

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Cabo Delgado gas

Total CEO optimistic, but says project resumption requires life in Cabo Delgado 'back to normality'

TotalEnergies will resume development of the Cabo Delgado gas when there is "sustainable security" there, Patrick Pouyanné, Total Energies chief executive, told a Maputo press conference Tuesday (1 Feb). "Sustainable security is not just the armed forces," he said. It is "normalisation of social life".

"There has been a lot of progress, frankly in a very short time," he noted. "Mocimboa da Praia and Palma are now secure." But "sustainable security" means "coming back to normal life - villagers coming back to villages, Palma city to be more normal city."

He said on his next visit he wants to visit Palma, Mocimboa da Praia, and Mueda. "When I see that life is back to normality, which means having state services and population, then the project can restart."

He concluded: "lots of progress makes me optimistic, but to reach a level of sustainability and normalization, we need to continue the efforts." Cloaked in nice words, it was a hard message - not just a Rwanda army security zone in Palma and Mocimboa da Praia, and no promises to restart this year.

And normalisation means dealing with grievances

Pouyanné took a much stronger line than his predecessors at Total and, before that, Anadarko. He called for not just local content, but "local-local content - local content from Cabo Delgado. To help social life to start again. I want the bread eaten by all the teams in the project to be produced by the local people - local-local content."

"in order to contribute to the normalization and sustainability of Cabo Delgado [there must be] local actions. We want villagers and the people to understand that we are there to give them a small prosperity," he stressed. We want "more of the young people from Cabo Delgado and Mozambique to contribute and participate and be involved in the projects. [There must be] programmes on the ground and having these young people being trained and contributing to the project." There must be support to develop agriculture so people raise vegetables and sell them to the project.

Again very diplomatic, but recognising the grievances behind the war - linked to lack of jobs and benefit from the gas - and recognising that Total and the government must be seen to deal with the grievances and local people must see some benefit before that project can resume.

Total increasing commitments in Mozambique and fossil fuels

Even if it is not clear when, TotalEnergies does seem committed to going ahead with Cabo Delgado gas. The day before Pouyanné's visit, Total signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with government for training 2500 young people for TotalEnergies projects, with at least some promise of jobs.

Also on Monday (31 Jan) Total announced it had purchased BP's retail network, wholesale fuel business and logistics assets. The transaction covers a network of 26 service stations, a portfolio of business customers and 50% in SAMCOL, the logistics company previously jointly owned by TotalEnergies and BP, which operates the Matola, Beira and Nacala fuel import terminals. TotalEnergies already has 57 service stations and is the leading retailer of petroleum products in the country.

COP26 failed to curb fossil fuels and Tuesday (1 Feb) the European Commission announced it wanted to classify gas as "sustainable investment". This ensures finance for Cabo Delgado gas, and more generally an economic future for fossil fuels. TotalEnergies and its partner China National Offshore Oil Corporation have reached a deal with Uganda and Tanzania to invest more than \$10 bn in developing crude oil production in Uganda near the border with DRC, and a pipeline across Tanzania to the sea, the French group said Tuesday (1 Feb). TotalEnergies also signed an MoU with Uganda to collaborate on "large scale renewable energy development projects".

Global politics is playing a big role, with France wanting to build its role in Africa and Rwanda wanting to be a global player. Pouyanné arrived in Maputo on Sunday (30 Jan) from Kigali, Rwanda, where he had signed an MoU covering a range of projects including LPG, hydro, and carbon and energy storage.

Rwanda has built a highly professional army which it rents out for peacekeeping forces across Africa, and now in Mozambique. The so far highly successful Mozambique mission is being paid for, officially, by Rwanda, although it is widely assumed that France is compensating with additional aid. The EU is now proposing to pay some of the costs, but this remains controversial. Nevertheless, Total's resumption of work in Cabo Delgado is likely to also require a promise of long-term Rwandan protection.

With links in all directions from the US to the UAE and Israel, President Paul Kagame has built his tiny country (13 mn population) into a world player, with most countries willing to turn a blind eye to his human rights violations such as murders of dissidents (including in Maputo). Mozambique and France are part of that growing network.

