



CABO LIGADO

5 April 2022

Cabo Ligado Weekly: 28 March-3 April

Cabo Ligado — or ‘connected cape’ — is a Mozambique conflict observatory launched by ACLED, Zitamar News, and Mediafax.

BY THE NUMBERS

Cabo Delgado, October 2017-April 2022

- Total number of organized political violence events: 1,210
- Total number of reported fatalities from organized political violence: 3,885
- Total number of reported fatalities from organized violence targeting civilians: 1,691

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

SITUATION SUMMARY

Last week, civilians in Cabo Delgado were the victims of violence perpetrated by both insurgents and Mozambican Defense and Security Forces (FDS). On 27 March, just outside Palma, police officers from the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR) were [accused](#) of torturing two young fishermen to death. The fishermen from Quissenge were reportedly blown off course into a restricted area of water, where they were detained near the Milamba area on suspicion of “terrorist” activity by patrolling UIR vessels.

Some women fishing nearby reported hearing the young men screaming from the boats after they were boarded by the police officers. The women alerted the local community and the family of the fishermen were located. They approached the Rwandan Defence Force (RDF) to whom residents usually appeal in the first instance, not trusting FDS. The RDF found the young men in critical condition near Quitunda, the resettlement village for the TotalEnergies liquefied natural gas (LNG) site, not far from Milamba. They were taken to a nearby hospital, where they were pronounced dead on arrival.

On the same day, a man working in the fields near Palma was reportedly confronted by the FDS, who began to torture him on the spot for an unknown reason. A colleague in a neighboring field witnessed the incident and called the Rwandan forces who intervened before the man was killed.

These incidents have further strained relations between civilians and the FDS, who have previously been accused of stealing from communities and brutalizing members of the general public. The RDF are often seen to be more trustworthy, especially around Palma, in part because they can communicate in Kiswahili, unlike most Portuguese-speaking FDS units. This may affect government ambitions for expediting the return of the displaced population to Palma, and more generally. According to a source in Nampula, displaced youths there are now being advised by their elders not to return to Palma for fear of arbitrary violence from government security forces.

In Nangade district, insurgents continue to evade security forces. On 29 March, a source in Nangade town reported that four local militia went on patrol in a nearby forest without weapons and encountered two insurgents. Two of the militia managed to escape but the other two were beheaded and their bodies were found in the woods the next day.

The same day, military reinforcements arrived in the district and occupied the area around Litingina in an attempt to block the strategic crossing between Nangade and Mocímboa da Praia districts, according to a source. Despite this, on 31 March, the dismembered body of a local militiaman was found in the abandoned village of Nkonga. His name was Mr. Kanjonjo and he was on a reconnaissance mission in the area. Security forces have told civilians to be vigilant when going to their farms as insurgents are looking for food.

On 3 April, security forces clashed with insurgents near Chicuaia Velha, approximately 20 km south of Nangade town. According to reports, there were seven insurgents, including a 13-year-old boy who managed to run away. One grave was later discovered and is believed to belong to an insurgent killed in the fighting.

Clashes between insurgents and the security forces also took place last week in Mueda district. On the morning of 29 March, insurgents attacked the village of Nambungali in the far north of the district, forcing residents to flee into the woods. A source reported that the local militia counter-attacked, drove back the insurgents and captured some of their weapons, with only two wounded in the battle.

The island of Matemo is still under a strict curfew imposed by the security forces to facilitate security operations following the attack on 15 March. An unconfirmed report alleges that two insurgents have been captured on the island. One local man remains missing and it is not known if he is still alive. Civilians on Matemo are now allowed to go fishing again but are restricted in how far they can go from the shore.

On 1 April, a video of Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), rendering the ba'yah (oath of allegiance) to the new caliph, Abu Hasan Al Hashimi Al Qurayshi, was published. The video shows at least two distinct groups of fighters bearing arms and the IS flag – one is believed to be from the Democratic Republic of Congo and the other from Mozambique. ISCAP first declared their allegiance on 17 March, a week after the new caliph was formally announced. The video was marked as coming from the media office of the ISCAP, an entity that had not been seen before.

