

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Also in this issue:

**Insurgents moving to profit from illicit economy
Heroin and people smuggling routes are shifting
Neglect and corruption strengthens insurgency;**

Criminalisation of Cabo Delgado - on both sides

A set of important articles and reports were published last week on the Cabo Delgado civil war. They point to increased criminality on both sides, and suggest there is now a struggle between Frelimo and the insurgents for control of illegal trades such as heroin and timber. And questions are being raised about government attempts to portray this as a foreign attack on Mozambique.

How can SA help when Frelimo ‘fails systematically to address the real roots of conflict’?

The unwillingness of South African President and African Union chair Cyril Ramaphosa to help Mozambique in Cabo Delgado is becoming increasingly obvious. Mozambique hired South African mercenaries Dyke Advisory Group (DAG) without even telling the South Africans, which surprised and irritated Ramaphosa.

Daily Maverick, the South African on-line newspaper which has largely replaced the *Mail & Guardian* as an investigative newspaper, in a very strong article (7 May), argues that Ramaphosa's unwillingness to help "might well have to do with Frelimo's quasi-totalitarian approach to power being the main cause of political conflict in Mozambique.

"From a regional perspective, Frelimo's behaviour lacks parallel in its unwillingness to democratise, de facto, the political and economic space in the country. Frelimo's absolute unwillingness to put in place real democratic institutions in Mozambique may be discouraging Ramaphosa and other democrats from intervening, as while war might be bad, constantly negotiating peace agreements in the context of an undemocratic incumbent like Frelimo might be politically challenging.

"Ramaphosa's challenge may reside on how to intervene in a context where his main counterpart fails systematically to address the real roots of conflict."

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-05-07-south-africas-dangerous-silence-on-terror-in-northern-mozambique/>

Neglect and corruption strengthens insurgency; government actions are insurgents greatest asset

"When conflict broke out in 2017, many observers pointed to Cabo Delgado's neglect by the national government, systemic corruption and economic grievances as driving the insurgency and creating fertile ground in which it could take deeper root. Yet to date, the government of Mozambique has not made serious attempts to address these concerns and restore confidence in the state. On the contrary, its response continues to be dogged by state corruption and weak legitimacy. In pursuing quick military fixes and suppressing information about the war, it is playing into the insurgents' hands and failing to win the support of the local population," warns Global Initiative (GI) Against Transnational Organised Crime in a 7 May report:

<https://globalinitiative.net/esaobs-risk-bulletin-7/>

"The greatest barrier to an effective response by the government [to the insurgency] appears to be its perception of Cabo Delgado primarily as a site of resources that can be extracted for Maputo's economic gain, not as a region where local people deserve better economic opportunities and governance," says GI.

"The policies (formal and informal) which have in the past secured the economic interests of the elite now play into the hands of the insurgents. For the elite figures in control of these assets, resource extraction has often relied on actions that marginalize people, such as the reported abuses on or near the Gemfields ruby mine," notes GI. "In the illicit economy, traffickers have an interest in state systems being weak and ports being porous, which is what allowed the heroin and people-smuggling economies to flourish. The high-level corruption that allows for enormous personal profit for senior political figures gives cover for low-level corruption and means that people live with predation at all state levels. Combined with decades of underdevelopment of the region, this is a central challenge to state legitimacy.

"The focus on preserving the status quo also appears to have led to a state response to the conflict which is focused on securing the north by military means. In the process, approaches that would address economic marginalization and state corruption have been neglected. To make matters worse, the military response has been mired in setbacks, and corruption and abuses may be exacerbating problems like weak state legitimacy.

"The state needs to reinvest wealth in improving conditions for the people of the region, communicate transparently and allow the media to operate, and hold its own officials accountable for their crimes – in short, up-end the current arrangements for governing Cabo Delgado. It's no small task. But if they don't, the government's own actions will remain the insurgent's greatest asset as they continue to recruit and solicit support from local residents."

Soldiers confiscating food and money

Soldiers at check points are confiscating food and money, particularly from traders trying to stay in business in war-affected areas, *Carta de Moçambique* (8 May) reports. In war hit areas banks have been attacked by insurgents or have closed. Many traders go to Pemba to buy goods to sell. With no banks, this is entirely a cash transaction.

