



CABO LIGADO

9 March 2022

Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 February - 6 March

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 2022

- Total number of organized political violence events: 1,187
- Total number of reported fatalities from organized political violence: 3,800
- Total number of reported fatalities from organized violence targeting civilians: 1,669

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

SITUATION SUMMARY

Nangade district bore the brunt of insurgent violence last week, with several villages coming under attack as militants consolidate their presence around Litingina. Escalating violence in the district has spread fears that Nangade town itself is vulnerable to attack and spurred further disaffection among the population with Southern African Development Community (SADC) security forces.

On Thursday 3 March, insurgents attacked the village of Unidade, killing an undetermined number of people. A woman was reportedly warned by the insurgents that nowhere is safe and they could enter Nangade town any day. Insurgents then moved southwest to Litingina, [which they had previously attacked](#) on Friday 18 February killing up to six people. One source reports that the latest attack claimed three civilian lives in Litingina, with insurgents occupying the town following the attack.

The next day, insurgents moved north to Chibau, approximately 5km from Nangade district headquarters. There, sources claim, insurgents burned houses, looted goods and beheaded three people, two of whom were from the same family. This was followed the day after by another attack which also struck around 3km west of Nangade town, in the village of Malamba, where up to seven people were killed.

Another report suggests that the villages of Mbuidi and Nang’omba, said to be 1km from the district headquarters, were also raided on Friday 4 and Sunday 6 March respectively, although the attack on the latter is disputed by other sources as a rumor. One of these reports claims that bodies of slaughtered civilians have been left to decompose in the woods, which are now effectively inaccessible due to heavy rain and the threat of insurgent violence. Allegedly, the security situation is now so dire that no one dares travel on the Nangade-Mueda road without an escort.

A local source reported that many locals believe insurgents will soon be on their way to Nangade and panic is beginning to set in. Faced with the prospect of a possible siege by militant forces, the price of essential products has shot up. A liter of cooking oil, for example, now sells for 200 meticaís when it used to cost no more than 120 meticaís.

This source also reiterates earlier reports that faith in SADC forces is collapsing due to their perceived lack of action in combating insurgent threats in the district. The SADC forces based in Nangade are known to be composed mainly of soldiers from Tanzania, with some from Lesotho. On the other hand, local militia, consisting mainly of veterans from the Mozambican War of Independence and their descendants, are said to be trusted much more as they continue to undertake offensive initiatives even without official government support.

When SADC troops first arrived in Nangade last July to support Mozambican security forces, there was a movement to return displaced people to villages from which they had been forced out by insurgent violence. Now, this movement is reversing and increasing numbers are seeking shelter in district headquarters as there is a general feeling that villages are unsafe.

Despite this, security forces have claimed some successes this week, including a victory over insurgents just outside of Nangade town which reportedly saw the capture of one militant and the killing of three others, plus the recovery of four motorbikes and eight bicycles.

Alexandre Jorge Mano, a propagandist for the Nyusi government, also claimed on Saturday 5 March that a combined force of Mozambican and Rwandan forces conducted an operation in Palma district that killed insurgent leader Amigo Kibirige and seven others. According to Mano's [post](#) on Facebook, Kibirige was a Ugandan national who had trained in Congo and Tanzania, and was involved in recent attacks on the villages of Muiha, Samora Machel, Nangololo, Mocimboa do Rovuma, Eduardo Mondlane, and Litingina.

In Macomia, trust in government security forces was shaken on Friday 4 March when a young man named Issa was shot outside his house by the authorities. According to a source, he was detained by five or six officers, belonging either to the police or the military, and was heard pleading for help before being shot in the head. His family have filed an official complaint with the local command.

WEEKLY FOCUS: WHY DO YOUNG MOZAMBICANS JOIN THE INSURGENCY?

Two publications in the past fortnight shed some light on the pathways that take people into the insurgency. The Observatório do Meio Rural's (OMR) latest [report](#) in its *Observador Rural* series examines the structural obstacles to youth's productive involvement in Cabo Delgado society. The [latest](#) in the *Ideias* series from Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos (IESE) gives a different perspective, presenting the life story of a recently killed insurgent leader.

In 2020, OMR's João Feijó, Jerry Maquenzi, and Aleia Rachide Agy surveyed 82 young women and men, in Montepuez, Nangade, Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia, and Muidumbe districts. The focus is on youth access to social services, employment, energy, housing, transport, and the relevance of that to social participation. The findings tell a familiar story of lack of investment in education and health services as well as infrastructure and the obstacles that govern access to their benefits. The report notes how the conflict has worsened things. Young people spoke of ongoing corruption in social services, but also in the security response in their districts. They point out that more frequent stops and checkpoints, and the need for a *declaração*, a form that may indicate a traveller's residence or destination, complicate movement and create further opportunities for corruption.

