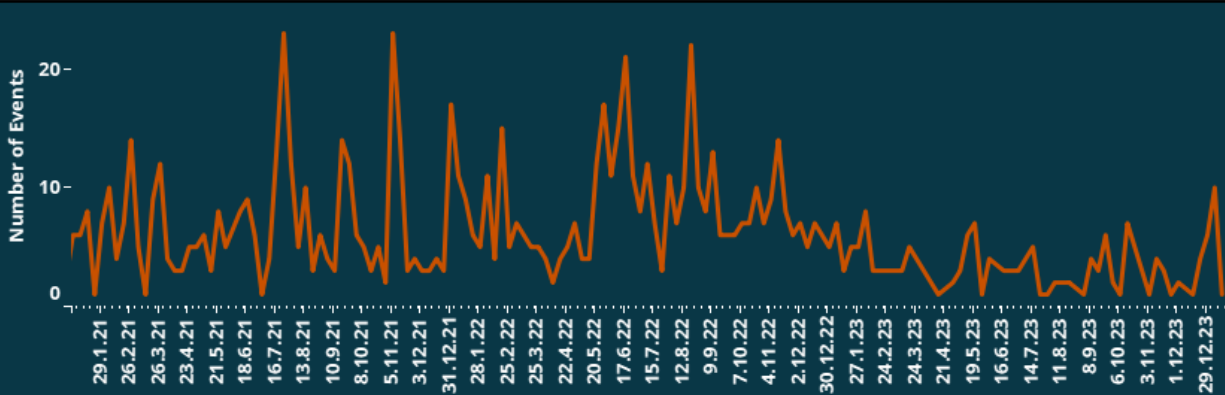
By the Numbers: Cabo Delgado (1 October 2017 - 19 January 2024)

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*Numbers shown here and in the line graph refer to Cabo Delgado province only. ACLED is a living dataset and figures are subject to change as new information becomes available. See the ACLED website for definitions and methodology documentation.



Political Violence in Cabo Delgado (1 JAN 2021 - 19 JAN 2024)