Civil War

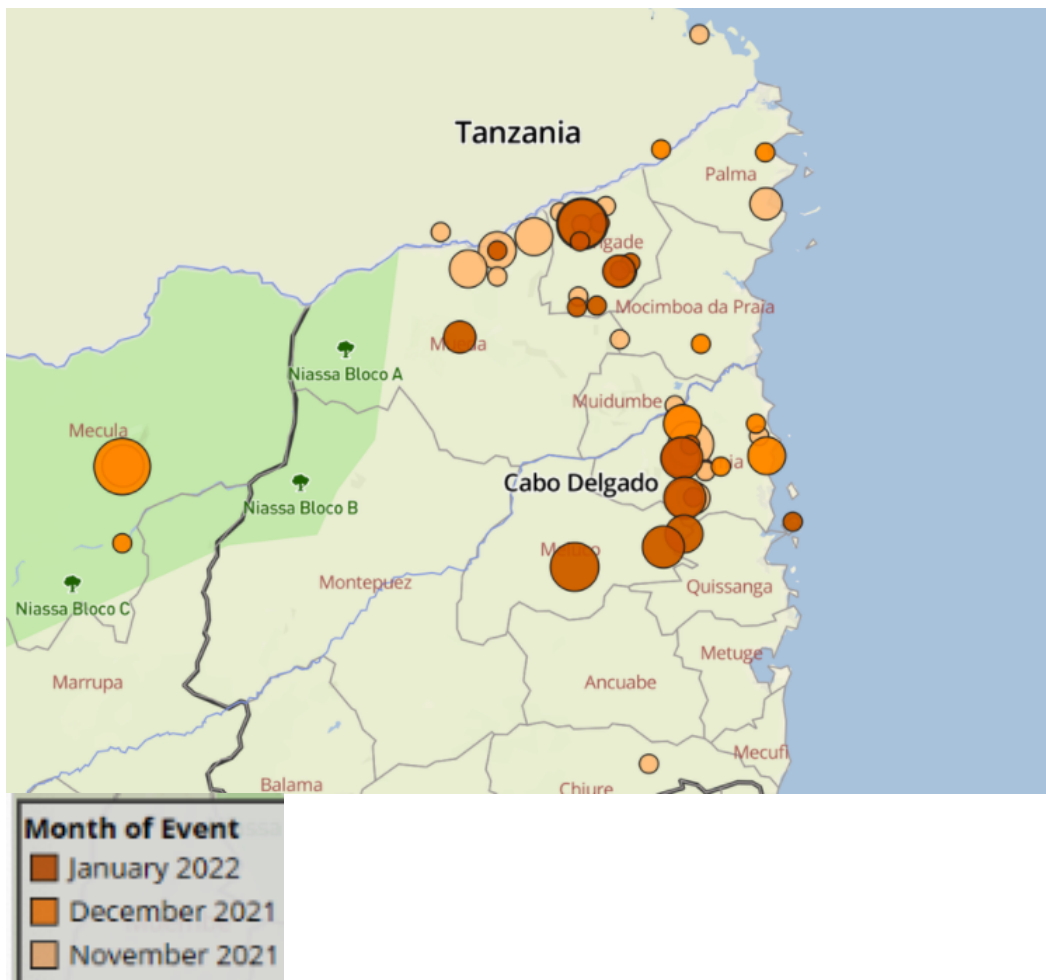
Insurgency continues outside gas zone

The rainy season usually reduces fighting, but it continues at a lower level. Rwandan troops are in effective control of the two gas districts, Palma and Mocimboa da Praia, and there seems little fighting there.

Rwandans also appear to control the Mueda to Mocimboa da Praia to Palma road. *Cabo Ligado* 83 (1 Feb) reports that authorized mini buses carrying goods for trade can make the trip from Mueda to Palma in six hours, stopping for frequent roadblocks by Mozambican and Rwandan forces that ensure only authorized vehicles make the trip. The price for passengers varies between \$16 and \$23 and cars are lined up to receive authorization for the trip. This system supports a booming business in trade between Palma and the rest of the province.

The Rwanda sweep forced most insurgents to flee that zone, breaking up, in normal guerrilla fashion, into smaller groups and moving to other areas where they have a presence and where fighting has continued for the past two years. But they also moved into northern Niassa province where they seemed to have prepared forest bases in advance, and into Meluco district of Cabo Delgado.

Fighting against the insurgents in these zones is done by the Mozambican army and SADC forces (SAMIM, Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique). There has been some serious fighting with a few insurgent middle level leaders captured or killed.



The map on the previous page is from *Cabo Ligado* 83 (1 Feb) and shows all incidents in the past three months (November 2021 - January 2022). Darker colours are more recent, bigger circles show more incidents.

One zone of continued heavy fighting is Nangade, west of Palma and on the border with Tanzania, where the insurgents have support and a significant presence.