The authors correctly note the risk this creates of violent groups to “function as an outlet for social tension.”

The use of grants and loans for petty trading, as well as an ideological framework provided in religious schools, originally outlined in a 2019 IESE [study](#), played this role prior to October 2017. OMR's study tells us this risk remains.

Sérgio Chichava of IESE complicates this narrative of disaffected youth being manipulated into joining the insurgency. He looks at the life of Maulana Ali Cassimo, killed in an [encounter](#) with the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) in late 2021. The study complements a previous [review](#) of insurgency leaders, including Maulana, from OMR in August 2021. Maulana was born in 1991 in Lichinga, Niassa province. He learned carpentry from his father, and studied agronomy at the Instituto Agrário de Lichinga. He had opportunities with mining company Vale, and the Mozambique Leaf Tobacco company, before joining public service as an agricultural extension worker in Niassa's Provincial Directorate of Agriculture. He was active too in civil society, where he was a founding member of the Niassa provincial association of the sport of Floorball.

Based in Mecula, Maulana was exposed to extremist interpretations of Islam by Tanzanian clerics, ultimately prompting his move to Mocimboa da Praia in July 2017 along with his wife, their daughter, and his sister. OMR's study notes that this was on the assumption that he would return as a mosque leader. It also notes his increasing role as a community leader beyond Floorball, leading protests on behalf of artisanal miners. Chichava reports that Maulana had the possibility of a scholarship to study Islam in Saudi Arabia. His family in Lichinga, disturbed by his radical views, approached the Islamic Council of Mozambique (known by its Portuguese acronym, CISLAMMO) for support, who then approached authorities with reports of a number of public servants in Niassa who had joined the emergent insurgency group then identified as Al Sunnah Wal Jammah. His wife and immediate family would later return to Lichinga, before trying to rejoin her husband. She was unsuccessful and placed in detention.

Just as much as disaffected youth may be shut off from opportunity, Maulana's experience suggests that existing opportunities for leadership in a fractured society are limited, and that the nascent insurgency provided opportunity for those with skills, and ambitions to lead. Both studies together illustrate the depth of the challenge faced by Mozambican authorities in future reconstruction.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The government of Mozambique is increasingly committed to a large-scale return of the population to their areas of origin. In recent weeks, the government authorities of Cabo Delgado have traveled to a number of villages and towns in Cabo Delgado, having already visited the districts of Macomia, Meluco, Muidumbe, and Palma, calling on public officials and the civilian population to return to their districts.

On 17 February, the provincial government of Cabo Delgado [issued](#) a document summoning the heads of administrative posts, localities, and district officials of Mocimboa da Praia, Palma, and Quissanga for a meeting the next day, in order to discuss the return of civil servants in those places. The meeting ended with the provincial government authorities demanding that they send teams to the districts to survey the needs and resources necessary for the resumption of activities. However, the civil servants questioned the provincial government's decision, claiming that the security situation in those districts is still problematic. The government dismissed the civil servants' concerns, saying that their decision was final.

But the civil servants have legitimate cause for concern. Although the main insurgent bases have been dismantled, there are pockets of insurgents scattered in the bush that could pose a threat to returning populations, as insurgents face major supply shortages. And the N380 road, specifically the section connecting Macomia to northern Cabo Delgado has not yet been reopened due to insecurity, indicating that security is still problematic as the civil servants mentioned.

On 4 March, the administrator of Muidumbe district called on civilians to make efforts to rebuild schools, health centers, and houses destroyed by insurgents. The district faces problems of access to drinking water, electricity, lack of school and health infrastructure, and mobile phone coverage.

Meanwhile, the authorities of Mocimboa da Praia district announced the return of the population to the main town on 6 March, in time for a celebration of the town's anniversary on 7 March. The first group was to come from the villages of Quitunda and Maganja, in the northern neighboring district of Palma, where the process of registering the populations that will be transferred to Mocimboa da Praia began on 4 March. However, as of the time of publication of this report, this process had not yet begun. Sources in Palma say that the populations have been warned that upon their return to Mocimboa da Praia, they should practice a "conventional" religion and that they should not go to the mosques without wearing the Kufi hat and should refrain from wearing short socks, in clear distinction from the attire of radical Muslims. The town of Mocimboa da Praia's 63rd anniversary celebrations were thus attended by several officials of the provincial government but few if any ordinary civilians.