WEEKLY FOCUS: NANGADE UNDER PRESSURE

On 1 April, weekly newspaper Savana published an interview with Nangade Administrator Dinis Mitande about the impact of the insurgency on the district that he has administered since November 2017. Mitande spoke of the use of “terror” by the insurgents, the extent of the impact on infrastructure, and his expectations of the international community. The interview came in the wake of new data on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nangade from the United Nations Refugee Agency, the UNHCR, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that broadly reflect ACLED data in recent months, and highlight the challenge facing communities and the state. Mitande was transferred to Mecúfi district since the interview, but his remarks set out the challenge for his successor.

Mitande described the concentration of insurgent activities in Macomia and Nangade districts that followed successful Rwandan and Southern African Development Community (SADC) military operations in Mocímboa da Praia and Palma districts. He highlighted the insurgents' use of arson to force displacement: “When [people] are scared, they leave because no one likes to see their house on fire and, when they want to get close enough to put out the fire, they're killed, so what is the point? It's worth running away.”

While in the past there had been considerable gaps between attacks, they are seemingly continuous this year. This is reflected in ACLED data, which recorded 39 organized political violence events in Nangade district for

the first quarter of 2022. This compares to 14 such events involving Islamist militia in the final quarter of 2021. While a spike in displacement can be expected, estimating numbers in hard to reach areas is challenging, and can lead to some variation. UNHCR has [estimated](#) that a total of 24,000 were displaced within Nangade from January to mid-March, and approximately 5,000 moved to the neighboring district of Mueda. IOM [notes](#) an increase of almost 7,000 in the number of IDPs in the district between assessments made in November 2021 and February this year.

ACLED's rising numbers of recorded events and the upward trajectory in displacement mark Nangade as problematic for the promotion of return as well as TotalEnergies's desire to see normality return to all of Cabo Delgado if its gas project in Palma is to go ahead. Administrator Mitande, similar to UNHCR, estimates that the great majority of IDPs have remained in the district, with the population of Nangade town itself doubling.

Mitande suggests that the coping mechanisms that Nangade people showed prior to 2022 have been overwhelmed: "Even with war, people can produce," he told Savana, but "displaced people have lost their agricultural assets, so starting over is not easy." Starting over will depend on establishing security, and resurrecting social and economic life. Efforts by the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) to secure the district have met with little success, with the detachment based in Nangade town — made up of troops from Tanzania and Lesotho — accused of avoiding conflict, and leaving security to local militia groups. This reflects a wider challenge for SAMIM forces who do not have adequate capacity to put in place more effective counterinsurgency measures. Tanzania will also be crucial to future recovery. Villages in Nangade close to the border have a high proportion of Tanzanian residents. Trade with Tanzania is crucial to the local economy, so Tanzania's [suspected objective](#) of preventing violence from spreading to its side of the border may not allow places like Nangade to recover to pre-insurgency levels if it constrains cross-border community relations.

For the insurgents themselves, displacement denies them access to people's agricultural produce, which may force them further afield for provisions. Mitande suspects that the armed groups benefit from local support, and made an allegory with housekeeping: "When you sweep your house, you sweep from inside to out, and you must know where to put the rubbish."

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The conflict in Cabo Delgado is one of the few issues that brings consensus between the main Mozambican political parties. On 30 March, in a session of the Provincial Assembly of Cabo Delgado, which was comprised of the two largest parties in Mozambique, Frelimo and Renamo, the provincial governor, Valige Tauabo, [pre-sented](#) the state of the situation and gave a picture of a fragile insurgency without the resources and capacity to face the FDS. This, Valige said, has allowed the government to make progress in the process of return of IDPs. During the session, Valige said that by the end of March, about 45 community leaders of the Mocímboa da Praia neighborhoods and civil servants were in the district to prepare to receive the returning population. The Frelimo and Renamo parties were unanimous in their assessments of the security situation in the province and the return of the population — with Frelimo calling for caution, citing the danger of insurgent infiltration, and Renamo emphasizing that areas are still not free of danger from insurgents.

During a [visit](#) to Mocímboa da Praia, Frelimo's top official in Cabo Delgado acknowledged that there is still a long way to go to deal with the structural challenges facing the town. José Elias Kalime, Frelimo's Provincial Secretary for Cabo Delgado, said Mocímboa da Praia still faces substantial challenges such as the degradation of access roads, sanitation problems, and a stagnant economy.