The heaviest fighting has been to control the N380, the only paved road north to the gas zone. This is shown by the vertical line of incidents. It starts at the north from Chai on the Messalo river and the border between Muidumbe and Macomia districts, where insurgents still have bases, and continues south through Macomia town, and further south along the border of Meluco and Quissanga districts.

These attacks continued last week, killing more than 20 people. The most serious was in Iba, Meluco, on Friday (28 Jan). The head of the Iba administrative post told *Mediafax* (31 Jan) he had counted 12 bodies of local people. He also denounced “the lack of intervention and reaction by the defence and security forces”, although Iba is only 13 km from Macomia town where military units are stationed. Many civilians fled north to Macomia town, in part because they were prevented from fleeing west to Montepuez by a Mozambican military roadblock on the road through Meluco district to Montepuez.

Meluco district has had more than a dozen attacks since the beginning of the year. Except for attacks near the N380 road in the east of the district, Meluco had previously been less affected by the war. But local people believe the insurgents are the ones chased from bases near Chai in heavy fighting in the 3rd week of December. (*Zitamar* 28 Jan)

It is also suggested that the insurgents want to capture resources and stretch the government and SADC forces. And roads are important, with insurgents attacking near the N380 but also increasingly near the local road to Montepuez.

Two other new areas of insurgent activity are northern Mueda district, off the plateau, and Mecula district in Niassa.

Insurgent leaders killed and captured

Rwandan soldiers ambushed a group of insurgents near Naquitengue, in southern Mocimboa da Praia district, on 29 January. Two insurgents were killed, including a Tanzanian insurgent leader named Twahili Mwidini, according to Mozambican police chief Bernardino Rafael. Rafael claimed that Mwidini had been responsible for the kidnapping of two Brazilian nuns during the insurgency's August 2020 attack on Mocimboa da Praia town. The nuns were later freed after a \$25,000 ransom was paid.

A low level insurgent leader, Juma Saide Mussa, was captured by government forces in January. Juma is 39 years old and from the coastal part of Macomia district. He was captured by insurgents in the fishing village of Pangane in October 2020. He was first taken because one of the villagers told the attackers that he was a sailor, *Mediafax* reported. He was forced to command a vessel transporting some of the insurgent leaders, supplies and looted goods from Pangane to Mocimboa da Praia on the same day that he was kidnapped. Pangane was one of Macomia's main fishing centres. What is known is at that time insurgents stole at least eight boats and travelled from Pangane to Mocimboa da Praia.

Seafaring skills are appreciated by the insurgency and Juma quickly rose to leadership rank, he said. He even commanded some operations. Prior to his abduction and recruitment, Juma was never linked to radicalisation, according to those who know him. As a child he attended madrassa like his peers. He left school after elementary level and did not study beyond primary. Juma worked as a motor boat sailor for a local business owner Abubacar Achime before being forced into the insurgency. (*Zitamar* 19 Jan)

Security kidnap scheme: Achime, who died last year, was once arrested on charges of links to terrorism. No evidence was ever presented, but he was forced to pay \$6,300 to be released, in a hostage scheme which allegedly involved local elements within state intelligence and security services, and the district attorney's office. (*Zitamar* 19 Jan)

External forces

Third US training started 31 January, with US army special operations forces training the Mozambican military. Mozambique is also participating, with 60 countries, in the US multinational maritime exercise Cutlass Express which began 31 January in waters around the Middle East.

India gave two fast inceptor craft on 27 December. They were brought to Maputo on the INS Kesari along with 500 tonnes of food aid. The interceptors are 16 metres long with a draught of 0.8 metres. Water-jet propulsion gives a top speed of 45 knots (83 km/h) and a range of 200 nautical miles (370 km). They can carry machineguns and feature bullet-resistant cabins. Built by Solas Marine in Sri Lanka, they were delivered to the Indian Navy between 2013 and 2017. As part of the competition to dominate the Mozambique Channel, India has been increasing its presence and support. An Indian Navy ship in the region was the first responder to Cyclone Idai in March 2019. In July 2019, India handed over two Larsen & Toubro interceptors. The 30 metre long fast interceptors have a top speed of 45 knots (83 km/h), a range of 500 nautical miles (930 km) and are typically armed with machineguns.

Four countries are competing for naval dominance in the Mozambique channel - France, which has tiny islands in the channel and nearby bases; India; the US; and South Africa, where participation is now restricted by the country's governance and financial crisis.