Last week, the World Bank announced the disbursement of an additional \$100 million fund, approved in December 2021, to support the government's reconstruction efforts in Cabo Delgado. The announcement was made in Pemba at a meeting between the World Bank team and the governor of Cabo Delgado, Valige Tauabo, who criticized the centralization of the implementation of the reconstruction program, and called for local bodies to be more involved. The World Bank has committed \$200 million through the emergency Northern Crisis Recovery Project (NCRP) to Cabo Delgado province. The first donation of \$100 million was approved in April 2021 for early recovery activities. The SADC also announced support for the return of the people affected by the conflict, but without specifying the type of aid and the amount to be spent. The announcement was made by the ambassador of Malawi, as part of a visit of ambassadors and high commissioners in Mozambique to Cabo Delgado.

The return of displaced populations to their areas of origin will require improvements in security, and in the relationship between the defense and security forces and the population. [Abuses](#) against civilians by security agents have been reported throughout the conflict. In order to reverse this situation, and to promote positive engagement between police officers and local and displaced populations, the United Nations Migration Agency (IOM) in Mozambique conducted a [training](#) of trainers for senior Mozambican police officers in Cabo Delgado. The training focused on community policing, gender, and youth engagement. In another development, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) funded the training of trainers involving 30 members of the defense forces on "Preventing the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in Mozambique." Training was provided by the Dallaire Institute, a Canadian organization set up by a Canadian military general in the wake of the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s to focus on the issue of child soldiers, and which retains strong links to Rwanda.

Mozambique's Council of Ministers last week [approved](#) a draft counter-terrorism law, which will now go to parliament for approval. If passed — as expected — it will replace a [similar law](#) passed in 2018. The existing law covers "international terrorism" and was passed in response to recommendations from international bodies such as the UN, while the new bill aims to include the national dimension. Under the new law, terrorism-related crimes will be punished by between eight and 24 years in prison, the maximum penalty in Mozambique. Individuals found guilty of committing or attempting to commit "terrorist" acts or related actions, by any means, directly or indirectly, whether deliberately or not, are to be punished under the law. The law will also criminalize radicalization, incitement, and espionage that result in "terrorist" acts.

In Tanzania, reports are emerging of further releases of Muslim prisoners facing "terrorism" charges over the past two weeks. Two women and two men were [released](#) by Shinyanga region Resident Magistrate's Court on 24 February after seven years in detention on "terror" charges. The women's health had declined, according

to the Advisory Council of Imams, which has been lobbying for prisoner releases. On 1 March, 17 men were [released](#) in Dar es Salaam. Five of those had charges dismissed, while the remainder were released on sureties while investigations continue. Further releases over the past two weeks have been reported by weekly newspaper An Nuur in Musoma (17), Mwanza (15), and Kibaha in Pwani region (50). An Nuur is a Swahili language Tanzanian newspaper owned by the Islamic Propagation Center, and is the only outlet to consistently cover prisoner issues. Exact dates, charges, and terms of release were not available.

The release of 21 people in Morogoro region on 22 February took a different course, with their immediate re-arrest outside the court. They were then charged with essentially the charges on which they had been released, Sheikh Juma Kitunga, a Morogoro activist who has been lobbying for prisoner releases, told An Nuur.

Tanzania held a “[High Level Protection Dialogue](#)” with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 1 and 2 March in Dar es Salaam. The talks followed last September’s [meeting](#) between the High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, and President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Relations have been poor since a 2019 [agreement](#) between the governments of Tanzania and Burundi to return refugees to Burundi, whether voluntary or not. While the meeting focused on Burundi, relations have also been [strained](#) on the issue of access to refugees from Mozambique, and their forcible return by Tanzanian authorities. The final [communiqué](#) noted agreement to undertake further efforts to improve access to territory and international protection. Whether this will extend to access to provision of protection to refugees from the conflict in Cabo Delgado remains to be seen.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has formally [authorized](#) the extension of troop commitments to the Cabo Delgado province. In a letter to the National Assembly Speaker, dated 28 February, the deployment of up to 1,495 personnel is extended from 16 January to 15 April, with a funding cap of just under R1 billion (around \$65 million). This detail replicates earlier authorizations, but it remains unclear, purportedly for security reasons, just how many South African National Defence Force (SANDF) personnel are or will be in the field, given the [reported](#) pending rotation and expansion of the South African contribution. This combat force, known as Combat Team Alpha, will [reportedly](#) include soldiers from 2 South African Infantry Battalion, and 1 Parachute Battalion. Despite this, there appear to be no plans to send additional air support for combat operations, such as Rooivalk attack helicopters, due to limited funds.