One trader said he had 1 million meticaís (\$15,000) taken by soldiers in Mucojo, Macomia district, where there are no banks. Some traders are being detained, accused of providing food or money to the insurgents.

The problem is widespread at check points outside towns and at the only road connection between the south and north of the province, the temporary bypass of the washed out bridge over the Montepuez river on the N380.

Many traders use small boats which land on the beach at Paquitequete neighbourhood in Pemba, where goods are confiscated unless a receipt or letter can be produced - and even then a fee of \$3 is charged. <https://cartamz.com/index.php/politica/item/5078-fds-apertam-cerco-a-circulacao-de-dinheiro-vivo-em-cabo-delgado>

Insurgents moving to profit from illicit economy

"The locations of recent attacks – which include coastal landing sites, transport hubs and the sites of natural resources – suggest that the insurgents may be targeting the illicit economy as a more substantial source of future revenue. Over time, control over the illicit economy may begin to shape the actions of the group more clearly," warns the Global Initiative (GI) Against Transnational Crime, in an article in the Daily Maverick (8 May) <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-05-08-are-mozambiques-insurgents-closing-in-on-illicit-trafficking-profits/> and which is part of a package of three articles was published in the 7 May Global Initiative "Risk Bulletin" <https://globalinitiative.net/esaobs-risk-bulletin-7/>

Initially, "the insurgent group was not systematically exploiting illicit economies for funding. Instead, its connections to criminal trafficking markets were ad hoc, reflective of the general importance of illegal and unregulated markets to livelihoods in the north." But this is changing, with insurgents increasing their control over key transport routes for legal and illegal commodities, and with evidence of more structured involvement in gold, rubies and heroin.

Artisanal gold mining has increased in the Niassa reserve, with local police bribed to allow the mining to continue. The gold is sold in Tanzania, Montepuez and Nampula. Insurgents have passed through the area and there have been reports of a fundamentalist Islamic sect in remote village in the Niassa reserve since 2011. There is new artisanal gold mining on the western edge of the Quirimbas park, in areas controlled by insurgents.

One of the radical Islamic groups which became part of the insurgency has had a mosque in Montepuez since 2012 and recruited youth, according to GI. Initially artisanal miners sold their rubies to Thai buyers, but in 2017, after Gemfields took control, a large police crackdown arrested 3,600 artisanal miners. Most of the miners were not Mozambican and were deported, along with several hundred foreign buyers. But artisanal ruby mining continues. GI cites reports that insurgents filled the marketing gap, buying stones from the remaining artisanal miners and selling them to Thai and Pakistani dealers. Also, some expelled miners joined the insurgents.

The ivory trade has been reduced, but the wildlife trade continues with animal products such as lion teeth and claws and pangolin scales. GI reports that a sect member from Niassa has been recruiting new members among the poachers.

Some of the heroin off loaded from dhows 30 km off the coast is brought to shore by smaller boats to the ports of Mocimboa da Praia and Quissanga and then transported by road to Nampula and then South Africa. The insurgents exert some control over these ports and appear to be using that to tax the heroin traffic. GI cites "reports that known heroin traffickers in Mocimboa da Praia have not had any of their business infrastructure damaged in attacks and may have been making 'donations' to the insurgents from early on."

The heroin trade for at least two decades has been licensed by senior figures in Frelimo, and a condition is that no heroin stays in Mozambique - that this is purely transit traffic. GI did a separate study of the East African heroin trade and found that Mozambique had a huge gap between the lowest and highest price for the drug - ranging from €20 to €140 per gram. Further investigation showed two entirely different heroin markets. The main local traders are respecting the agreement with Frelimo and only small amounts of pure heroin leak out and are sold at the high price. But there is an entirely separate network bringing low grade, low price heroin in from Tanzania and selling it mainly to gold and ruby miners.