Last week, several humanitarian organizations reported the deteriorating situation of displaced people in Cabo Delgado, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable groups. Save the Children has [expressed concern](#) for the increasing number of displaced children in Cabo Delgado. Last February alone, at least 7,000 children, out of a total of 14,000 people, arrived at displacement centers as a result of the recent attacks in the districts

of Nangade and Macomia. The country director of Save the Children in Mozambique, speaking in Manica, said there are thousands of traumatized children, highlighting the need for the organization to integrate psycho-social support into most of its services. More than 370,000 children have been forced to flee the violence and seek shelter in displacement centers, according to Save the Children.

The Ministerial Committee of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security (MCO) met in Pretoria on Sunday 3 April to [discuss](#) the situation in Cabo Delgado and SAMIM's progress. This meeting is a precursor to the Organ Troika Heads of State and Government Summit, scheduled to meet the following day, but postponed at the last minute, ostensibly because of overlapping meeting commitments. A new date for the Summit has not been announced yet (as of the time of writing), but is likely before the SAMIM's current three-month mandate ends on 15 April.

Thanking contributing SADC member states, South African foreign minister, Naledi Pandor, confirmed that additional personnel and resources had been brought on board during the last quarter, including a reported airlift of [South African National Defence Force \(SANDF\) equipment](#) to Pemba in the last two weeks. The South African navy has also redeployed off the Cabo Delgado coast with the navy frigate SAS Spioenkop. A forward SANDF team is now in place in Cabo Delgado preparing the way for about 1,000 combat troops who will reportedly follow. This will include a combination of units, including Parabats (1 Parachute Battalion), Special Forces, and the main force from 2 SA Infantry Battalion (2SAI), commanded by Lt. Col. Erica Cambinda. This will take the SAMIM mission up to approximately 1,600 to 1,800 personnel.

At the MCO meeting, Pandor reconfirmed the January Extraordinary SADC Summit decision that the SAMIM deployment will now be extended to 15 July, and that in this renewed mandate period, the mission would be [changed](#) from full enforcement to a peacekeeping mission. This will entail a formal shift in terms of African Union rules from a "Scenario 6" mandate to a "Scenario 5" mandate. Practically, and given ongoing issues of insecurity, this is [likely to mean a combination of roles](#) for an expanded force as enforcement capacity will still be required. Peacekeeping operations will also require a larger visible presence once communities are resettled, a process which remains very much in its formative stages.

Funding to underwrite the mission remains a major challenge; with no clear pathway on how that will be resolved, especially in terms of major operational costs, this leaves SADC member states, in particular South Africa, to shoulder the costs. At the MCO meeting, Pandor thanked the European Union for providing almost 2 million euros of support under the African Union Early Response Mechanism. This will cover some of the mission's "Scenario 5" focus costs, and is [intended to provide support](#) for "non-military interventions especially on youths and women empowerment, dialogue with civic leaders and capacity building of Police and Correctional Services Officers, among other key interventions."

On 29 March, Amnesty International (AI) [released](#) its 2021-2022 report on the state of human rights around the world. In its analysis of Mozambique, AI described the conflict in Cabo Delgado as the most critical issue, due to the prevalence of war crimes and serious human rights violations. Regarding war crimes, the AI report stated that the Mozambican security forces, insurgents, and Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), which left the country in March 2021 after a year of operations, have killed civilians indiscriminately throughout the conflict. This is strongly denied by the DAG. Regarding the humanitarian situation, most of the IDPs in the accommodation centers are women, children, and the elderly. In these centers, there is a shortage of food and inadequate housing, health, and education conditions. The report states that women were particularly victims of sexual exploitation by humanitarian aid distribution workers.