The European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mozambique is based in Katembe, part of Maputo city, and Chimoio. Around 140 military personnel from 10 European countries are training 1100 Mozambican officials, as a cost of €15.2 mn (\$17 mn). The first group of 300 soldiers from the army, navy and air force will finish their training in March.

"The under-equipped and poorly manned SAMIM (Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique)" is simply "faffing around" not "achieving anything", South Africa defence analyst Helmoed Heitman told *defenceWeb*. The SADC force is "ludicrously weak and under-armed with criminally inadequate air support", he adds. Reflecting that, Rwanda troops and police have taken control of the two gas provinces, Palma and Mocimboa da Praia, leaving SAMIM the other districts - where it has not been able to quell the insurgents. And both Lesotho and South Africa are having financial problems and may not be able to continue to pay for troops and supplies.

Tanzanian president Samia Suluhu Hassan met with President Filipe Nyusi in Pemba on 28 January to increase cooperation on an insurgency that is crossing their border. It shows a marked improvement in relations due both to the new Tanzania president replacing the disruptive John Magufuli, who died last year of Covid, and to both presidents actively trying to improve relations with neighbours.

Other news

Cyclone Batsirai could hit Monday

Mauritius was hit yesterday by intense cyclone Batsirai which is expected to hit Madagascar Saturday and move into the Mozambique Channel Monday afternoon.

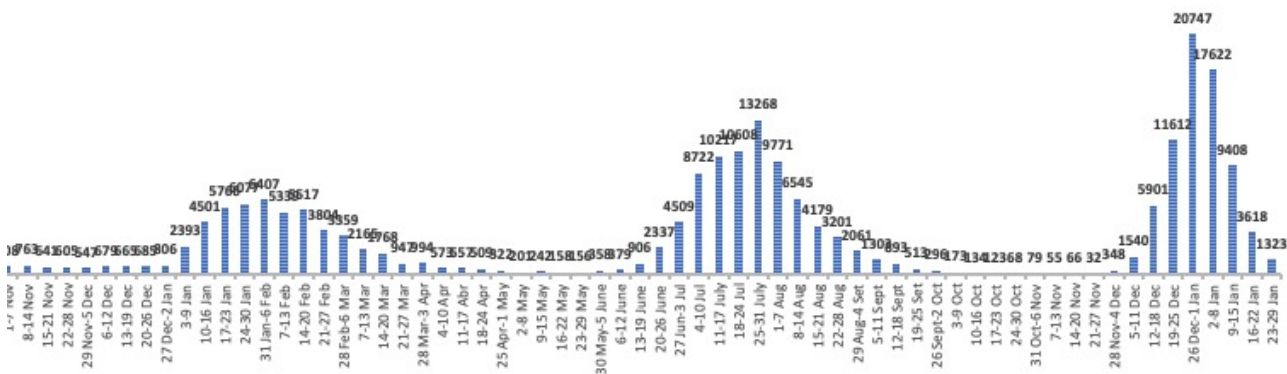
Cyclone tracker on <https://www.cyclocane.com/batsirai-storm-tracker/> and wind and rain projections on <https://www.windy.com/-19.926/38.205?2022020518,-20.514,38.205,6,m:c5WaheP>

Covid 3rd wave over

Cases, deaths and positive tests have all dropped to low numbers. National vaccination rates have reached 58% of adults and 31% of the general population, with the highest vaccination rates for adults in Nampula (88%), Cabo Delgado (63%) and Manica (63%).

The third wave peaked in the week ending 1 January. Since then, weekly deaths have fallen from 63 to 11, weekly cases from 21,000 to 1300, and the positivity rate of people being tested has dropped from 43% to 7%. The graph below of new cases per week is from Miguel de Brito.

NR. DE NOVOS CASOS POR SEMANA
© MIGUEL DE BRITO



IMF talks resume

Two weeks of talks with the IMF began in Maputo Monday (31 Jan). Aid from the Fund to Mozambique was cut in 2016 in response to “hidden-debts” revelations. The importance of the talks is shown by the personal involvement of economy and finance minister Adriano Maleiane and representatives from Bank of Mozambique. Maleiane made clear he hopes that the IMF will agree to resume budget support, which in turn could encourage other donors to restart direct support to the state budget, which was halted in 2016.

The IMF has made clear it wants to restart the programme, but demands a high price. The IMF made clear in its 20 December statement that it demands reductions in borrowing and spending, particularly cutting the wage bill and investment, and further raising taxes. Government also must crack down on money laundering.