Heroin and people smuggling routes are shifting

Cyclone Kenneth and a subsequent heavy rainy season which washed out bridges and turned roads to mud, combined with an intensifying war which has given insurgents control of roads and ports in the north of Cabo Delgado, is having a direct effect in shifting heroin and people smuggling routes. For heroin and other illegal cargoes, dhows are now going further south to the coasts of Nampula and Zambézia, while the people traffickers appear to be making more use of the Malawi route.

Changed off-loading points for heroin are indicated by further information on the stranded boat which was towed into Beira port on 30 April. The changes might have confused the crew. *O Pais* (7 May) published a picture of the boat, which is clearly a 15-20 m Jelbut dhow, exactly the boats used for heroin smuggling.



(*O Pais* photo)

O Pais interviewed two fishermen from the Beira-based company Martins Mar, who only returned to Beira Tuesday 5 May, after the boat had been towed in. They say they had been fishing in the zone off Pebane, Zambézia and Moma, Nampula, and on the morning of 25 April they saw this boat. They were surprised that it had no flag and no registration number. They said it was low in the water and obviously had a large cargo. It disappeared over the horizon, so they do not know where it went. But when it was found near Beira, it had no cargo.

The normal system is that the dhow carries up to 1 tonne of heroin. It sits 30 km or more off the coast and off loads the heroin in smaller parcels to local fishing boats, which carry it to an agreed location on the beach, where it is collected. Typically this is arranged by text messaging. Moma and Angoche, a former slave-trading port 95 km northeast of Moma, are on a coast very similar to northern Cabo Delgado, with isolated beaches protected by a string of islands, making it hard to detect the delivery. A study by Simone Haysom published 5 March argues that some of the trade had already moved to Angoche by 2011, and that in 2013 there were press reports of fishers earning money by going out to the dhows to collect heroin.

Similarly, it appears that **people smuggling routes have changed**. At 2 am on 24 March an air-tight locked container filled with Ethiopians - 64 dead and 14 surviving - was opened at the Mussacama weigh bridge in Tete. This suggests that people smuggling has shifted from the Cabo Delgado route. This overland route goes south through Tanzania, crosses the Malawi border in the far north at Karonga, traverses all of Malawi, and crosses the Mozambique border at Dedza or Mwanza-Zobué. The weigh bridge is on the road 23 km south of the Zobué-Mwanza border with Malawi and just south of the junction of the roads coming from Zobué and Dedza. The discovery was reported initially by Miramar TV and *Carta de Moçambique* (25 Mar). Bribes are paid at

various border posts. *Carta* notes that in some cases, migrants have to wait in Malawian border towns to negotiate their travel into Mozambique.

Further south, the road divides and again there are two choices. One route is via Tete city and into Zimbabwe, and then crossing into South Africa near Beitbridge, where it is apparently harder to bribe officials. So migrants must walk across the Limpopo river in an area infested with crocodiles, but the transporters do arrange guides, says *Carta*. The other choice is to turn east and cross the Zambezi river at Caia, and then follow the N1 south to Maputo, and then go directly into South Africa.

More details were given in the 6 April Global Initiative (GI) "Risk Bulletin" <https://globalinitiative.net/esaobs-risk-bulletin-6/>. Only 2% of migrants from the East and Horn of Africa go south, but that is still thousands, and most pay smugglers. "Cargo trucks are a particularly attractive form of transport for smugglers and put migrants at a particularly high risk. ... Drivers often know very little about their cargo and are provided with minimal information, partly as a security measure. This increases the likelihood that, unbeknown to them, drivers may be transporting smuggled migrants," GI notes.

Comment: Well known and accepted

Reports of the Frelimo-controlled heroin trade were published two decades ago. Reports of massive illegal sales of hardwood timber to China involving the Interior Minister and member of the Frelimo Political Commission were published in 2006. By 2010 it was well known that Mozambique had become a people smuggling centre, there was a growing role of Islamic militancy in Cabo Delgado, and elephant poaching and ivory smuggling from the Niassa reserve enjoyed protection. The huge natural gas reserves became known in 2010, and there were dreams of personal wealth - millions of dollars for top people, and a new house or car for those lower down. A totally useless airport, built because of large bribes, opened in 2014. The \$2 bn secret debt became public knowledge in 2016. For two decades, under three presidents, the state has been transformed into a machine generating large profits for ministers and senior officials and a licence to collect bribes for police, teachers and other lower level civil servants. Investigative journalism and strong civil society organisations have told these stories again and again. No one can say they did not know. And the failure to at least limit blatant corruption was taken as a signal that this was accepted - this is the new normal. Religious militants in Cabo Delgado were able to recruit with a promise of a more just society. The resulting war has killed 1100 people so far. As Global Initiative says: "the government's own actions will remain the insurgent's greatest asset as they continue to recruit and solicit support from local residents." *jh*