On 1 March, the US State Department [designated](#) four Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and ISIS-Mozambique financial facilitators in South Africa. The four men, Farhad Hooper, Siraaj Miller, Abdella Hussein Abadigga, and Peter Charles Mbagga are accused of helping to transfer funds from the “Islamic State hierarchy to branches across Africa,” or have “served as leaders of ISIS cells in South Africa.” Mbagga was specifically [identified](#) as having “facilitated funds transfers from South Africa. Mbagga sought to provide support to ISIS-M by helping the group procure equipment from South Africa. Mbagga also sought to procure weapons from Mozambique.”

One of the named men – Farhad Hooper – has previously been caught in the crosshairs of South Africa’s criminal justice system, when he and 10 other members of an alleged ISIS cell in the city of Durban were charged with a deadly attack on the Imam Hussein Shi’a mosque in Verulam in KwaZulu Natal. Hooper has also been connected in the media to funding the legal defense of the Thulsie brothers, who were charged in 2015 on IS-related “terrorism” charges, and who [cut a plea bargain deal](#) with the state in early February after seven years awaiting trial.

Although the South African government has [said](#) it will cooperate with the US authorities to track down the men, it is unclear why the US has gone public on the designations before South African authorities have had a chance to arrest the men. South African think tank the Institute for Security Studies [questioned](#) whether the designations were in fact designed to stimulate a reaction from Pretoria. The US has long been concerned about extremist activities in South Africa and the capacity of South African intelligence and law enforcement to combat this threat. These concerns have deepened in the context of the parlous state of the South African

Police Services Crime Intelligence and State Security Agency assets. Whilst analysts tend to concur that IS networks in South Africa are generally limited, Crisis Group's latest briefing, [Winning the Peace](#), released on 10 February, claims its research shows "that suspected jihadist and criminal networks operating in South Africa are channelling significant funds into the region." And that "criminal investigators have started to identify suspects, including people from East Africa and the Horn, who have sent money to individuals with ties to ISIS in Kenya." All eyes will be on South Africa to see if it now moves against these individuals.

Please note: an earlier version of this report claimed that the World Bank's first donation was channeled through the Northern Integrated Development Agency and that it provided at least \$300 million to the Mozambican government. It has been corrected to say the World Bank has committed \$200 million through the Northern Crisis Recovery Project.

Ligado Weekly #88

By the Numbers: Cabo Delgado

1 October 2017 - 4 March 2022

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*Numbers shown here and in the line graph below are for Cabo Delgado province only. See full report and ACLED website for more information about terminology.



Month of Event

- February 2022
- January 2022
- December 2021

Number of Events

- 1
- 2
- 4
- 6
- 8
- 9

NOTE: The above map shows organized political violence events for the most recent three months. Some events from this coverage period will be included in next week's infographic due to reporting delays.

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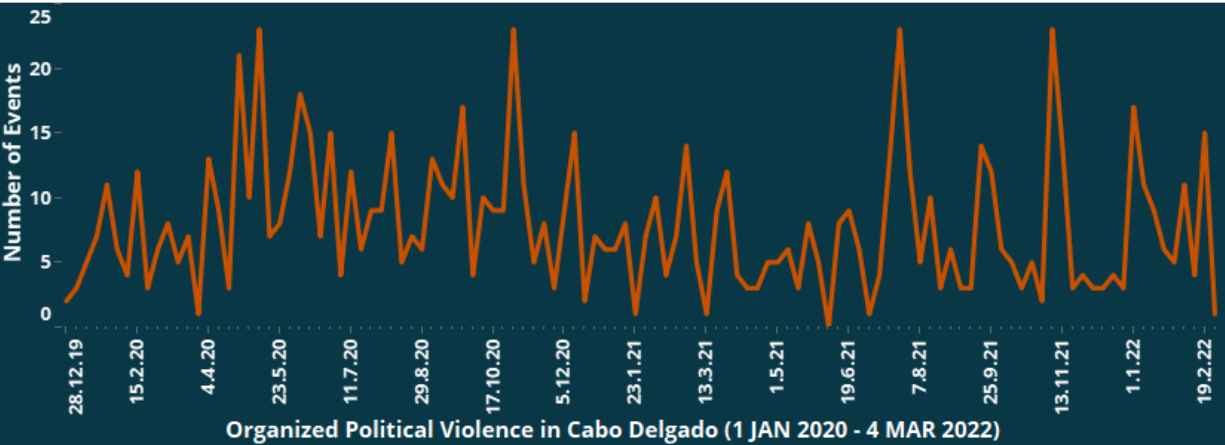
Insurgent-related events in Tanzania

Tanzania

Insurgent-related events in Niassa province

Security Gains Being Reversed in Nangade

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