Comment: But cyclone Ana last week made clear that cutting investment comes at a high cost. Flooding washed out the Revúbuè River bridge in Tete, which had only been repaired after being washed out by Cyclone Idai in 2019. But the government had already cut infrastructure investment to the bone and paid \$3.7 mn to only replace the deck which washed away; there was no money to raise the bridge and strengthen the pillars. International agencies are pushing Mozambique to spend more on resilience to the climate emergency, just as the IMF wants it to spend less. And there have been protests about the new, relatively small tolls on the Maputo ring road, which will only pay for maintenance and not the building costs.

Frelimo bears much of the blame for the crisis. The \$2.2 bn secret debt caused the 2016 cut in aid and the economic crisis, and the current civil war in Cabo Delgado is caused in part by Frelimo greed causing growing poverty and inequality. But forcing more austerity is unlikely change Frelimo.

jh

Comment: Toll gates

The confrontation over the toll gates on the Maputo ring road says a lot about Mozambican civil society. The ring road was built by Chinese contractors several years ago (based on colonial plans) and was expected to have toll booths, but this did not occur. Eventually they were built and tolls were to be collected from 1 February (Tuesday). The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) led a campaign against the tolls, including going to court. CDD won an injunction, overturned on Monday (31 Jan), and tolls were charged from Tuesday.

It seems all a bit marginal for the majority of poor people along the ring road. The toll is \$0.63 for light vehicles, minibuses and motorcycles rising to \$6 for heavy lorries, with discounts for frequent users. Public transport including minibuses (*chapas*) pay \$0.16.

The main people being hit are those who bought relatively inexpensive imported Japanese second hand cars - broadly the middle class - or who now have motorcycles (and can easily detour around the toll gates).

Meanwhile what is called "civil society" is largely groups funded by aid donors, and normally paying relatively high salaries to leaders and staff. These are not membership organisations, but pressure groups to keep a check on Frelimo and government - and provide good jobs. To be sure, as elsewhere in the world, there is a transfer of wealth from the middle class to the rich, and those who can afford Japanese cars are being squeezed. The reduction in traffic at the end of the month when people can no longer afford fuel is notable. The poor are squeezed too, but civil society campaigns for the car owners. *jh*

Follow up and notes from readers

Estacio Valoi's very good 19 Jan article "A Deadly ring of coal: VALE's poisoned gift to Mozambique" is **available in English** on <https://ja4change.org/2022/01/19/a-deadly-ring-of-coal/>

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To cite for academic purposes, treat as a blog or a newspaper. Normal citation format would be: "Mozambique News Reports & Clippings, number XXX", DATE, bit.ly/Mozamb, accessed XXX.

\$2bn secret debt trial: Daily press clippings in English on <https://bit.ly/Moz-Debt-Map-Trial> .

Important external links

Exchange rates 2006-21 & minimum wages 1996-2021 <https://bit.ly/Moz-Exch-wage-2021>

Covid-19 daily updated data <https://www.facebook.com/miguel.de.brito1> and

<https://covid19.ins.gov.mz/documentos-em-pdf/boletins-diarios/>

Daily flood and monthly dry season reports - <https://bit.ly/Moz-Flood-2022>

Cyclone trackers, <https://www.cyclocane.com/> and <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war <https://www.caboligado.com/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/MozNews2022> and <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021>

Downloadable books: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books> Election data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

Cabo Delgado

Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data <https://bit.ly/Moz-CDg>

Special reports on the war

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 27 Feb 2020 <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>

Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 <https://bit.ly/Moz-492>

Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-496>

A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-498>

Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - 2018 - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>

2001 first article- *Metical* - English and Portuguese <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001>

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng

Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Background reading

Special reports

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>

Special report on four poverty surveys: bit.ly/MozPoverty

\$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>

Kroll - Full report on \$2bn debt - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz>

Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>

Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>

Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt

2018 Constitution - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Election newsletters are on <http://bit.ly/2H066Kg>

Ten books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)

Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014) is on <https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer>

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Civil War Civil Peace (2006): <https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace>

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000 (2001)

Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)

Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996)

Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991)

Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986) <available shortly>

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013)

Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)

Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)

Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique (free): <http://clubofmozambique.com/>

Zitamar (paywall): <http://zitamar.com/>

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall):

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O País: www.opais.co.mz

@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>

Carta de Moçambique <https://cartamz.com>

Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:

Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP <https://cipmoz.org/>

Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR <https://omrmz.org/>

Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE <https://www.iese.ac.mz/>

Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD <https://cddmoz.org/> (some CDD in English)

Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) <http://www.fmo.org.mz> and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).
To subscribe to all CDD publications: <http://eepurl.com/gO9I6v> (English or Portuguese).

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