Background information: My 2018 report on Mozambique's **heroin transit trade**, "The Uberization of Mozambique's heroin trade," is available in English on <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin> and in Portuguese on <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>. That study was the more detailed Mozambique case study for a Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI) 2018 study "The Heroin Coast" on <https://globalinitiative.net/the-heroin-coast-a-political-economy-along-the-eastern-african-seaboard/>. Simone Haysom's GI October 2018 follow up "Where crime compounds conflict: Understanding northern Mozambique's vulnerabilities" is about the political economy of heroin markets in East and Southern Africa and is on https://globalinitiative.net/northern_mozambique_violence/. Her 5 March 2020 paper on the heroin trade is on <https://enactafrica.org/research/research-papers/from-the-maskani-to-the-mayor-the-political-economy-of-heroin-markets-ineast-and-southern-africa>. My first article on the heroin transit trade was published in 2001, and is available on <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001> in both English and Portuguese. The NATO "Identification guide for Dhows, Skiffs and Whalers in the High Risk Area" is on <https://www.norclub.com/assets/ArticleFiles/NATO-Guidance-for-ID.pdf>

Rowan Morre Gerety's wonderful 2018 book on Mozambique *Go Tell the Crocodiles* is based on long periods of getting to know Mozambicans, and has a chapter on **people smuggling**, which

can be read for free on Google preview

https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Go_Tell_the_Crocodiles.html?id=9KcJDgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&redir_esc=y - v=onepage&q&f=false

It details how Nampula city and the nearby refugee camp of Marratane had become the centre for people smuggling from Somalia and Ethiopia to South Africa, with people being brought in dhows along the coast to Cabo Delgado, and then road to Nampula and then onward to South Africa - exactly the heroin route. But it also describes a route via Malawi, crossing into Mozambique at Milange, then continuing across the Zambezi River at Caia. Gerety's book is still the best in English looking at life on the ground and making do in the informal Mozambican economy, and is a delight to read.

An expose of the **timber trade** by Catherine Mackenzie for the Forum of NGOs in Zambézia (FONGZA) was published in 2006 and is still available in

<https://www.open.ac.uk/technology/mozambique/sites/www.open.ac.uk.technology.mozambique/files/pics/d72272.pdf>. The Environment Investigation Agency did a follow-up report in 2013 which named then Agriculture Minister José Pacheco as being involved, and is in English on <https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/EIA-First-Class-Connections1.pdf> and in Portuguese on <https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/EIA-First-Class-Connections-Portuguese1.pdf>

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime has established a Civil Society **Observatory of Illicit Economies** in Eastern and Southern Africa, which in turn now has a very interesting "Risk Bulletin" every two months. There is a subscription form (free) on the home page of each issue, most recently <https://globalinitiative.net/esaobs-risk-bulletin-7/>

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"Mozambique News Reports & Clippings, number XXX", DATE, bit.ly/mozamb, accessed XXX.

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Background reading

Special reports

Mozambique heroin transit trade

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

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

2001 first article - 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

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

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

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

Minimum wage and exchange rates 1996-2018 -- <http://bit.ly/MinWage18>

\$2bn secret debt - in English

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

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

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>

Eight 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)

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)
Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 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)

Two more will be available shortly to download:

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986)
Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000

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)

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Mozambique media websites, Portuguese:

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz
O País: www.opais.co.mz
@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>
Carlos Serra Diário de um sociólogo: <http://oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com>

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique: <http://clubofmozambique.com/>
Zitamar: <http://zitamar.com/>
Macauhub English: <http://www.macauhub.com.mo/en/>
AIM Reports: www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news

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