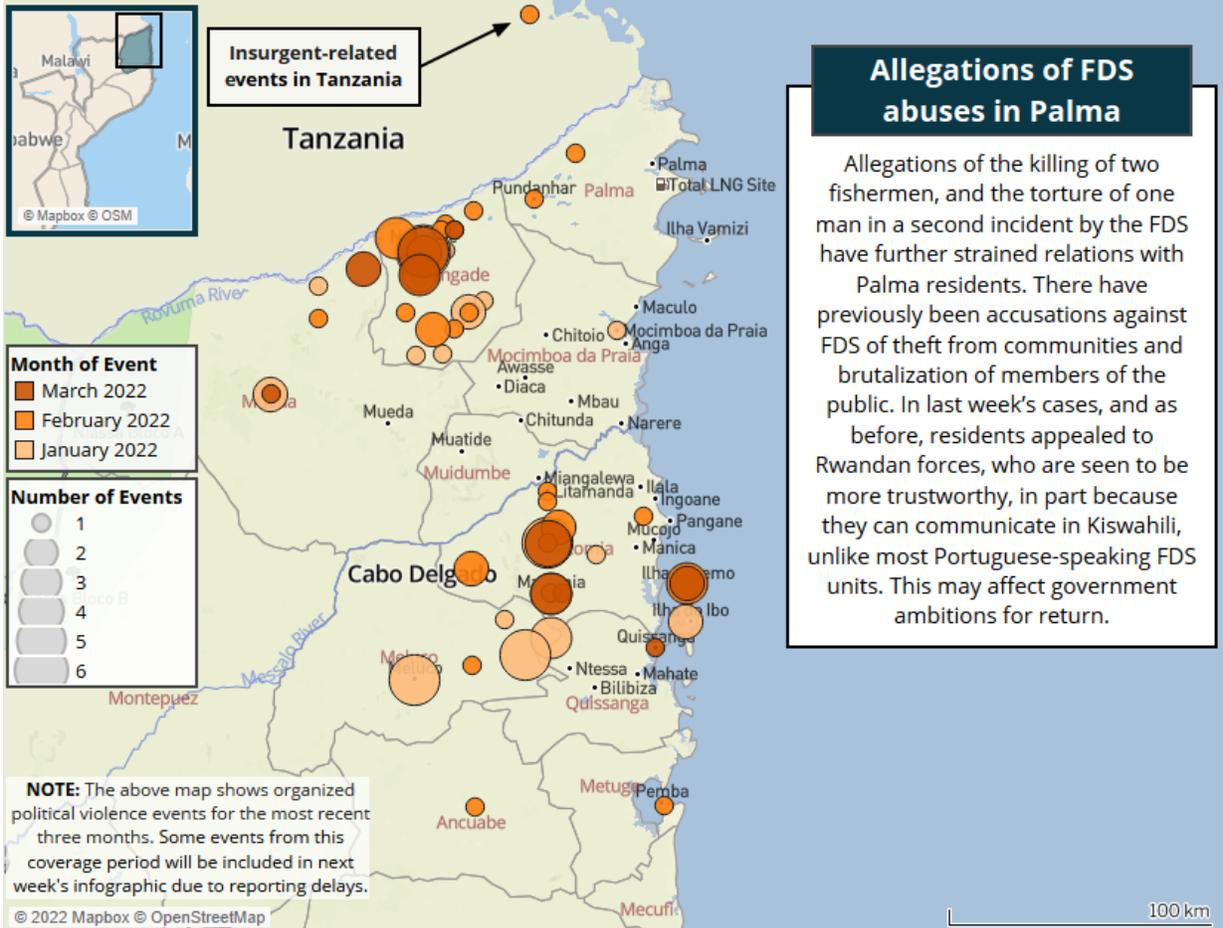
IOM's February 2022 [Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) shows that over 49,000 people were displaced between November 2021 and February 2022 in Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces, bringing the total number of IDPs to over 784,000. In Niassa province, the displacements occurred in Mecula district, while in Cabo Delgado there

were registered displacements in Nangade, Meluco, Macomia, and Ibo districts. The IOM highlighted the difficulties in providing food and shelter to the displaced. Displacement was attributed to fear of attacks, as well as from attacks themselves.

On 24 March, the government of Japan announced a [funding](#) of \$5.2 million to Mozambique for humanitarian assistance to IDPs and host communities. The funding will be channeled to six humanitarian organizations including United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC).

Further, the US government [announced](#) on 1 April that it will implement a strategy to “Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability” in four countries, including Mozambique, in addition to a group of West African countries. The 10-year initiative essentially aims to engage in the areas of diplomacy, development, and the security sector in order to “address the underlying causes of violence and instability before conflicts and crises can break out or deteriorate.” This initiative will reinforce other existing US government programs, such as the [third Joint Combined Exchange Training \(JCET\)](#) military program that has been underway since January 2022 and aims to strengthen the capacity of Mozambique’s security and defense forces in counterinsurgency efforts in northern Mozambique.

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